

The Emancipated Worker?
A Foucauldian Study of
Power, Subjectivity and Organising
in the Information Age

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Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

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A Focused Study of
Power, Subjectivity and Organising
in the Information Age

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ABSTRACT

This study is about organisational control in the information age. Organisational control is examined through the changing landscape of power, subject and organisation. The focus is on examining escapes from the traditional practice of organisational control and the spaces of freedom which open up for workers to exercise their own agency. This examination takes place in the avant-garde professional work organisations of a pioneer industry in the world's leading information society, Finland. Theoretically, the study draws on the later works of Michel Foucault and on Critical Management Studies. Empirically, the contemporary operation of organisational control is examined as a case study, in which the Finnish mobile content providing industry constitutes the case. The research is qualitative, consisting of semi-structured interviews and thematic analyses.

The findings indicate that the contemporary worker is a subject rather than an object. This impacts on organisational control, as objects can be externally controlled, but subjects cannot. Correspondingly, the ways of controlling and the locus of control have changed from external to internal. The traditional structures of domination, practices of management and preconceived worker subjectivities are largely absent in the organisations researched – and instead there is self-control. This form of control operates through the subjects actively working upon themselves and their own conduct. In contemporary organisations this culminates in the practice of self-management. Self-management is founded on the premise of agency. Overall, the means of control are no longer supported by structures of domination or based upon disciplinary techniques, but rely on relational, pastoral, power. This form of power operates directly through subjectivity. There is no objectifying system, but a subjectifying self.

The findings also indicate that contemporary organisations, or any part of them, are no longer viewed as socio-technical systems that can be externally managed and controlled. Instead they are seen as essentially consisting of human social processes - lateral relations, which are deeply embedded in action and in their contextuality, historicity and politicality. By implication, social processes and agency need to be incorporated into the analysis, and the social and political reality of organising, managing and working put on the agenda of future organisational research.

“My problem is not to satisfy the professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. This means that at the end of the book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue...” (Foucault, 2000, p. 242).

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The shortcomings of the work are naturally solely my own.

-Hannele Huhtala

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Introduction

This is a study of contemporary organisational control. Essentially it explores the operation of organisational control through the themes of power, subjectivity and organising. This examination takes place in the avant-garde professional work organisations of a pioneer industry in the world's leading information society, Finland (Castells and Himanen, 2001). Theoretically, the study draws primarily upon Foucault's later work (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). It culminates in understanding organisational control in terms of the new modern forms of power and in explaining the relationships among subjectivity, agency, power and organisational control. This entails exploring the ways in which contemporary workers are controlled in/through their everyday organisational practices and realities. The aim is also to explain how workers in one of the pioneering industries struggle. This entails exploring the existence of particular modes of subjectivity and practices of the self that contribute to opening up spaces of freedom in the context of contemporary workplaces. Conventional organisational control is largely viewed as a way of governing working subjects (Rose, 1999; Townley, 1998). Agency and its everyday organisational materialisations, on the other hand, are postulated as offering a potential escape route(s) from this government. The question arises: what if the contemporary working subjects also have the possibility of questioning their surroundings and themselves? Thus, what if, rather than just being isolated, alienated and repressed human ruins, the workers actually quite like their working realities and actively participate in reconstructing and reproducing them? What if, in fact, in the avant-garde professional work organisations of the information age, working subjects *already* experience - and view others - as liberated?

With regard to the theoretical framework, this study draws primarily upon the later works of *Michel Foucault*, and in particular upon his writings on "disciplinary power", "pastoral power" and "technologies of the self"(Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). The study also draws – as primary sources - on Foucauldian authors writing in the realm of Critical Management Studies who have taken Foucault's ideas into the realm of organisational studies (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Fournier and Grey, 2000; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Jermier, Knights

and Nord, 1994; Townley, 1998). Finally, in historically contextualising the study, Marx is drawn upon (1884, 1967). In particular, his accounts are essential in exploring the possible historical changes in the understanding of paid work under capitalism. Despite some comparisons between Marx and Foucault, *this thesis does not aim to provide a Marx-Foucault debate on organisational control. Foucault and the critical management authors, writing in the realm of organisational theory, are the main body of literature drawn upon*; Marx simply provides the point of historical comparison of basic attitudes to paid work under capitalism, and thus as illustration of possible change in these. On the other hand, the main theoretical themes in this study are power, subjectivity and organising. In fact contemporary organisational control is examined primarily in terms of these three themes. *Power is examined because it underpins the control and government of workers* (Deetz, 1992; Townley, 1998; Rose, 1999). Equally, power is also intertwined with resistance and struggle (Foucault, 2000; Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994). On the other hand, organisational control is examined in terms of subjectivity. *Subjectivity is explored because aligning the subjectivity of a worker to work is viewed as the premise for a more subtle form of control* (Rose, 1999; Fournier, 1998; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998). Finally, Organisational control is examined in terms of organising. This is because the ways of controlling are illustrated in the ways of organising the workplace reality and practices. *Thus, the ways of controlling are demonstrated and materialise in the organisation of everyday life*. Conventionally, the organisation of control of workers is epitomised in Human Resource Management (abbreviated to HRM). Therefore, this study empirically examines contemporary organisational control firstly in terms of HRM.¹ Finally, *organisational control is examined in the specific context of the professional work organisations of a pioneer industry in a world-leading information society* (Castells and Himanen, 2001; Castells, 2001).^{2 3}

¹ Human Resource Management is the widest concept for examining the management of human resources. It also incorporates administrative or personnel functions (A Dictionary of HRM, 2001, p. 162).

² Pioneer industry refers to the mobile content providing industry, which is the leading sector of the IT cluster in Finland. Finland, on the other hand, is currently the leading information society in the world (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 21-25; more in section 1.1.1 of the thesis).

³ The terms information age and network era are used interchangeably, because Castells and Himanen (2001) talk of the Finnish model of the Information Society and Castells (1996, 2001) talks of network society and network economy. Thus, these authors seem largely to use the terms interchangeably. This same practice is continued throughout this study.

Empirically, the contemporary operation of control is examined as a case study, in which the Finnish mobile content providing industry constitutes the case. The research is qualitative, consisting of semi-structured interviews and thematic analyses. Interviews were first conducted with industry experts, in order to draw up a sample of ten companies within the industry in which to conduct the research. In these companies, the persons in charge of human resource management were interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to establish the extent to which and the ways in which conventional HRM techniques were used in the contemporary companies. In half of the companies, further interviews were carried out with workers in the main professional groups of the industry. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information on the way in which the professional workers experience themselves (as expressed through their talk) as workers and view their work - as well as the work of others - in contemporary organisations⁴. The data collected is analysed by means of *thematic analysis*⁵. The thematic analysis is conducted with *Atlas/ti*, which is a tool for qualitative data analysis management and model building. The analysis consists of two main levels: the textual level and the network level. At the textual level the focus is primarily on establishing the *common themes*. However, the main themes that are missing in relation to the research questions are also identified, in order to contrast these with the common themes. At the network level of analysis the focus is on elaborating the relationships between the different themes by illustrating the common themes and sub-themes within these. The networks are mainly used to assist in theory building and for illumination in the results and discussion part of the thesis.

The examination of organisational control starts by exploring the contemporary relevance of conventional ways of controlling the human resources in the organisations, namely Human Resource Management. Therefore, the ways in which and the extent to which HRM operates in the contemporary organisations under study are first established. After this the structures of control are examined. The structures are explored first through the split between the organisational structures and human

⁴ In addition, a web search was conducted on the five Finnish operators and of all the companies forming the base for the sample. This information was gathered for the purposes of gaining more context-related information.

⁵ The choice of spoken language as the type of data to utilise was made because of its consistency with the theoretical framework of the study. That is to say that in a Foucauldian view the role of *language and discourses in the constitution of subjectivity* is essential, and thus it seemed rather straightforward to research themes in spoken text.

practices (Humphreys, Berkeley and Jovchelovitch, 1996, pp. 1-3). The purpose is to find out whether contemporary organisational control is supported by conventional structural arrangements such as bureaucracy and hierarchy (Clegg, 1990, pp. 25-73; Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 128-142). On the other hand, the structures of control are examined by exploring the materialisation of classical models of management in the context of contemporary organisations (Guillén, 1994, pp. 7-20). Management is explored particularly in terms of the split between the managed and the managers. Thus, what are the respective subject positions of those controlling and those being controlled in the pioneering organisations of the information age? Are there also more subtle, normative ways to control workers, for example, through their attitudes and aspirations? Understandably, the external control required is rather different if the workers view their work as a necessary evil that is suppressing and restraining them or if they find their work interesting and enjoyable. Also, if future prospects are seen as redundant, different control measures are needed; therefore future prospects which often materialise in the idea of a 'career' can be seen as a means of controlling workers (Fournier, 1998). Many of the aforementioned culminate in examining organisational control as it materialises in everyday organisational reality and practices. They also call forth an examination of the contemporary way of working. Finally, the Foucauldian authors writing in the realm of Critical Management Studies explore control as taking place through aligning the subjectivity of a worker to work and then altering and modifying workers' subjective experiences through particular techniques (Rose, 1999, pp. 103-123; Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). Perhaps drawing a particular presupposition of a worker as an ideal or normal worker, i.e. construing a particular type of worker subjectivity, is one way of attempting to alter, modify and shape workers' subjectivity. Therefore it is interesting to examine whether there is a particular type of novel worker subjectivity that could be viewed as being shared by these contemporary workers of the information age who have been the subject of this research.

Overall, the study focuses on examining and exploring the following *research questions*:

1. How does organisational control – understood in terms of Human Resource Management - operate in contemporary work organisations, and what is its *modus operandi*?
2. How is worker's subjectivity operationally linked to contemporary organisational control?
3. How are organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power operationally linked in the context of contemporary work organisations?
4. How do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?
5. Do workers have individual agency in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age?
6. Is there a particular contemporary worker subjectivity that could be seen to encapsulate the contemporary worker's relationship to one's self as a worker and to one's work?
7. Can it be postulated, from the way in which the subjects speak of themselves, of others and of their work, that rather than being repressed and restricted the workers are in fact enabled, liberated and, in short, emancipated?

Limitations of the Study

With regard to the limitations of the study, *the term workers refers throughout specifically to those professional workers of the information age who work in pioneering conditions that are presumably different from the conditions of the majority of workers*. Furthermore, contemporary working people are referred to as workers because they are contracted to carry out work and are paid for it (The Oxford Book of Work, 1999, p. xv; xiii-xxiii). Thus, *this study only discusses paid employment*. The term worker is preferred to that of employee because the presence of bureaucratic tendencies in contemporary organisations of the information age is not assumed at the outset (Castells, 2001, pp. 1-2), and the word employee is seen as a term more associated with the bureaucratic mode of organising. Also, this study examines *worker subjectivity*; therefore, the other sides of subjectivity such as gender, age group and ethnicity are only considered insofar as they significantly impact on worker

subjectivity. Furthermore, *the companies in which the research has been carried out are small and medium sized organisations with 10-200 workers*. Therefore, this thesis does not aim to generalise these findings as such to large contemporary organisations. Also, *work in this thesis will be considered under the current predominant mode of production, i.e. capitalism*. Furthermore, although constant reference is not made to the information age, the contemporary organisation is always referred to *in the context of the information age*.

Finally, I have taken for granted the existence of, and the need for, organisational control. Indeed, anyone who has ever worked in an organisation would probably subscribe to such a presupposition. Indeed, this is not a matter of mere unverified disbelief in the good will and trustworthiness of workers, managers and owners. There is also stealing, laziness and endeavours to abuse influential positions in the service only of self-interest. Altogether there is misbehaviour of all sorts on the part of workers, managers and owners, which makes monitoring and control necessary. These misuses and misbehaviour result in economic losses, the overburdening of colleagues, the malfunctioning of systems and so forth. Thus, control does not exist just for the sake of control, but its existence and prominence has a material basis. These are not denied in this study. However, to explore these material bases is, for the most part, beyond the scope of this study. Both the existence of some form of control and the need for control are assumed at the outset. Finally, I will first theoretically substantiate the literature foundations and the core concepts, along with the empirical context, and then explicate the results by drawing upon the theoretical premises developed earlier. Due to this strategy there will be a slight element of *repetition* that I hope the reader will tolerate.

The Structure of the Thesis

To sum up the structure of the thesis, this study is divided into four interrelated parts, namely:

- Part I: Theoretical and Contextual Premises (Chapters 1 and 2)
- Part II: Methodology and Analysis (Chapter 3)
- Part III: Results and Discussion (Chapters 4 and 5)
- Part IV: Conclusions and Implications (Chapters 6 and 7).

Part I starts by historically contextualising the study in the emerging societal era of networks. This is followed by a summary of the rationales and limitations of drawing upon Foucault. After this, Critical Management Studies in general and Foucauldian Organisational Studies in particular are briefly introduced. Then traditional organisational literature and the Foucauldian view are compared and contrasted in terms of their respective views on power, the working subject and organisation. After introducing the literature foundations of the study, the concepts of power, subject and work are explored in more depth. After this organisational control is discussed, particularly in terms of Human Resource Management. Finally, the examination of organisational control is summarised in terms of research questions. Part I ends with a description of the empirical case.

Part II explains the empirical research conducted, including both data collection and data analysis. However, the methodological decisions and research design are first justified and the overall research process explained. After this the process of data collection is explained. The remaining part of the section focuses on describing in detail the way in which the data collected is analysed.

In Part III the results are explored, explained and discussed. The results are first explored in terms of organisational control, research question by research question. The results are then discussed in terms of power, subjectivity and organising in the information age. Finally, the results on organisational control are compared and contrasted to emancipation.

Part IV consists of conclusions and implications. First the conclusions are drawn for each research question. Joint conclusions from the research questions are then drawn. The findings on power, subjectivity, organising, organisational control and emancipation are then summarised. Finally, the conclusions end with the discussion of the implications of the findings for organisational research in general and the realms of organisational psychology and Foucauldian organisational studies in particular.

Part I: Theoretical and Contextual Premises

1. Theoretical Underpinnings

1.1 The Literature Foundations

1.1.1 The Context of the Information Age

This is a Foucauldian study of organisational control. Foucault was a critical historian of thought (Foucault, 1998a, p. 459; 459-463). He wrote historical accounts using archaeology and genealogy (Foucault, 1997, pp. 261-262; pp. 369-389). This study draws upon Foucault's later, genealogical works (Foucault, 1977, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). Genealogy is a particular way of reading history that problematises the conventional historiography because it is involved with a search for origin (Foucault, 1998a, pp. 369-393; Barker, pp. 20-24).

“The genealogist needs history to dispel the chimeras of origin, somewhat in the manner of a pious philosopher who needs a doctor to exorcise the shadow of his soul. He is able to recognise the events of history, its jolts, its surprises, its unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats - the basis of all beginnings, atavisms, and heredities. Similarly, he must be able to diagnose the illnesses of the body, its conditions of weaknesses and strengths, its breakdowns and resistances, to be in a position to judge philosophical discourse. History is a concrete body of becoming; with its moment of intensity, its lapses, its extended periods of feverish agitation, its fainting spells; and only a metaphysician would seek its soul in the distant ideality of the origin” (Foucault, 1998a, p. 373).

Foucault underlined the importance of historicity and context. He was interested in understanding *who we are today through our historicity* (Foucault, 1997, pp. 303-321). This is often translated as understanding how we have been trapped in our own history (Foucault, 2000, p. 329). For this reason - in order to understand contemporary workers – historical contextualisation of the study is essential. Foucault also highlighted the importance of *local contexts* (Foucault, 1980, pp. 97-99; Foucault, 2000, pp. 330, 342-345). Specifically, the focus ought to be on examining the local contexts in their particularities; Foucault encouraged us to examine these particularities in their localities, as opposed to attempting to find some universal theories or grand narratives (Foucault, 1988b, pp. 9, 11). He encouraged us to examine *practices* rather than ideologies, institutions or theories (Foucault, 2000, p. 225). More specifically, to analyse “*regimes of practices*” - “It is a question of analysing a “regime of practices”, practices being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and

reasons given, the placed and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect” (Foucault, 2000, p. 225). Also, Foucault was particularly interested in examining what happens at the breaking points, the *discontinuities* of events and epistemes (Foucault, 1998a, p, 431; 420-431). All in all, Foucault’s writings encourage us to question the taken-for-granted and to attempt to break away from the fixed conceptual constraints, to open up spaces for freedom in order to enable alternative worlds of existence.

Let me examine, in the following, the way in which the aforementioned are implicated in this study. As stated, Foucault was interested in discontinuities. Indeed, if we are to believe the theses of Castells on the rise of the network society, then we are at this time witnessing a set of discontinuities which are contributing to the rise of a new era. (Castells, 1996, pp. 500-509; Castells, 2001, pp. 1-8).

“The new economy emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century on a worldwide scale. I call it informational, global and networked to identify its fundamental distinctive features and to emphasise their intertwining” (Castells, 1996, p. 77).

According to Castells, this new network society emerged because the information technology revolution made available the obligatory material basis for its creation (Castells, 1996, p. 77). Correspondingly, throughout the world the IT sector has been the leading industry in this transfer from old economy to new (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 21-25). Finland is currently the leading information society in the world (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 13-20). Finland is also the leading country specialising in exporting high technology (*ibid.* p. 22). The Nokia Telecommunications Corporation, which specialises in mobile devices, is the core of the Finnish IT cluster (*ibid.* pp. 26-46). Finland is also a forerunner in the mobile content services provided by telecom operators (Castells and Himanen, 2001, p. 22, citing also Steinbock, 2001). Finnish companies are the precursors on a world-wide scale in the production and development of mobile content services (Castells and Himanen, 2001, p. 23; Aula and Oksanen, 2000, pp. 12-29). Basically, Finland is the hub for mobile content production (Castells and Himanen, 2001). Thus, the particularity of the context in a Foucauldian sense is provided by the fact that the mobile content providing industry is the avant-garde sector of the leading society in the network era (Castells and Himanen, 2001, p. 21; Castells, 2000). Furthermore, according to the scant research conducted to date in the industry or in the

new media sector in general, it seems to provide an *exception to the rule*, for example in terms of financing structures and geographic proximity (Pratt, 1999, 2000; Aula and Oksanen, 2000). In sum then, *this study examines organisational control in small and medium sized organisations that are operating in a pioneering industry in a rising era of information and networks*. Furthermore, the workers in these organisations are pioneers in the entire field world-wide. Therefore, although I refer to them as contemporary workers throughout the study, the workers referred to are working in an industry that is novel, and their work and working conditions probably differ from those of their predecessors as well as those of the mass of contemporary workers (Castells, 1996, pp. 232-243; Castells, 2001, pp. 41-42, 46-48, 278). It is precisely its context in this pioneering industry of a surfacing era of information and networks that makes this case exploratory as well as attention-grabbing. It is appealing to examine the possible potential spaces of freedom that this particular locality might offer for these working subjects to escape the established forms of control and to construe novel types of subjectivities. It is also thought-provoking to deliberate - beyond statistical generalisability - upon whether or not the contemporary actuality of organisational control in *this sector* will be the reality for a larger number of workers in the coming decades of the information age.

1.1.2 Why Foucault?

Foucault's work has been *increasingly* applied in organisational and management studies during the past 10 years, particularly in the UK and by the critical management scholars (Fournier and Grey, 2000, pp. 5-7). In practice, this means that there is a growing body of literature on the matter upon which to draw (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). I draw upon Foucault in this study because he wrote directly about issues which are viewed as central to organisational psychology, such as power and the subject (Foucault, 2000, pp. 326-349). In order to understand how subjectivities are construed both in linguistic and materialistic terms, whilst incorporating power/knowledge into the analysis, one basically needs to turn to Foucault. Foucault views power as intrinsically *relational*, (Foucault, 1980, pp. 92-108; 1997, pp. xiv-xvi, xxxv; 2000, pp. 340-348) innately challenging the conventional views on power in organisational psychology as a possession or a structure (Kearins, 1996, pp. 2-8). In Foucauldian organisational studies power is viewed as relational, contextual and historical; the implications of this for conventional organisational

research are thought-provoking (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). Supposedly, Foucault's works could also be seen as being about *organising*, about how people are governed and disciplined, and construed as organising themselves. Foucault problematises conventional subject–power relations, which can be seen to touch upon the individual-system split found at the core of organisational psychology (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). I suggest that Foucault's view offers an alternative way to attempt to go beyond the split.

However, it should be noted that this study does not aim to provide some kind of single 'true reading' of Foucault, since Foucault's works are constantly the subject of debate, as they are characterised by some inconsistency and, all in all, leave room for interpretation (Knights and Willmott, 1999; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998). Additionally, those works drawn upon here are his later ones, because this study attempts to address issues centred on subjectivity, but in a manner which can also be seen as allowing some agency (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). Moreover, it should be noted that Foucault himself never wrote directly about work in terms of its direct consequences on an individual's subjectivity, or indeed about worker subjectivity. Thus, this study proposes a particular reading of Foucault for the purposes of theoretical analysis and empirical investigation. That said, for the most part the way in which Foucault is interpreted and applied is consistent with the way in which Foucault has been interpreted and applied by other academics, in the realm of organisational studies in general and Critical Management Studies in particular (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Fournier and Grey, 2000; Rose, 1999; Townley, 1998). These authors contribute to Critical Management Studies, which has established itself firmly during the past 10 years in the UK (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, in addition to the later works of Foucault, this study also draws on the Critical Management authors as primary sources in literature research.

1.1.3 Critical Management Studies

Foucauldian organisational studies belong to a broader realm of Critical Management Studies [abbreviated as CMS]. Critical Management Studies consists of several differing perspectives which all share a common denominator, namely *a critical stance on management*. These perspectives include those of "neo-Marxism, deconstructionism,

literary criticism, post-structuralism, feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies and environmentalism, and in addition one could include post-colonialism and queer-theory” (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p. 7). These perspectives utilise some common concepts. There are also some other commonalities, in that the different perspectives under the CMS label are characterised by *some* similar views. Fournier and Grey convincingly argue that these commonalities are *denaturalisation, reflexivity and performativity* (2000, pp. 17-19). This is particularly the case with denaturalisation as, regardless of the aforementioned perspective, the aim is to reveal the unnaturalness or irrationality of management and organisations in one way or another. In addition, most of the perspectives call for management to be self-critical (ibid.). Finally, most of them hold that traditional organisational literature and techniques are governed by the principle of performativity. “Performativity serves to subordinate knowledge and truth to the production of efficiency when instead one ought to question what is done in the name of performativity” (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p. 7). In essence, CMS aims to denaturalise the taken-for-granted presuppositions of traditional organisational literature, which are, by and large, based upon taken-for-granted management-centrism, i.e. the naturalisation of management, performativity and non-reflexivity (ibid.; see also Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, pp. 113-137). Finally, CMS is a *political project*. This political project is aimed at “unmasking the naturalised power relations around which organisational and social life are woven and to liberate individual subjects from the power relations within which they are inscribed, including their own subjectivity” (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p. 9; see also Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Many perspectives contributing to CMS, such as post-structuralism and feminism, have drawn upon Foucault.

1.1.4 Foucauldian Organisational Studies

Foucault has also been applied to critical analyses of contemporary work practice(s) (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). However, the Foucauldian studies conducted to date typically concentrate on concepts such as power and the subject, as conceptualised in Foucault's middle works (Foucault, 1977, 1980). This is done to the relative neglect of understanding the same concepts as put forward in his later works (Foucault, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). Thus, there has been a somewhat unbalanced focus in applying Foucault's works to organisations. As a result of this, many Foucauldian accounts in organisational literature have become rather pessimistic and negative (e.g. Deetz, 1992; Knights and Willmott, 1999). I suggest that this is largely due to the omission of the conceptualisation of an active subject in studies drawing on Foucault (O'Leary, 2002, pp. 154-163). In Foucault's middle works discursive power structures still significantly subdue agency and subjects are perceived as rather passive beings unable to transform themselves or their environments in any meaningful manner (Dreyfus, 1999, pp. 1, 4-5). This understanding of the subject is significantly different from the conceptualisation of the subject in Foucault's later works, in which subjects are perceived as active and able to transform themselves, and even their surroundings, to a certain extent, particularly on a micro-level (Dreyfus, 1999, pp. 1, 4-5; O'Leary, 2002, p. 159, more on the subject in section 1.3.2.1).

Also, the number of empirical investigations conducted which have utilised a Foucauldian framework is rather low. There have been some empirical studies, such as the one of Fournier (1998). Nevertheless, these studies have been conducted mainly in large - often multinational- service sector corporations and particularly in the HRM and accounting practices/departments of this type of organisation. Furthermore, all these studies conducted to date have taken the presence of HRM as a given. In addition, there have not been many empirical investigations carried out in charity organisations, public sector organisations, not to mention activist-based organisations or organisations consisting of creative workers. The relative lack of empirical studies is probably due to the abstract theoretical nature of Foucault's accounts. In the author's view, there should be more empirical investigations conducted in contemporary contexts, precisely in order to substantiate the somewhat abstract postulates of Foucault. Finally, many of the studies focus on examining management practices, and thus themselves come to

contribute to the reproduction of management-centrism. In my view, organisations should not be understood only in terms of management practices, but rather it should be emphasised that managers are also workers. That is to say that even though they might be affected by some different discourses, the way in which power operates still remains the same. It is based on discursive power/knowledge systems, whether managers or shop-floor workers are under discussion (Starkey and McKinlay, 1998, pp. 111-126). The view is taken here that it might be more useful to talk of power/knowledge discourses in an organisational context that involves workers and management than of management and workers in a dichotomist manner. Traditional organisational literature requires a broader critique than merely the critical assessment of one aspect, namely management. Thus, if there seem to be some problems with Critical management studies, as well as with Foucauldian studies, why not draw on the traditional organisational literature? It is argued here that there are more fundamental problems in traditional organisational literature, starting from the conceptualisation of an organisation *per se*. To substantiate this argument, traditional organisational literature is compared and contrasted to the Foucauldian literature in the following section. In essence, the purpose of the following section is to illustrate the commonalities and differences between the traditional and Foucauldian view by comparing their respective views of power, subject and organisation. This is also done in order to demonstrate how a Foucauldian interpretation differs from the more conventional one and thus how a Foucauldian view offers a different stance on organisations and related phenomena.

1.2 Traditional vs. Foucauldian Organisational Literature

The surfacing of organisation-related literature, as well as the emergence of the realms of organisational and management studies, are predominantly phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries⁶. Furthermore, this organisation-related literature can be divided into several sub-disciplines, such as Organisational Theory, Organisational Psychology, Organisational Behaviour, Management Science, Human Resource Management and Human Resource Development⁷. There are also several sub-disciplines in the realm of sociology, psychology and industrial relations, such as the sociology of work, employment and industry; the sociology of money and economy; work psychology and labour process theories, which also examine issues associated with organisations, such as employee relations, conditions and regulations. Thus, there is a vast literature, presenting various perspectives, on organisations and organisation-related phenomena. My purpose here is not to summarise the arguments of each school of thought on organisations in order to demonstrate their respective differences or similarities, but rather to analyse and, moreover, to criticise a large number of them, in terms of some of their underlying assumptions on *organisation*, *the working subject* and *power*⁸. Essentially, then, I will illuminate the theoretical position taken in the study by contrasting and comparing it to traditional organisational literature in terms of these three themes of organisation, working subject and power.

⁶ There have been writings on the role of the manager from the late 17th and early 18th centuries onwards, as references to management can be found, for example, in Adam Smith's work. However the popularisation, along with the disciplinisation, of the field is predominantly a phenomenon of the last and current centuries (Fournier and Gray, 2000, pp. 2-11).

⁷ For more on different disciplines as paradigms see Morgan, 1997; for Human Resource Management see Beardwell and Holden (eds.), 1995 and for Human Resource Development see Collin, 1994 and Doyle, 1994, in Beardwell and Holden, 1995.

⁸ With regard to the indistinct-sounding term 'traditional organisational literature': this term is used to refer to the mainstream writings compiled in the realm of organisational studies in general and in the realm of organisational psychology in particular. Furthermore, reviewing and questioning the premises of organisational psychology is the main focus. However, as the disciplinary boundaries within organisational studies are transitory, many points and arguments would probably be valid also in other sub-realms of organisational studies, such as Organisational Behaviour. Also, many terms and concepts of organisational psychology have some of their roots in other realms of organisational studies, or indeed in neighbouring fields such as in management studies. However, *it should be emphasised that the distinction between traditional and Foucauldian organisational literature is primarily an analytical one*. That is to say that the field of organisational literature is oversimplified by categorising it as a traditional or as a Foucauldian approach, and thereby undermining some of the internal differences among the different positions within what is distinguished here as a traditional approach; the same self-criticism applies to undermining the internal debates and differences among those taking a Foucauldian stance.

1.2.1 Work Organisation in Traditional and Foucauldian Literature

The examination of the concept of organisation is, in my view, illustrative of the underlying differences between traditional organisational literature and the Foucauldian literature. A similar fundamental contrast can also be found in the understanding within these two distinct perspectives of the concept of the working subject. In traditional organisational literature, organisations are essentially seen as entities which exist in their own right. Thus, it is assumed that persons and organisations are independent of one another, as illustrated by notions that people work *in* or *for* the organisations. Meyer et al. posit that this ‘entitative’ view, i.e. the perspective that views organisations as their own entities, is the culmination of five distinct characteristics that organisations are described as having (1985, cited in Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-42). To begin with, in these accounts the organisational membership and organisational boundaries respectively are seen as precise. Secondly, as a consequence of well-defined boundaries, the organisation is seen as a unitary entity with an identity of its own. Further, this entity is seen as embodying its own missions, visions, values and goals. This entity is also seen as having its own designed and formalised structure. Finally, this entity is seen as distinct from the environment it exists in, as merely affected by or affecting environmental factors, not intrinsically enmeshed in its environment (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 39-63).

Furthermore, the view previously described, i.e. that *organisations and people are independent actors, culminates in a split between the two*. As Humphreys, Berkeley and Jovchelovitch posit, this fundamental split between organisational structures and creative human practices results in overestimating the importance of organisational structures and tasks *per se* and underestimating the human factor and social interaction of which the organisation consists. Indeed, this split forms the very core of organisational psychology, whereby:

“The split between organisational structures, which appear as autonomous and with a life of their own, and human practises within organisations, which appear as apart, thrown off-centre from the decision-making process is a contradiction at the very heart of everyday life in organisational settings ... The notions of task and human factor have dominated, on opposite sides, the main categories underlying organisational psychology theories and codes of practise” (Humphreys, Berkeley and Jovchelovitch, 1996, pp. 1-3).

Thus, this 'entitative' approach has led to theorising about and researching into organisations, as independent of human subjects and their relational processes (Humphreys et al., 1996; Humphreys, 1998; Hoskins and Morley, 1991). This in turn has caused organisations to be viewed as actors in their own right, having their own motivational forces, missions and goals akin to those of people. Subsequently, this view has contributed to legitimating the theorising about organisations independently of workers and of their experiences as well as their relational processes. One might ask: is this meaningful and accurate? How can organisational structures be distinguished from human relational processes? Is this the reality in contemporary organisations?

In practice, the entitative approach often leads to thinking of organisations as *socio-technical systems* that can be manipulated, controlled and changed, in short engineered (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15). This approach is illustrated, for example, by the views of phenomena such as culture, i.e. *of* an organisation *having* a culture rather than *being* a culture/set of cultures (Morgan, 1997, pp. 119-152). Essentially, in socio-technical systems, the system is seen as consisting of structures and tasks that are separate from people and their lateral processes (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). The system or any part of it can be manipulated and changed, and people taught to deal with the change. This way of thinking has led to distinguishing between people *and* systems, and, basically, to separating the two (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3; Checkland, 2000, pp. 5-15). In the realm of HRM, this same pattern of thinking has separated system and techniques from human resources, i.e. workers. It holds that, with specific techniques human resources can be assessed, monitored, altered or re-trained altogether, and managed. Thus, the socio-technical system is essentially a "*hard system*" (Checkland, 1999, pp. 9-11). Finally, according to Checkland, the understanding of the difference between a 'hard system' and a 'soft system' is epitomised in the understanding of the word 'system' (1999, p. 10). In approaches drawing on '*hard system*' thinking, "the word 'system' is used simply as a label for something taken to exist in a world outside ourselves. The taken-as-given assumption is that the world can be taken to be a set of interacting systems, some of which do not work very well and can be engineered to work better" (Checkland, 1999, p. 10). In approaches drawing on '*soft systems*' the word 'system' "is no longer applied to the world, it is instead applied to *our process of dealing with the world*" (Checkland, 1999, p. 10, emphasis added). The systems

engineering view is an archetypical illustration of the former, and organisational theories drawing on social constructionism of the latter.

The view taken in this study stands in sharp contrast with this traditional understanding of organisations, which draws on the 'entitative view' or view of the organisation as a socio-technical system. The view taken here is the Foucauldian one, combined with the ideas on organising put forth by Hosking and Morley (1991). This view essentially holds that organisations cannot be viewed as independent entities, existing without creative human practices, their relational processes and contexts. On the contrary, *organisations are seen as consisting of creative human practices and multifaceted social processes and relations*, which in turn are dependent on historically specific discursive practices and power/knowledge regimes. Therefore, organisations cannot be viewed as unitary entities consisting of rather stable structures, and as being independent of people as well as of the environment, but rather must be viewed as consisting of people and their social relations, which are informed by the prevalent power/knowledge systems and thus inherently involve power (Foucault, 1980, pp. 78-109). From this perspective, the focus is on relational processes rather than stable structures and tasks, and on the discourses on organisation and management, which at a historically specific time come to legitimate what is considered as a truth about organisational practices and functions, rather than on the technical improvement of such practises *per se*. Therefore, rather than providing pragmatic and technical knowledge as well as techniques for the improvement of an organisation *and* its workers, the Foucauldian view enables one to contemplate why, and in particular *how*, certain ways of organising have emerged as the 'truth' about organising, and further, what sort of knowledge and associated expertise and institutional structure has legitimated this 'truth'. Likewise, it enables one to consider *the alternative views on organising and organisation which these prevalent conceptualisations of an organisation and its workers inhibit from arising*.

Taking this stance enables one to question the traditional view(s), with its presuppositions. It also enables one to pose questions such as: *what if the splits that have been at the core of much of the organisation-related literature are in fact disappearing - becoming obsolete?* What if they are merely unquestioned, outdated academic discourses that have no premise in contemporary organisations? In addition to questioning the traditional conceptualisation of an organisation, this study also

questions the taken-for-granted split between the manager and the managed; what if managing is no longer about managerial decision making, the exercising of position-based power and 'bossing people around', as the popular discourses would have us believe? This brings us to further questions on how decisions are made, what sorts of decisions are made, by whom, and how. These questions are to be examined in the operational everyday practices of contemporary organisations. The possible disappearance of the manager/managed split is also examined in another way, namely by examining the extent of self-management in contemporary organisations and, thus, by contrasting self-management on the one hand and traditional management on the other.

1.2.2 The Working Subject in Traditional and Foucauldian Literature

Concepts such as the subject, subjectivity, self-identity and individuality are not recurrent themes in traditional organisational literature; in fact, they are seldom discussed in this literature, hardly ever even referred to. Rather, workers are typically considered solely on the basis of their technical, transferable or social (i.e. communication) skills (Collin, 1994, pp. 280-289). Technical skills include grasping the abilities relevant for a particular expertise or for carrying out particular tasks. Transferable skills include skills such as information-search skills, computer literacy, language skills; finally, social skills include, for example, team working/building skills as well as negotiation and delegation skills. However, and rather interestingly, leadership and management are often perceived not as skills but as personal characteristics that some people naturally have and others do not. Furthermore, these aforementioned skills become requirements for jobs, as does the continuous improvement of such skills. Moreover these skills and abilities are assessed and one's development carefully monitored (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). This is all handled in a wholly technical and practical manner, and without too much consideration for its political implications.

However, from the Foucauldian stance, these aspects of traditional organisational literature are seen as intrinsically involving power (Fournier and Grey, 2000). Defining the skills that workers ought to have and assessing them accordingly (and making the workers assess and monitor themselves) is seen as affecting the very being of workers, i.e. their *subjectivity* (Fournier, 1998; Townley, 1998; Rose, 1999). This is seen as

requiring the alignment of the worker's subjectivity to work, and through this 'linkage' the subjective meaning is shaped and modified via organisational discourses (Rose, 1999; O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246). Taking this Foucauldian stance, the prevalent management and organisational theories (discourses) are seen as acting as power/knowledge regimes which, in a historically specific period of time, come to define the truth not only of an organisation and of organisational practices, but also of workers, i.e. how they should act and think in conducting themselves with others as well as on their own. This is seen as *highly political, precisely because of this incorporation of workers' subjectivity*. It is due to these fundamental effects of the modern forms of power on shaping, modifying and altering workers' subjectivity that workers are referred to as working subjects rather than as autonomous individuals (more on section 1.3.2.4). In sum, then, in traditional organisational literature workers are often viewed as autonomous moral agents, the assessment, improvement and monitoring of whose technical, transferable and social skills become the main foci. On the other hand, the Foucauldian approach concentrates on approaching the organisational literature through concepts such as subjectivity and individuality, not by taking them for granted but by, on the one hand, analysing them as 'truth effects' of the new modern forms of power and, on the other, attempting to denaturalise them.

1.2.3 Power in Traditional and Foucauldian Literature

Traditional organisational literature has mainly drawn on simplistic conceptualisations of power, in which the main focus has been on researching the observable behaviour of individuals and groups. In particular, interest has been in examining the managers' *power over the managed* (Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997, pp. 45-54). This view of power has been rather straightforward to research, i.e.: who has power? what sort of power relations are there? and what are the impacts of power? According to Barnes, the most popular conceptions of power treat it "as an entity or attribute which all manner of things, processes, or agents may have" (Kearins, 1996, p. 3, citing Barnes, 1988, p. 1). According to Daudi, the '*primitive discourse*' on power translates as authority, influence and decision-making; it is something one can possess: "as it were a concrete means by which to govern and dominate; a means to be *owned* and which should be understood, studied and used as such" (Daudi, 1986, p. 1). Other researchers, in their analysis of power, view power as a property of social structures rather than a property of individuals or groups (Parsons, 1967, p. 237, in Kearins, 1996, p. 7).

Foucauldian analyses of power focus predominantly on its intrinsically *relational* character. Subsequently, in practice the empirical research concentrates on examining the everyday construction and reconstruction of power/knowledge in the workplace (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, pp. 113-137, 167-190; 193-209, Foucault, 1980). Thus, the focus is on practices, relationships and processes that are *produced* and reproduced on a daily basis in the organisation's local context. In the Foucauldian view, power is not a property, function or structure. Furthermore, power relations have no clear beginning or end, they just exist and operate; power is *omnipresent and multidirectional*.⁹ This means that the researcher is also enmeshed in the power relations (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, pp. 113-137). Power is innately present in all human interaction. However, power is not simply repressive, but also *positive, productive and enabling* (Foucault, 2000, p. 341; 1980, pp. 78-109).

“If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think that one could be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things; it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as *a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression*” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

Knowledge and power are intrinsically intertwined (Foucault, 1980, pp. 79-108). Power produces knowledge; all knowledge produces power relations and all power relations produce knowledge (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). The mechanisms of power are at the same time also mechanisms of formation and accumulation of knowledge (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). Power and knowledge operate through *discourses*. Power relations “cannot themselves be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of ‘discourses of truth’ which operate through and on the basis of this association” (Foucault, 1980, p. 93; 92-108).

⁹ “Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated or homogeneous domination over others or that of one group or class over the others. What, in contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power... is not that which makes a difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. *Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain*. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 99, emphasis added; 78-108).

Power is maintained and produced in numerous ways, which are *subtle*, e.g. discursive practices, which restrict what one can and cannot say, do or think.

The Foucauldian view that power operates but cannot be owned has deep-seated implications for researching power in organisational psychology. The focus shifts from questions like “who uses the power?” and “through which formal channels?” to examining the ways in which power operates in everyday organisational life, is omnipresent in routines, and is spoken about in discourses. Furthermore, in this study, *the concept of power also functions as a premise for understanding contemporary organisational control*. This means that the aim is to understand the *modus operandi* of contemporary organisational control mechanisms, particularly those associated with HRM, by analysing them as exemplars of Foucault’s new modern forms of power, namely “disciplinary power” and “pastoral power” (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-252, 253-280, 281-301; 2000, pp. 328-336). Secondly, after analysing these HRM-related organisational control mechanisms through Foucauldian forms of power, the aim is to examine the possible all-embracing nature of the different control mechanisms. This is done by comparing and contrasting the control mechanisms to the extent of the agency that the working subjects have in the contemporary organisations under study.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL ORGANISATIONAL LITERATURE AND THE FOUCAULDIAN VIEW

Core Concept	Traditional Literature	Problem with Traditional Literature	Foucauldian View
Organisation	<p>-An entity which exist on its own right with clear boundaries, identity, designed and formalised structure and as distinct from the environment.</p> <p>-People and organisations are independent of one another i.e. people work <i>for</i> or <i>in</i> organisation (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 39-63).</p>	<p>-Overestimating the importance of organisational structures and tasks <i>per se</i> and underestimating the human factor and the social interaction which the organisation consists. This leads to a fundamental <i>split</i> between organisational structures and creative human practices. (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3).</p>	<p>-Organisations <i>consist</i> of creative human practices and multifaceted social processes and relations, which in turn are dependent on historically specific discursive practices and power/knowledge regimes.</p> <p>- Focus is on <i>relational processes</i> rather than on stable structures and tasks. The focus is on the <i>discourses on organisation and management</i> which at a historically specific time come to legitimate what is considered as a truth about organisational practices and functions, rather than on the technical improvement of organising and management practices <i>per se</i></p>
Worker/ Working subject	<p>-Understands workers merely on basis of their technical, transferable or social (i.e. communication) skills</p> <p>-Lack of explication of concepts such as subject, subjectivity, self-identity and individuality</p>	<p>-Also fails to understand the implications of power-laden nature of organisational theorising and practices for the subjectivity of the workers in general and worker subjectivity in particular.</p>	<p>-The fact that these technical, transferable, social skills become requirements for jobs, as does the continuous improvement of such skills, is perceived to intrinsically involve power.</p> <p>-Moreover, the fact that these skills and abilities are assessed and one's development carefully monitored, are again seen to intrinsically involve power. These practices are power-laden because defining the skills that the workers ought to have and assessing them accordingly (and making the workers to assess and monitor themselves) is seen to affect the very being of workers, i.e. their subjectivity. Thus it is not just the doing but also the being that is shaped.</p> <p>-In essence, then, organisational practices are viewed as highly political due to the incorporation of workers' subjectivity (Rose, 1999).</p>
Power	<p>-Power is conceived of as a resource that some people or groups of people possess and exercise over others.</p> <p>-other researchers view power as "possessed or exercised by structures or systems rather than by individuals" (Kearins, 1996, p. 7).</p> <p>-More generally, power is viewed as a thing or property that an entity, process or agents can <i>have</i>.</p>	<p>-Concentrating on asking who, or which group, has the power, and how much of it, fails to acknowledge the <i>relational</i> character of power and to explicate its more <i>subtle</i> forms.</p> <p>-Traditional literature depicts 'the primitive discourse on power', with the relative neglect of relational power (Daudi, 1986).</p>	<p>-Power is also understood as inherently relational and discursive, and as something that cannot be possessed or controlled.</p> <p>-The focus is on explicating the way in which the prevalent organisational discourses have come to impact upon, shape and modify working subjects regardless of their position, for example, in a hierarchy.</p> <p>-Finally, power is understood also as <i>productive and enabling</i> (Foucault, 1980b, p. 119).</p> <p>-Relational power operates both through and upon subjectivity.</p>

1.3 The Core Concepts of the Study

Traditional literature has been criticised for its inability to grasp some of the central concepts in organisational psychology, such as the working subject. Indeed, it is easy to criticise, but one might ask exactly how these concepts are then to be conceptualised. This chapter consists of the conceptualisation of the core concepts of the study.¹⁰ Being a Foucauldian study, these conceptualisations are predominantly explicated from a Foucauldian stance. First, power is conceptualised. The specific interest is in exploring the relationship between power, knowledge and truth and in explaining how this forms the premises for organisational control through subjectivity. This is followed by an explication of the working subject. This entails also looking at the related conceptualisations of subjectivity, self-identity and individuality. All these form a foundation for understanding the contemporary worker. Understanding of the contemporary worker, in turn, is necessary in order to be able to understand how s/he might be controlled. Work is then conceptualised. This is done through historical comparison. After exploring the historical change in the meaning of work, the career aspect is scrutinised. This is because the career, from a Foucauldian stance, can be seen as a means of controlling the workers (Savage, 1998, p. 66; Fournier, 1998). Finally, this chapter finishes with a conceptualisation of organisational control for the purposes of this study. In conclusion the research questions are summarised and the essentials of the empirical context described.

1.3.1 The Conceptualisation of Power

1.3.1.1 Modern Forms of Power

In essence we are all instruments as well as subjects of power. We simultaneously exercise power and experience its effects, and in so doing constitute even such fundamental relations with ourselves as our sense of individuality (Barker, 2001, p. 28; Foucault, 1980, pp. 97-98). This way of viewing power is quite different from understanding it in terms of law or sovereignty. In a Foucauldian view, power is not a structure or possession, but nor is it to be found in law or sovereignty. Furthermore, it is not principally hierarchical, but more like a web of relations, or, as Barker puts it, “a net-like’ series of relations” (2001, p. 28). Therefore, rather than analysing power in

¹⁰ The only exception being that the concept of organisation is not examined in this chapter. The conceptualisation of contemporary organisation is constructed after having collected and analysed the empirical data from contemporary organisations in the results and discussion part of the thesis.

terms of states, institutions or law, Foucault explored the *making* of a subject through particular forms of subjection and subjectification.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault illustrates the making of a *disciplined* subject by making the penitentiary *subject and object for him/herself* (1998a, pp. 459-461). The subject is constituted as an object for himself through “the formation of procedures by which the subject is led to observe himself, analyze himself, interpret himself, recognize himself as a domain of possible knowledge (Foucault, 1998a, p. 461). Disciplinary power is omnipresent in every perception, every judgement, and every act (Deetz, 1992, p. 37). It is a *constitutive capacity*, both enabling and constraining (Foucault, 1980, pp. 70-108, 119). It can be considered as a specific technique of power, a technique that regards *individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise*. According to Foucault, discipline makes possible the operation of *relational power* (1977, p. 177). Basically, there are three instruments from which the success of disciplinary power derives, namely hierarchical observation, normalising judgements and their combination - examination (Foucault, 1977; Barker, 2001, pp. 48-70; see also section 4.2 of the thesis for more on the instruments of discipline). Overall, disciplinary power operates upon subjectivity.

Pastoral power, on the other hand, is a form of power that *makes individuals subjects* for themselves. Pastoral power subjectifies; it turns objects into subjects for themselves. “This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him” (Foucault, 1982, p. 212, in Kearins, 1996, p. 11). Pastoral power operates through subjectivity. For that reason, in order for the pastoral power to operate, awareness and knowledge of *conscience* is needed, as are technologies for modifying and directing it. Hence, pastoral power necessitates the knowledge of people’s mind and soul (Foucault, 2000, pp. 332-336). Pastoral power “is coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth - *the truth of the individual himself*” (Foucault, 2000, p. 333, emphasis added).

1.3.1.2 Power, Knowledge and Truth

”To put the matter clearly: my problem is to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth” (Foucault, 2000, pp. 230).

Power, knowledge and truth are intertwined (1980, pp. 78-134). In essence, knowledge generates power by constituting persons as objects of knowledge. After constituting persons as objects of knowledge it governs them by that knowledge. Power and knowledge are mutually implicated; “the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and cumulates new bodies of information” (1977, p. 51), whilst on the other hand, “knowledge constantly induces effects of power” (1977, p. 52). Thus, there is no power without knowledge and vice versa; the exercise of power is both constitutive of and dependent on the construction of the *local knowledge(s)* of specific populations, e.g. of workers. Basically, *through the production of these knowledge(s), people govern themselves and others.*

“It is the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge - methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, *apparatuses of control*. All this means that power, when it is exercised through these subtle mechanisms, cannot but evolve, organise and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather *apparatuses of knowledge*” (Foucault, 1977, p. 102, emphasis added).

In the context of this study, the interest lies, on the one hand, in examining *the apparatuses of control in terms of HRM techniques* and, on the other hand, in examining *the apparatuses of knowledge linked to HRM* in contemporary organisations. Thus, the aim is to examine the contemporary apparatuses of organisational control, i.e. “methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research”, which are put forward and utilised in the realm of HRM. The other aim is then to take a look at how these techniques are used, as “effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge”, on working subjects in contemporary organisations (ibid.). Hence, in examining HRM technologies and knowledge, it is of particular interest to examine the way in which these HRM technologies and knowledge might be used to legitimate as truth in contemporary organisations a certain way(s) of organising and of being a working subject. The interest lies in explicating how this might be functioning as a contemporary form of organisational control - a form of control that operates by putting forward and legitimising a particular type of worker subjectivity.

Furthermore, in order to be able to understand this postulated form of control, it is important to recognise that power and knowledge are inherently interconnected not only to one another, but also to the accredited truths. In other words, *power/knowledge functions through the production of the truth*, thereby making power, knowledge and truth intrinsically intertwined (Foucault, 1977, p. 93).

”There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and *we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth*” (Foucault, 1977, p. 93, emphasis added).

Therefore, let us next explore the Foucauldian notion of truth, and in particular the production of truth, first in terms of ‘the subject of truth’ and then in terms of ‘discourses of truth’. This examination of power, knowledge and truth culminates in examining the premises for the operation of organisational control in terms of worker subjectivity.

1.3.1.3 The Subject of Truth

The view is taken here that discursive practices and power/knowledge regimes come to legitimate and uphold certain historically specific ‘truths’ about the subject, which are legitimated by the related experts, authority and structures (Foucault, 1980, pp. 109-134; Rose, 1999, pp. xi-xii, 16-21, 135-154). Further, these are connected to particular institutions, which become their sites, i.e. pragmatic fields of application (such as the prison, the mental hospital, medical practices, educational institutions or indeed workplaces) (Rose, 1999). Thus, knowledge is legitimised and truth accredited by experts and authorities in their pre-eminent institutional sites and subject positions. Overall, Foucault’s accounts illustrate how in this manner the “human sciences” come to use the subject as an object of knowledge and at the same time, through applying this knowledge upon themselves, the subjects became subjects for themselves. They come to alter, modify and shape themselves according to such knowledge as they perceive it to be a truth – thus they become ‘subjects of truth’. Essentially, then, as Barry Allen lucidly posits: (Western) *power/knowledge governs subjects by construing novel and tractable forms of subjectivity*, i.e. by reforming and refashioning people (Allen, 1998, pp. 190-191).

“Western social and psychological sciences subtly deconstruct the ancient philosophical connection between truth and freedom, and *refashion the pursuit of enlightened self-knowledge as a tactic of subjugation*. Our ‘human sciences’ do far more than merely report on the objective facts of the social reality; they contribute to the fabrication of those facts; their knowledge is the power in the world, *a power to make up the people they describe*” (Allen, 1998, p. 190, emphasis added).

Indeed, are these postulates of Foucault and Allen also applicable to organisational sciences and contemporary organisations? Thus, is the postulated contemporary worker subjectivity, if found, merely a “novel and tractable form of subjectivity” (ibid.) construed in order to control? Is it associated with novel discourses and practices, which yield knowledge of new ways in which contemporary workers can shape, modify and control themselves?

1.3.1.4 Discourses of Truth

In my view, Foucauldian ‘discourses of truth’ culminate in the definition of what is normal and what is not, what is available for individuals to do, think, say and be, in different settings, and what is not.¹¹ In the context of work organisations, the ‘discourses of truth’ illustrate the prevalent truth about different issues, such as working conditions, practices and mentality and, correspondingly, attempt to construe ‘subjects of truth’ accordingly. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, this truth and associated knowledge is supported and distributed by experts and authorities, who come to utilise the techniques drawn from such knowledge in their pre-eminent institutional sites and subject positions, and thus further legitimate this knowledge.¹² In the context of this study, these experts are HRM professionals and their subject position as the ‘head of HRM’ in the organisations. The suggestion is that, through the associated knowledge, experts, institutions and techniques, these organisational ‘discourses of truth’ come to define, categorise and typify what is to be considered as a normal and appropriate working subject in particular organisational settings at that historically specific point in time. One might ask why this is problematic. The danger is that, with the passing of time, these ways of organising and perceiving the working subject become established and viewed as normal, and in consequence render alternative ways of organising and

¹¹ Discourse of truth = “assertive discourses which position individuals in an ethical, or moral framework” (Foucault, 1981, in Humphreys et al., 1998).

¹² In the context of this study, organisational knowledge primarily refers to the discourses and knowledge associated with the management of human resources that are found to circulate in the contemporary organisations under study.

perceiving the working subject invisible (Rose, 1999; Foucault, 1997, pp. 281-301; 1998b, pp. 459-464). This contributes to closing down spaces of freedom, meaning that we are no longer talking of power relations, but of relations of domination (O'Leary, 2002, pp. 154-170). Relations of domination are subduing, restrictive and restraining, to the relative neglect of the productive and enabling aspects of power relations (Foucault, 1997, pp. 281-301).

1.3.1.5 Worker Subjectivity

Let us next examine organisational control in terms of worker subjectivity. It is assumed at the outset that organisational discourses act as power/knowledge systems which operate through the constitution of subjectivity (Rose, 1999; Townley, 1989, Fournier, 1998). In a historically specific period of time these discourses can shape and modify the ways in which workers think, act and relate to others as well as to themselves (Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Rose, 1999). Thus they have the potential to come to describe the way in which workers experience their work as well as themselves as workers. These power/knowledge discourses aim to produce a particular type of worker subjectivity in order to render workers calculable and predictable and, in short, controllable (Rose, 1999; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; O'Connor, 1999). However, the view is taken that the constitution of worker subjectivity is not mechanical, unproblematic or without resistance, but that workers might also use the prevalent discourses as tools and resources to express their agency and possibly even modify structures. Therefore, it is posited that organisational power/knowledge systems *can* shape and modify workers; however they do not necessarily accomplishing this in a straightforward manner or without resistance (Collinson, 1994, pp. 25-68).

In a sense, then, this study is about the *making* of the contemporary worker subjectivity. At the outset it is posited that '*making*' *implies constant processes of construction and re-construction*. Further, these processes are at once historic, social, discursive and, by definition, power-laden. More specifically, these processes of construction refer, on the one hand, to the organisational discourses and practices [in]forming the work-related reality of workers, and on the other hand, to the self-construction, self-reconstruction and associated self-renunciation that workers come to exercise upon themselves. It is posited that the aforementioned are mutually implicated, as self-construction, self-reconstruction and associated self-renunciation are upheld and advanced by the organisational

discourses and practices circulating in the realms of work and organisations (Allen, 1998, pp. 189-191; Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211.). The historically specific prevalent organisational discourses and practices give limits and techniques for these processes (Rose, 1999, pp. 15-39). Furthermore, it is suggested that these discourses and practices also come to provide particular ideals – along with specified techniques for self-construction and self-reconstruction, in the name of “self-development”, aimed at encouraging a particular type of worker subjectivity (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). These very discourses and practices become so powerful precisely because of their operation upon and through subjectivity (Rose, 1999, pp. 55-80; Allen, 1998, pp. 189-191).

How do contemporary workers, through their knowledge of work and of being a working subject, become construed as particular types of *subjects of truth*? In particular, how is HRM as an organisational *discourse of truth* contributing to producing knowledge, which at is currently considered to be the truth about controlling and managing the working subject? What sort of worker subjectivity are these discourses of truth construing in contemporary organisations? Is there a particular type of discursive constitution of contemporary worker subjectivity that could be seen to encapsulate the contemporary worker’s relationship to one’s self as a worker and to one’s work? If yes, *what are the core constituents of this worker subjectivity*? Is it different from previous worker subjectivities? In summary, then, in examining the production and re-production of a particular type of worker subjectivity from a Foucauldian stance, the focus shifts to the explication of contemporary organisational discourses and practices. How do these discourses and practices depict and describe workers?

1.3.2 The Conceptualisation of the Working Subject

“The goal of my work during the past twenty years ... has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, or to deliberate upon the foundations of such analysis. My objective instead has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 2000, p. 326).

1.3.2.1 The Concept of the Subject

Explicating the subject from a Foucauldian stance causes some difficulty, as Foucault’s understanding of the *subject* altered in the course of his writings (Dreyfus, 1999, p. 1). In Foucault’s earlier works, human subjects are understood as passive, merely resultant from the effects of social practices of subjection (1972, 1979, 1977 etc., i.e. works before *The History of Sexuality*, volume I). However, in Foucault’s later works, subjects are described as more active and ethical (1980, 1981, 1988a, 1988b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). Despite these changes in Foucault’s perspective, an overarching premise can be found which connects his writings in terms of the role of the subject. This is that *subjects are not viewed as self-transcendental autonomous moral agents who exercise power, but rather the view is taken that subjects themselves are creations of power.*

“There are two meanings to the word “subject”: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to” (Foucault, 2000, p. 331).

Indeed, many authors such as Habermas and Giddens have *criticised Foucault for undermining the role of the subject*, claiming that his view disregards human agency and thereby any possibility of resistance or of ‘a way out’ of power relations and discursive practices (Habermas, 1983, p. 14; Giddens, 1987, p. 214, in Berard, 1999, pp. 209-210).

“What happens is that the more powerful the vision of some increasingly total system or logic – the Foucault of the prison book is the most obvious example – the powerless the reader comes to feel. Insofar as the theorist wins, therefore, by constructing an increasingly closed and terrifying machine, to that very degree he loses, since the critical capacity of his work is thereby paralysed, and the impulses of negation and revolt, not to speak of those of social transformation, are increasingly perceived as vain and trivial...” (Jameson, 1998, p.106, cited in Berard, 1999, p. 210).

However, such claims are theoretically flawed, as Foucault on several occasions makes clear in his accounts that power is not a monumental entity possessed by a certain privileged individual or group, but something inherently relational that presupposes the possibility of resistance (Berard, 1999, p. 210; see also, Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, pp. 167-198). This is because power and domination are different: power necessitates spaces of freedom, whereas domination closes down spaces of freedom (O’Leary, 2002, pp. 154-165). Furthermore, it seems as if many of the critics are so set in their prevailing thinking patterns, i.e. those which put power and resistance into opposing categories, that they are unable to understand Foucault’s postulates, which are based on the idea that power and resistance are intrinsically intertwined - power presupposes freedom; therefore power relations also incorporate spaces for struggle and resistance (Foucault, 1980, pp. 78-134). As regards the criticism of that he neglects agency, these critics, in my view, fail to take into account Foucault’s views on the subject as put forward in his *later* works (O’Leary, 2002, pp. 154-165).¹³ Moreover, if one fails to grasp or disagrees with Foucault’s postulates on power, it becomes difficult to seize his understanding of the subject, which stems from the comprehension of discursive power/knowledge and pastoral practices.

As said, Foucault’s understanding of the subject altered in the course of his writings. The subject, in Foucault’s earlier writings, is merely a ‘function of a discourse’ (Foucault, 1972, p. 139). Subjects, in his earlier works, are understood as conscious beings, capable of acting; however, the idea that subjects could be *autonomous* agents is rejected on the grounds that this idea is merely a “product of particular practises and so could not have the causal agency our culture attributed to it” (Dreyfus, 1999, p. 2; Kieft, 2000, pp.1-3). Thus, in Foucault’s earlier writings, subjects remain as ‘speakers of discourses’ and thereby are reduced to mere functions of discourse, as the interest is in the statements made therein rather than in the subjects who speak these discourses (Kieft, 2000, p. 1-4).¹⁴ From critiques of the self-transcendental autonomous agent, Foucault turns, in his genealogical works, to criticising the origins, power-knowledge relations and production

¹³ “...for early Foucault, the subject is reduced to a function of discourse; for middle Foucault, writing can open up new worlds, and in later Foucault, *freedom is understood as the power to question what is currently taken for granted, plus the capacity to change oneself and perhaps, one’s milieu.*” (Dreyfus, 1999, pp. 1-2, emphasis added)

¹⁴ “The death of man is nothing to get particularly excited about. It is one of the visible forms of a much more general decease, if you like. I don’t mean by it the death of god, but the death of the subject, of a subject in capital letters, of a subject as origin and foundation of Knowledge, of Liberty, of Language and History” (Foucault, 1969, quoted in Dreyfus, p. 2; see also, Dreyfus, 1999, p. 1; Foucault, 1998a, pp. 459-465).

of the individual in terms of subjectivity and consciousness (Kieft, 2000, pp. 6-9). However, he does not believe subjectivity and consciousness to be crucial in themselves, but rather that they are “constituted on the basis of complex power/knowledge relations” (ibid.) In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault initially examines the individual as an *object* of power/knowledge relations.¹⁵ However, despite their subjectivity and consciousness, subjects in *Discipline and Punish* are still seen as passive beings, *as objects of subjugation*. In *The History of Sexuality* (1998b), Foucault’s conception of subjects as passive beings alters, allowing a subject to comprehend itself *as a subject*. In this realisation the development of practices of confession and self-examination enabled by “pastoral power” was essential. Consequently, power and subjugation are now seen to act “*through* subjectivity instead of *upon* it” (Berard, 1999, p. 208, quoting Foucault, 1987, pp. 97-98; 1988a, p. 118). Hence, *the subjects are constituent in constituting themselves and asserting themselves as subjects*. Thus, in all volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, the focus is on the constitution of *active subjects* (Foucault, 1998b). Essentially, the subjects have come to recognise themselves as subjects of subjectivity who can actively work upon the self and on their own subjectivity through specific techniques of self-examination and practices of confession. Given this understanding of a subject, it becomes essential to understand the self’s relation to the self, as well as the production and reproduction of one’s relationships to the self. Indeed, it is the explication of *the relationship(s) that the contemporary workers who are the subject of this research establish with themselves as workers*, on the one hand, and the examination of the production of associated contemporary worker subjectivity, on the other, that is the focus of the study.

1.3.2.2 The Concept of Subjectivity

To start with, subjectivity is understood as a *product* rather than as a source. That is to say that the idea of the unitary identity of an individual as the source of meaning is abandoned at the outset and, instead, the view is taken that *subjectivity is a product of discursive practices and social relations which intrinsically involve power*. To put it another way, subjectivity is perceived as a form of *self-relation which is interrelated*

¹⁵ “I am not saying that human sciences emerged from the prison. But if they have been able to be formed and to produce so many profound changes in the episteme, it is because they have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power: a certain policy of the body... This policy required the involvement of definite relations of knowledge in relations of power; it called for a techniques of overlapping subjection and objectification; it brought with it new procedures of individualization” (Foucault, 1977, p. 305, in Kieft, 2000, p. 6).

with the relation to others. It is a result of historically specific discursive practices and power/knowledge regimes that come to legitimate a particular way of relating to one's self and to others as normal and given. However, this does not mean that discourses would determine subjectivity but rather that *discourses are perceived as forming the premises, limits and conditions for subjectivity.*

Furthermore, we are all enmeshed in many different social relations and networks, and there are many social agencies which combine in numerous ways with each other as well as with the social experience and history of each one of us (see also Fiske, 1987, p. 49; 48-73). Despite the individual differences in social agencies, experiences and personal histories, along with genetics, subjectivity is not chiefly individual but social. As Fiske puts it "it is what we share with others" (ibid.). In essence, then, subjectivity is personal but not individual. Subjectivity is innately social.

"Subjectivity... is *the product of social relations* that work upon us in three main ways, *through society, through language or discourse, and through the psychic processes* through which the infant enters into society, language and consciousness. Our subjectivity is not inherent in our individuality, our [biological] difference from other people, rather it is a *product of various social agencies* to which we are subject, and *thus is what we share with others*" (Fiske, 1987, p. 49).

Thus, subjectivity is not understood as the subjectivity of an individual subject. Rather, subjectivity, from a Foucauldian stance, is examined *as a 'truth effect' of the exercise of power in defining groups or categories of individuals* such as workers. Hence, the examination of worker subjectivity. However, the aim here is not to imply that there is some universal collective worker subjectivity, or that the manner in which workers come to be defined holds across time and space. On the contrary, it is postulated that the way in which workers are defined varies across time and space and thus, essentially, *subjectivity needs to be understood as a specific historical product rooted within particular circumstances and power relations.*

"Subjectivity in these terms has to be seen not as a synonym for the concept of the individual subject but as a way of describing a complex composite of such subjects as a category of persons. *In absence of totalising collective consciousness it is the formation and reformation of self that is the aspect of subjectivity most important*" (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, p. 8, emphasis added).

Overall, in this thesis, the view of subjectivity is a combination of the views of Foucault and Fiske (ibid.). Foucault is drawn upon in explicating the discourses and their effect on subjectivity; in construing particular categories of individuals and subjectivities. However, any particular subjectivity is only one self-relation that the subject has.¹⁶ This is complementary to Fiske's view that subjectivity has a number of social dimensions, for example: age group, family, class, gender and ethnicity (Fiske, 1987, pp. 50-55 quoting Harley, 1983, pp. 69-70).

1.3.2.3 The Concept of Self-identity

The following underlying assumptions will form the premises for the study with respect to self-identity.¹⁷ First of all, it is suggested that *language is particularly important* as it defines, as well as circumscribes, the possibilities of meaningful existence. Thus, as Clegg vividly posits, "through language we constitute our sense of ourselves as distinct subjectivities through a myriad of 'discursive practises', practises of talk, text, writing, cognition, argumentation, representation generally" (1998, p. 29). Secondly, *(self) identity is by no means fixed* in its appearance or given by nature; rather it is constantly 'in process', i.e. self-transformation, within the limits and conditions provided by historically specific discursive practices (Clegg, 1998, p. 29). Thirdly, in denying the existence of collective consciousness or universal subjectivity, *it is this self-transformation which becomes the most significant feature of (Foucauldian) subjectivity*. Fourthly, *Self-transformation* is a multi-faceted result of subjection and suppression, and resistance to these, as self-transformation is simultaneously self-renunciation, as the self is the object of transformation. However, although subjectivities are effects of power, 'subjectification' and self-identities are constantly in process and are always subject to reproduction or transformation through discursive practices that protect or negate particular posited identities (Clegg, 1998, p. 29; Allen, 1998, pp. 189-191). However, this does not imply determinism, as *power does not directly determine identity, but*

¹⁶ Thus, it is underlined that, though the main focus in this study is on workers and on worker subjectivity, this does not mean that a view would have been taken that this indeed constitutes subjectivity *per se*. Therefore, it is *not* assumed at the outset that *all* the aforementioned social aspects of subjectivity would have been subdued by work; it is merely the case that the working subject, work and the worker are the focus in this particular piece of research, and thus constantly referred to, to the relative neglect of the other dimensions of subjectivity.

¹⁷ The term 'self' is often used interchangeably with 'person', though usually with more emphasis on the 'inner', or psychological, dimension of personality than the outward bodily form. Thus, self is conceived of as a subject of consciousness, *a being capable of thought and experience* and able to engage in deliberate action. More crucially, *a self must have a capacity for self-consciousness*" (Oxford Companion to Philosophy, 1995, pp. 816-817, emphasis added).

simply provides the limits and conditions of possibility for self-formation. Overall, the view is taken that, like subjectivity, identities are by no means fixed, but rather they are products of historically specific discursive practices – always relational and in process.

One central premise underpinning much of the discussion on the subject and subjectivity is the concept of the individual. The concept of individuality is also closely linked to the concept of self-identity, as Giddens points out: “The *search* for self-identity is a modern problem having its origins in Western individualism” (Giddens, 1991, pp. 74-75, emphasis added). Therefore, let us next explore this concept.

1.3.2.4 The Concept of the Individual

“The ‘individual’, in a certain sense, did not exist in traditional cultures, and individuality was not prized. *Only* with the emergence of modern societies and, more particularly, *with the differentiation of the division of labour, did the separate individual become a focus of attention*” (Durkheim, 1984, in Giddens, 1991, p. 75, emphasis added).

According to Giddens, in pre-modern times the idea that “Each person has a unique character and special potentialities that may or may not be fulfilled” was alien (1991, pp. 74-75). Furthermore, in Medieval Europe attributes relevant to identity, such as lineage and social status, were all relatively fixed. Of course transitions needed to be made in the course of a range of stages in life; nevertheless, these were governed by institutionalised processes in which the role of the individual was rather passive (ibid.). According to Foucault, a new form of power relations emerged in the early modern period, in addition to the ‘sovereign power’ invested in state and law (Allen, 1998, p. 174). In order to be able to trace this new power, one needed to look at the new institutions, forms of knowledge and practices; such as schools, hospitals or the knowledge of psychiatry, all of which were unknown prior to modern times (ibid.). As Allen brightly posits, these new forms of knowledge, i.e. “human sciences”, came to be regarded as ‘scientific’ at the same time as modern Europe exposed the body as an object and a target of discipline (ibid.; see also, Foucault, 1977). The aim of this was the production of what Foucault calls a ‘docile body’, i.e. a body that is at once stronger and more obedient – hence, calculable and predictable (ibid.). At the same time the “human sciences” were born and begun to examine these bodies as objects and to generate knowledge and precise data about them. As a result, reciprocity has developed between the knowledge the discipline produces and the power which it exercises (ibid.). Further, this knowledge is

simultaneously both individualising and totalising (Allen, 1998, pp. 176-177).¹⁸ From this stance, individual is a product of power rather than an autonomous agent in possession of power:

”Individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in doing so subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, *it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals... The individual is not vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects*: The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98, emphasis added).

Overall, these theoretical foundations form the premises for understanding a contemporary working subject. Understanding a contemporary working subject in terms of its subjectivity, individuality and self-identity is in turn essential, because it forms the premises for understanding how power and control operate in these contemporary organisations. The other reason for exploring the different aspects of the working subject is to understand worker subjectivity. *Worker subjectivity is explored because of its postulated linkage with organisational control*. In order to establish whether there is indeed a contemporary worker subjectivity to discuss, the way in which *people working in this selected industry* talk in terms of themes is examined in order to determine:

- a) if the workers talk in terms of the same organisational themes and thus if their worker subjectivity can be perceived to be underlined by the same organisational discourses
- b) if the workers talk of themselves as distinct and distinguishable from workers in other industries

This should, in part, illuminate how new forms of worker subjectivity are potentially being fabricated in contemporary organisations. The purpose is to examine this making of worker subjectivity from a viewpoint of organisational control.

¹⁸ *Individualising* in that it represents ”the entry of the individual description, of the cross-examination, of the anamnesis, of the ”file” into the general functioning of scientific discourse” (Foucault, 1977, pp. 190-191). Thus, an ‘individual’ becomes an analysable object of “human sciences”, as the new ‘scientific’ methods and discursive techniques are able to register individual differences in aptitude, attitude, ability and so forth, thereby yielding knowledge that preserves and even magnifies individuality (Allen, 1998, p. 179). Whereas the *knowledge is totalising* in that it, in addition to producing knowledge on individuals, also produces knowledge on collectives, which allows ”the calculation of gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given population” (Foucault, 2000, pp. 326-348); and thus, exercises power over the collectives, which are defined by the ‘scientific’ discourse. The result, according to Allen, is ”an improbable configuration of scientific knowledge and political power, which realizes the effective government of collectivities by an effective knowledge of their individual members (1998, pp. 176-177).”

1.3.3 The Conceptualisations of Work and Career

1.3.3.1 The Conceptualisation of Work

According to authors such as Giddens (1991), Marx (1884, 1967) and Weber (1947), *industrialisation fundamentally changed the meaning of work*. Factory production gradually replaced cottage industry and in consequence work and family became disconnected into more distinct spheres (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 36-37). In addition, individuals became obliged to treat their own labour as a commodity to be exchanged with employers who competed over its purchase (ibid.).

“Work in the factories was no longer subject to everyday rhythms of nature, tradition and domestic existence. A condition of employment (as a wage-labourer) in the new factories and offices was the *contractual obligation* to set aside the customary rights to work at one’s own pace and place. Labour worked at a speed and was directed, formally at least, by owners or their managerial agents... Traditional rhythms were progressively supplanted by *the demands of an impersonal and bureaucratic workplace discipline*, determined largely by the constraints of productive efficiency within competitive markets” (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 129).

In factories, machinery was utilised to an increasing extent, in addition to human labour. As Wilenius (1981, p.30) lucidly puts it in his articulate account of “People and Work”, prior to industrialisation machinery and tools were used as extensions of human bodies. After industrialisation human bodies became extensions of machinery. Also, as a consequence of automation, the significance of equity in relation to labour increased. Thus, the ownership of equity became a prominent political issue from the 1800’s onwards (Wilenius, 1981, pp. 30-31). From the viewpoint of human labour the essential change was probably the more profound division and fragmentation of labour, as an individual worker performed an increasingly small part of the whole production process (Durkheim, 1984). As a consequence of *fragmentation and specification*, it became increasingly difficult for an individual worker to see the whole production process and its connection to satisfying the needs in the community. In this way the link between production and consumption became less transparent (Wilenius, 1981, pp. 26-35). As a result of productivity being de-coupled from sacred and communal meanings, personal financial gain, the measure of which was money, became the central motivation of work. Thus, “*the most important concern of the worker became wages, and the most important concern for the owner became profit*” (Wilenius, 1981, p. 30). “This cycle of compensated work and consumption reduced the communal meaning of work and subsequently contributed to individualising the meaning of work” (Wilenius, 1981, p. 30;

22-35). Consequently, the current forms of management and workplace organisation can be seen as products of socio-economic transitions from feudal to industrialised societies (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 36)¹⁹.

All in all, the concept of *paid work* under capitalism is multi-faceted and an issue for continuous debate (see, for example, Wilenius, 1981, pp. 14-15). However, it appears that most of the definitions of paid work under capitalism have a negative connotation, relating it to slavery, exertion and trouble, as illustrated below:

An activity that affords one his livelihood

Synonyms: business, calling, employment, job, line, occupation, pursuit

Related words: art, craft, handicraft, metier, profession, trade, vocation, walk

Strenuous activity that involves difficulty and effort and usually affords no pleasure

Synonyms: bull-work, donkeywork, drudge, drudgery, grind, labour, moil, plugging, slavery, slogging, sweat, toil, travail

Related words: effort, exertion, pains, trouble; chore, duty, job; elucubration; striving; spadework (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Thesaurus-on line)

In spite of this negative connotation, which is often omnipresent in the discussions of paid work under capitalism, the view taken here at the outset is that *the meaning of work and how it has been valued varies across time and space*. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to attempt to provide some absolute meaning of work, which would be applicable across contemporary time and space. The purpose is to provide *a snapshot of ultra-modern contemporary organisational reality in the information age* and to deliberate on whether this can indicate some fundamental changes in the understanding of core phenomena relating to the contemporary understanding of paid work and organisational control. This examination of the changes in the meaning of paid work is carried out by comparing and contrasting the findings from contemporary organisations to conventional theories and conceptualisations.

With regard to the conceptualisation of paid work, as said, it appears that historically most of the definitions of this type of work, *within the current mode of production*, have had a negative connotation, relating it to deprivation and inhumanity, as clearly

¹⁹ Marx (1884, 1967) and Weber (1904, 1914) have fundamentally captured these socio-economic transitions. In addition to the accounts of Marx and Weber, Durkheim (1858-1917) also provides a useful account, for example on the increased impact of the occupational structure on the society as a whole (1889). However, Marx's and Weber's accounts were perceived as more suitable for the purposes of this study as they, in the author's view, were more easily applicable to an organisational context.

illustrated for example in Marx's accounts (1884, 1967; see also Braverman, 1979 and Marcuse, 1991). However, *viewing paid work under capitalism as a compulsory evil with innately alienating consequences seems to be giving way to an opposing view, in which paid work is considered as intrinsically meaningful to one's very being*. Indeed, Marx's accounts of the alienating effect of paid work stand in sharp contrast to the meaning attributed to work in the contemporary mainstream literature on Human Resource Management. In this literature work is self-evidently viewed as the path to one's self-realisation, self-development and individual growth.

“Employee development is the skilful provision and organisation of learning experiences in the workplace ... [so that] performance can be improved...work goals can be achieved and that, through enhancing the skills, knowledge, learning ability and enthusiasm at every level, *there can be continuous organizational as well as individual growth*. Employee development must, therefore, be part of the wider strategy for the business, *aligned with the organization's corporate mission and goals*” (Harrison, 1992, p. 4, quoted in Beardwell and Holden, 1995, p. 309, emphasis added).

Thus, organisational and employee development are encouraged *in so far as* employees develop themselves in a manner that increases the corporations' productivity, efficiency and, ultimately, the bottom line. Rose goes even further, vividly suggesting that: “The individual is not to be emancipated from work, perceived as merely a task or a means to an end, but to be fulfilled in work, now construed as an activity through which we produce, discover and experience ourselves” (Rose, 1989, pp. 103-104). It is as if ‘true’ self-realisation would not be possible without working, since work is represented as *the way in which one can fulfil oneself and find one's full potential* (Rose, 1999, pp. 55-103, 217-259). In the light of this, it is evident that *the meaning of work has radically altered in that work has become to offer more than material subsistence - it has become to offer existential meaning* (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 37-40; Wilenius, 1981, pp. 22-35). This change is seen to result from aligning the subjectivity of a worker to work (Rose, 1999). This alignment of work to the sphere of subjective is also seen as a premise for more subtle form or control – control through subjectivity (Allen, 1998, pp. 190-191). Therefore, contemporary work mentality and associated attitudes are looked at. The interest lies in examining whether this form of control can be found in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age? On the other hand, the interest lies in examining whether these contemporary working subjects have the possibility of questioning their surrounding as well as themselves? In other words: do these contemporary workers have individual agency and thus, some potential escape route(s) from this pervasive government of subjectivity?

1.3.3.2 The Conceptualisation of Career

The Traditional Career

“A career *was* a lifelong pathway through the world of work, a single vocation or calling that the individuals adopted in early maturity that they often prepared for from childhood. Careers were pursued throughout the individuals’ working lives....in the latter half of the twentieth century, careers provided steady job tenure in an established professional culture, and for many, progression within an organisational hierarchy” (Flores and Gray, 2000, pp. 9-11, emphasis added).

Traditionally, a career was understood as *a continuous path throughout one’s life*. It formed a narrative that enabled a sense of continuity by encompassing one’s professional life, considering it as a coherent whole. Hence one could experience security, predictability and at least a semblance of control over one’s life, as one was likely to stay in the same profession, even within the same organisation, throughout one’s life. Thus, a career offered a secure framework according to which one could interpret one’s life and attempt to make sense of it. Further, it often constituted a fundamental part of a worker’s identity, as, through their sustainable and continuous profession, workers could identify their acknowledgement by their own community. Further, one knew relatively well what was expected in terms of effort at work in order to be upgraded to the next level of the hierarchy and to achieve the benefits associated with these higher-level duties. Thus, one could, to some extent, plan one’s life accordingly. Of course there would be some uncertainties and other variables affecting one’s career, such as personal contacts in the case of ‘promotion’ prospects. However, *a career was a rather stable and conventional institution around which one could build one’s life*.

With regard to the emergence of this ‘traditional’ career in the first place, Savage (1998, pp. 65-92) suggests that *the surfacing of the concept of a career is closely related to bureaucratisation* and in particular to the emergence of large bureaucratic units (for more on bureaucratisation, see Weber, 1950). In actual fact, according to Clegg (1990, p. 39) the concept of a career is related to one of the 15 core tendencies of bureaucracy, namely ‘careerization’, which Clegg defines as follows.

“Differently stratified credentials are required in order to enter different positions in the hierarchy of officers; thus, there is a career structure and promotion is possible either by seniority or by merit of service by individuals with similar credentials, depending on the judgement of superiors made according to the rules. Without the appropriate credentials one cannot be promoted to the next rung in the hierarchy: thus, there is a tendency towards *careerization* (striving to be bigger cogs in the machine) within an organisation” (Clegg, 1990, p. 39, emphasis in original).

Careerization brought forth *the idea that the understanding of work could be conceptualised in terms of movement in time and space*, i.e. in terms of career. Also, implicit in such an understanding was *continuity*, as workers would commit themselves to the work organisation in order to move up the career ladder. Thus there was a continuum of effort and promotion prospects within an organisation. Furthermore, Weber (1978) saw ‘career’ as a common feature of rational (modern) societies, as societies based upon rational-legal authority needed to ensure that “those individuals in position of power would not be inclined to use such positions for self-aggrandizement” (Savage, 1998, p. 66.) Thus, the ‘career’ was to remind the employees that they could wait for moves between jobs and therefore should not treat any job as a sinecure (Savage, 1998, p. 67). However, all in all, Weber posited the ‘career’ as just *a by-product* of modern bureaucracy (ibid. p. 70).

Conversely, I depart from this conventional view and posit that the concept of a ‘*career*’ is not merely a by-product of bureaucracy, but a means of controlling and disciplining the worker. From a Foucauldian view, career ladders are seen to be utilised, for example, to encourage workers to monitor and regulate their own actions. From a Foucauldian view, a career is seen as a combination of ‘disciplinary power’ and ‘pastoral power’ (Foucault, 1977, 2000). ‘Disciplinary power’ is concerned with techniques of bodily control, whereas ‘pastoral power’ is concerned with techniques aimed at constructing new forms of self-monitoring and self-developing worker subjectivity (Foucault, 1977, 1997, 1998b, 2000). Subsequently, from this perspective, a career increasingly encroaches on an employee’s self-awareness and subjectivity. As a result, ‘career’ advancement comes to be more than a reward for merit, hard work and efficiency; it becomes a work-related *control mechanism* based upon these modern forms of power. From this view, the operation of a career can be seen to depend, on the one hand, on the construction of modes of inspection, examination and control in order to regulate job

movements and choose who ought to be promoted. On the other hand, a career can be seen as a construction of particular forms of selfhoods and subjectivities, as individual employees themselves begin to recognise a career as something that they ought to pursue (Savage, 1998, pp. 65-93).

The Decline of the Traditional Career

However, the traditional conceptualisation of the career is in dispute, whether understood from a mainstream perspective or indeed from a Foucauldian one (Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999; Collin and Young, 2000; and Flores and Gray, 2000; Fournier, 1998). The various arguments raised suggest, by and large, the same thing, which is that the notion of a career has fundamentally changed in character and thus needs re-conceptualisation in a contemporary context.²⁰ Is this indeed the case? Is the conventional conceptualisation of the career outdated? Has it indeed been replaced by the 'new career' discourse, as suggested by Fournier (1998)? What do contemporary workers think in terms of the idea of a career? Or indeed, do they think in terms of a conventional career?

²⁰ Arthur and Rousseau (1996) talk of 'boundaryless career'. Whereas, in the book edited by Collin and Young (2000), several authors explore various new ways of explicating the career and 'the fragmented nature of modern working life' in a multi-layered manner, incorporating issues such as multiculturalism and women's careers, as well as their implications, for example, for policy-making and HRM practices.

2. Organisational Control

2.1 The Premises of Organisational Control

Organisational control is conventionally viewed as an intrinsically negative and restrictive phenomenon, which in one way or another subjugates workers (Jermier, Knight and Nord, 1994, pp. 1-24).²¹ Subsequently, accounts of organisational control often examine the constitution of a resistant subject and call forth a need for emancipation and liberation of this intrinsically alienated and repressed working subject (ibid.; Marx, 1884, 1967; Clegg, 1994, pp. 274-325). This study examines conventional organisational control primarily in terms of HRM. However, it is argued that organisational control more generally is based on *a particular understanding of power*; an understanding that views power as intrinsically negative and repressive (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, pp. 1-24). Thus, power is equated with domination and subjugation. Furthermore, it is proposed that, within the idea of organisational control as repressive and restrictive, *a particular understanding of work* is implicit - again an understanding that is fundamentally negative. Indeed, the control methods needed are rather different if workers experience their work as a necessary evil that is suppressing and restraining them or if they find their work interesting and enjoyable. In sum, it seems that the accounts of organisational control written to date are based, on the one hand, upon inherently negative conceptualisations of power, and, on the other hand, upon innately negative conceptualisations of work. These negative conceptualisations seem to be taken-for-granted as facts that are seldom questioned in the organisational literature.

However, the Foucauldian stance encourages one to stop reproducing the 'facts' and instead start questioning them. This is precisely what this study aims to do in terms of the aforementioned taken-for-granted conceptualisations of work and power. Hence, in this study such 'facts' are probed, examined and re-examined. In essence, I am asking what happens to the understanding of organisational control if we re-conceptualise the negative conceptualisations of power and work which lie within its central tenet. One can deliberate: what are the implications for understanding organisational control if we –

²¹ For an overview of organisations as political systems from a conventional stance(s), see Morgan, 1997, pp. 153-214 and for associated bibliographical notes on key references, see Morgan, 1997, pp. 401-405. For a Foucauldian view of organisational control as negative because it constitutes a 'disciplinary power' see Deetz, 1992 and for a view of it as a more subtle form of organisational control - drawing on 'technologies of the self' - see Townley, 1998; and for an overview of resistance and power in organisations see Jermier, Knight and Nord, 1994.

instead of viewing power as merely negative - view power as also productive and enabling? In a similar manner, what if we view work as something that is not intrinsically negative, alienating and repressive but as something which can be reasonably satisfactory and, every so often, even enjoyable? Thus, can we not recognise power, along with work, as having the capacity to be both positive and negative? Furthermore, in questioning the basic character of work, we might also start rethinking the conceptualisation of the working subject. Understanding work to have the capacity to be also productive and enabling has implications for the organisational control needed. The changes in control methods needed are interrelated with presuppositions not only about work, but also about the worker. We need new tools, concepts and *questions* in order to be able to further explore these presuppositions and interrelationships.

In consequence, I would like to go a bit further in my questioning and raise the question: what if, instead of being merely repressed and restricted, the working subject is in fact emancipated and has agency? What if contemporary workers, in actual fact, do quite like their work, even enjoy it at times? Suppose they even experience pleasure in undertaking their work? Even Marx wrote about humans having productive agency (Marx, 1884, pp. 61-81); suppose workers are actually able to use their productive agency in contemporary work organisations - at least at times. Thus, what if, rather than just being isolated, alienated and repressed human ruins, workers actually quite like their working realities and actively participate in reconstructing and reproducing them? What if negative connotations and conceptualisations of work are out-dated, mere discourses circulating within academic walls? What if, in fact, in avant-garde contemporary organisations working subjects already talk of themselves as emancipated workers? This brings us to one of the research questions, i.e.: “how do contemporary working subjects experience themselves and view others as working subjects?”

2.2 The Examination of Organisational Control

In this study, the examination of organisational control starts by exploring the contemporary relevance of the most important conventional way of controlling human resources within organisations, namely Human Resource Management. The ways and the extent to which HRM operates in the contemporary organisations under study are established first. After this the structures of control are examined in a broader sense. The structures are explored initially through the split between organisational structures and

human practices (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). The purpose is to find out whether contemporary organisational control is supported by conventional structural arrangements such as bureaucracy and hierarchy (Clegg, 1990, pp. 27-48; Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 128-138). On the other hand, the structures of control are examined by exploring the materialisation of the conventional practice of management in the context of contemporary organisations. In addition to the conventional practices of organisational control, also the more subtle, normative ways to control workers, for example through their attitudes, aspirations and subjectivity, are examined. Perhaps, for example, putting up a particular presupposition of a worker as an ideal or normal worker, i.e. construing a particular type of worker subjectivity, is one way of attempting to control the contemporary workers. Therefore, it is interesting to examine whether or not there is a particular type of novel worker subjectivity, shared by the contemporary workers of the information age, which is based upon such manipulation and subjugation. Overall, the aforementioned questions culminate in an examination of organisational control as materialised in everyday organisational reality and practices. They also call forth an examination of the contemporary ways of working, managing and organising. Before proceeding to examine the different forms of power and control operating in contemporary organisations, I shall examine theoretically the conventional way of controlling and managing human resources, namely HRM.

2.3 The Human Resource Management

The term HRM is used as a convenient shorthand term. *“HRM is simply a way of grouping together the range of activities associated with managing people that are variously categorised under employee relations, industrial/labour relations, personnel management, and organisational behaviour”* (A Dictionary of Human Resource Management, 2001, p. 162, emphasis added). This *range of activities* translates into HRM techniques. In this study the HRM techniques researched are the following:

1. Recruitment
2. Job descriptions (inc. responsibilities)
3. Job orientation (inc. mentoring)
4. Training and development
5. Assessment and evaluation (inc. performance appraisals)
6. Job monitoring and surveillance
7. Internal research
8. Career planning and development
9. Motivation
10. Rewards (inc. benefits)
11. Commitment and loyalty
12. Job satisfaction (inc. personnel turnover % and absences)

13. Company culture and values
14. Enjoyment
15. Atmosphere
16. Internal communications
17. Feedback

In more practical terms, HRM is seen as comprising the aforementioned techniques. Furthermore, these are organised and implemented by people with specified training in HRM, i.e. HRM personnel. They have their own expertise, with specific knowledge, discourses and language with associated jargon and fads. Conventionally, HRM personnel also occupy their own particular subject positions in their professional groups and corresponding structural units.

Why research HRM as opposed to other organisational functions, such as accounting, which - from a Foucauldian stance - can also be seen to contribute to organisational control? As stated, HRM is the conventional way of managing and controlling workers. *If there are fundamental changes in organisational control, these ought to be reflected in HRM practices.* Indeed, different functions of organisations can be analysed through the Foucauldian lens. In fact, Foucauldian analyses have drawn on a number of organisational functions and practices, such as marketing and sales practices, on accounting practices, on IT practices, as well as on HRM practices. Most of the Foucauldian organisational analyses to date have concentrated on accounting and HRM practices and systems.²² These analyses have essentially explicated the way in which these practices have made workers more calculable, docile and predictable. Accounting and HRM have been examined both as whole systems and via their specific techniques per se. However, in examining accounting practices Foucault's accounts of 'disciplinary power' have been drawn upon, whereas in examining HRM both 'disciplinary power' and 'pastoral power' have been drawn upon, along with 'technologies of the self'. In doing so, the analyses of HRM practices seem to create more room for the *exploration of subjectivity* than does the examination of other organisational practices.

²² On Accounting as a system see, for example, Hosking, 1998, pp. 93-111 and for analysis of some of its techniques see Hopper and McIntosh, 1998, pp. 126-151; for HRM as a system see Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211, and for the analysis of one of its techniques, namely performance appraisal, see Findlay and Newton, 1998, pp. 211-230.

2.3.1 The Roots of HRM

The Discourses Associated with the Human Relations Movement

“The rise of the human relations school produced a paradigmatic revolution in organisational thought and practise because *it shifted attention from the technical to social-psychological aspects of work*. To be sure, productivity and profits were still thought to be relevant and certainly related to the technical factors of production, but it was increasingly understood that neglecting morale, sentiments and emotions of both the worker and the manager would set limits to the firm’s productivity and profitability” (Guillén, 1994, p. 58, emphasis added).

Let me start by placing the Human Relations Movement (Mayo, 1975) in its historical context. The discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement were born as an antidote to Taylorism (Taylor, 1911). Taylorism was blamed for dehumanising and deskilling the workforce, thereby producing resistance and increasing the popularity of the labour movements (Rose, 1989; Barley and Kunda, 1992; Humphreys, 1998; O’Connor, 1999).²³ Further, there was also a growing management elite, which needed a body of knowledge to legitimate it (O’Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246). Mayo’s (1975) ‘project’ fitted these needs, as it changed the way workers saw and experienced their work, without any fundamental changes in working conditions or salaries (O’Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246). In contrast to Taylorism, in Human Relations the focus shifted from an analysis of work to the analysis of the unwanted side effect of work, namely fatigue, which was now curable through the ‘counselling interview’, whereby through talking with the psychologist workers would be able to cope with their ‘irrationality’ and discomfort (*ibid.*). As a result, one’s attitudes and behaviour at the workplace came to be seen as determining one’s mental well-being (*ibid.*). *Also, the focus shifted from formal to informal organisation and from individual work to group work*. Additionally, unlike in Taylorism, the instrumental interest in money and the goods it can buy was no longer perceived as the only motivation for labourers to work. With Human Relations, social needs and the *motivation* to work became essential. All in all, it is interesting to note how the social unrest (caused by Taylorism) simmered down as a consequence of getting workers to change the way they *experienced* their work. Another consequence was that the need for workers to participate in labour movements decreased as *group spirit* could

²³ According to Guillén (1994, pp. 31-32), the rise of Human Relations Movement/School relates to and can be traced back to the rise of welfare capitalism, vocational guidance and personnel administration, and to the increasing importance of social-psychological science and consulting.

now be achieved at work, as work was now ‘humanised’.²⁴ Moreover, work became rewarding and as such *work came to have an intrinsic meaning in itself*.

“Finding meaning and dignity in work, workers would identify with the product, assume responsibility for production, and find their own worth embedded, reflected and enhanced in the quality of work as a product and as an experience” (Rose, 1989, pp. 106-107, emphasis added).

Furthermore, Rose argues that work became ‘a path to self-fulfilment’, and also simultaneously constitutive of individuals’ subjectivities (ibid.). Overall, the organisation became a community to which loyal workers were emotionally committed, where one’s mental well-being was determined and one’s subjectivity construed (Rose, 1989; O’Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246). Taking this stance culminates in the view that *it was indeed the discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement which fully incorporated work into the sphere of the existential, through aligning the subjectivity of a worker to work as well as to the enterprise*, thereby creating on the one hand intrinsic meaning in work, and on the other hand, easily governable, productive workers (Rose, 1999, pp. 55-119). In consequence, work was to be reshaped in accordance with knowledge of the subjectivity of the worker, as this would enhance the ability to meet the psychological strivings and needs of the individual, whilst improving efficiency, productivity, quality and innovation. Subsequently, the politics of the workplace centred on enhancing the ‘quality of working life’, whilst the new image of a worker was construed in terms of a “self-actualising ego whose personal strivings could be articulated into the organisation of the enterprise [and] as a unique individual seeking a personal meaning and purpose in the activity of labour” (Rose, 1989, pp. 104-105, emphasis added). In practice, the new image of the worker was supported by reforms: labour rights in terms of law were enforced, and the concepts of participatory management, co-operatives and self-management were utilised, in order to introduce the notion of democracy to the field of work. However, these reforms were aimed at generating a sense of hope, whilst alleviating signs of discontent, in order to increase productivity and efficiency and decrease resistance (O’Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246; Rose, 1989). Furthermore, this culminated in construing ‘worker subjectivity’ in terms of motivation, self-direction and responsibility. In consequence, work satisfaction came to

²⁴ For more on the historical roots of HRM, see O’Connor (1999, pp. 223-246). See also Rose (1999), who provides an interesting genealogy of such practices. For more on the predecessors of HRM, see Guillén (1994).

be provided in terms of psychological motivators, instead of physical or material ones (Rose, 1989, p. 119).²⁵

Accordingly, on the one hand by internalising the discipline, and on the other hand through the psychologist entering the sphere of subjectivity and aligning it with work and with the aspirations of the workplace, the ‘self-actualising’ worker came into being. This self-actualising subjectivity imposed on, and at the same time constructed by, workers is different to any preceding form of subjectivity. The new image of the productive subject, argues Rose is “an individual in search of meaning, responsibility, a sense of personal achievement, of maximised ‘quality of life’, and hence of work (1989, p. 104). Contemporary Human Resource Management (i.e. HRM) has its roots in the discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement. Overall, HRM practices and techniques can be seen as devices which, through measurement, evaluation and classification, aim to objectify workers by constituting them as bodies of knowledge, which thereafter can be controlled through that very knowledge (see Townley, 1993, p. 541, in Townley, 1998, p. 194; 191-211) From this stance, these HRM-related discursive practices and techniques encourage workers to discipline themselves, but only in a manner that is aligned with the desires of the modern workplaces. Further, *from this stance* HRM techniques and practices drawing on the new modern forms of power are not perceived as contributing to new way(s) of being that would escape the established forms of control. They are merely seen as another form of subjugation, functioning on the level of self-constitution and subjectivity (Townley, 1998; Rose, 1999; Deetz, 1992).

2.3.2 Researching HRM

In the author’s view, HRM can be examined from a Foucauldian view in two interrelated senses. First of all, it can be examined as an entire system through the lens of the panopticon, i.e. explicating how “it disciplines the interior of the organisation, organising time, space and movement within it. In doing so personnel helps to bridge the gap

²⁵ “In the psychologies of Human Relations, work itself could become the privileged space for the satisfaction of the social needs of individuals. In the psychologies of self-actualisation, work is no longer necessarily a constraint upon the freedom of the individual to fulfil his or her potential through the strivings of the psychic economy for autonomy, creativity and responsibility. *Work is an essential element in the path to self-fulfilment.* There is no longer any barrier between the economic, the psychological and the social. The antitheses between managing adaptation *to* work and struggling for rewards *from* work is transcended, as *working hard produces psychological rewards and psychological rewards produce hard work*” (Rose, 1989, p. 119, emphasis added).

between promise and performance, between labour power and labour, and organises labour into a productive force” (Townley, 1998, p. 195). The other way to view HRM is through examination of its specific techniques, i.e. analysing recruitment procedures, performance appraisals and so forth as exemplars of ‘disciplinary power’ and ‘pastoral power’. So far, most of the Foucauldian analyses conducted have concentrated on explicating HRM from the former *or* from the latter stance. However, *in this study, these two are combined* and thus the study examines, on the one hand, the extent to which the HRM techniques are present in contemporary organisations and, on the other hand, the scope of the HRM system of the organisations in terms of HRM personnel and structure.

In this thesis the intention is to empirically research the extent to which traditional HRM-based control mechanisms are present in the contemporary organisations under study. However, there is also a deeper underlying interest. This interest lies in examining organisational control and the way in which it might be changing. It is suggested that the postulated changes in ways of exercising control are reflected in contemporary companies’ HRM practices, as HRM is the conventional way of managing and controlling workers. In examining HRM the focus is predominantly on examining it through its techniques, personnel and structure. That is to say that the chief aims are to establish, on the one hand, the extent to which HRM techniques and the associated structure are used in contemporary organisations and, on the other hand, the number of people involved in carrying out a company’s HRM. In addition, I would like to say something about the ‘general mentality’ of the organisations with regard to HRM. However, the conceptualisation of ‘general HRM mentality’ being rather difficult to establish, the main focus is:

- a) to establish the extent to which the *a priori* specified 17 conventional HRM techniques are present in the companies under investigation
- b) to establish the number of HRM personnel present in the companies and handling HRM-related matters on a full-time basis
- c) to establish whether HRM is a separate function or department

After examining HRM-related ways of managing workers, the other structural arrangements supporting the control of workers are looked at. The more subtle means of impacting on the workers are then explored - this includes exploring the contemporary experience of work, along with the contemporary understanding of career. Finally,

individual agency and worker subjectivity are explored in terms of organisational control on the one hand, and emancipation on the other.

2.4 Summary of the Research Questions

Research Question	Specific Research Questions
1. How does organisational control – understood in terms of Human Resource Management - operate in contemporary work organisations and what is its <i>modus operandi</i> ?	
2. How is worker's subjectivity operationally linked to contemporary organisational control?	
3. How are organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power operationally linked in the context of contemporary work organisations?	The splits at the core of organisational studies are changing: a) The structure-human factor split is changing b) The manager-managed split is changing
4. How do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?	Limited to: a) Examination of contemporary experience of work in terms of basic approach to work b) Examination of the understanding of work in terms of career
5. Do the workers have individual agency in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age?	In what ways do workers exercise their individual agency in contemporary organisations?
6. Is there a particular contemporary worker subjectivity that could be seen to encapsulate the contemporary worker's relationship to one's self as a worker and to one's work?	Do the people working in the industry form a particular type of category of persons?
Overall, 7. Can it be postulated from the way in which the subjects speak of themselves, of others and of their work, that rather than being repressed and restricted the workers are in fact enabled, liberated and, in short, emancipated?	Limited to: a) Examination of emancipation from organisational control b) Examination of ways in which emancipation might - or might not – manifest and materialise itself in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age

Table 2: Summary of the Overall Research Questions and Specific Research Questions

2.5 The Empirical Context

Finland is the leading information society in the world (Castells and Himanen, 2001; Castells, 2001).²⁶ One might ask: if Finland is so special in this respect, why not explore its national peculiarities in depth? There are probably some national cultural characteristics that contribute to Finland being the leading information society in the world. If we are to believe Castells and Himanen, this is indeed the case (2001). Castells and Himanen talk of the Finnish Model of the Information Society and dedicate a whole book to its examination and exploration (Castells and Himanen, 2001). They also conduct a comparative study on Finland, the USA, Singapore and the EU (see appendix 12). The comparison illustrates the particularities of the Finnish Model of the Information Society in terms of wealth, economy, openness and technology (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 13-20). Furthermore, Himanen (2001) explores the hacker ethic in the context of the Finnish information society. The book also outlines some of the Finnish peculiarities in terms of work mentality and working culture. All in all, then, research on Finnish working peculiarities and the Finnish model of the information society has already been conducted and theories around it formulated. There is no need to attempt to redo this.

This is a study of contemporary organisational control in the context of a pioneering industry in the world's leading information society. If the UK were the leading information society and leading the way in mobile content provision, the research would have been conducted in the UK. Basically, the focus here is on the examination of organisational control in the pioneer industry of the leading society of an emerging era of networks and information. The intention is not to explain the peculiarities, underlying values or institutional structures of the nation in which these contemporary organisations are located. Finally, in addition to networking and informational dimensions, *globalisation* is the third fundamental characteristic that sets this era apart from its predecessors, according to Castells (1996, p. 77). Given this globalising

²⁶ Obviously, all societies have information. However Finland is a leading information society in terms of information technology, see <http://virtual.finland.fi/info/english/>; see also the reports of the World Economic Forum <http://www.weforum.org/> (Global IT-report, 2003 according to which Finland is the leading information society in terms of Information Technology; Global Competitiveness Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003, according to which Finland has been the most competitive country 2001 and 2002 and is currently, in 2003, the second most competitive country in the world). The Finnish model of the information society (see appendix 11) is also distinct in terms of wealth, economy and openness (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 13-20; for a comparative study on Finland, the USA, Singapore and the EU see appendix 12).

tendency at the core of the networking society, focusing on the national context alone would be rather peculiar. It is understandable that Castells has done this in the process of illustrating that there is indeed a new era emerging (Castells, 1996). However, after having established the presence of an essentially global networking era, the concentration on the national to the relative neglect of the local and the global would be somewhat odd.

2.5.1 The Information Age and Networks

The information age provides the sociological and historical context in which the subject of the study is examined.²⁷ The context and subject of research are interrelated. However, rather than being the direct subject of research, the information age provides the contextual frame of reference for the interpretation of findings. Its networking aspect is also directly examined. This is because networks are an organisational phenomenon and networking is a way of organising. In fact, according to Castells, networks are proliferating precisely because of their valuable organising qualities. "Networks have extraordinary advantages as organizing tools because of their inherent flexibility and adaptability, critical features in order to survive and prosper in a fast-changing environment. This is why networks are proliferating in all domains of the economy and society, outcompeting and outperforming vertically organized corporations and centralized bureaucracies" (Castells, 2001, pp. 1-2). For example in the Finnish context this is illustrated by new networks among the universities, research centres, national resources and ministries and private financiers (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 47-79; see appendix 11). Finally, Castells also argues that the new network era is illustrated by the transformation of work and employment (2001, p. 278; 1996, pp. 216).

The networking logic is also said to impact on the way power operates (Castells, 1996, p. 500). Therefore, networks and networking are also likely to impact on the way in which control operates in the organisations under study.

"Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power and culture. While the networking form of organization has existed in other times and spaces, the new information

²⁷ The terms 'information age' and 'network era' are used interchangeably, since Castells and Himanen (2001) speak of the Finnish model of the information society and Castells (1996, 2000) of the network society and the network economy.

technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure” (Castells, 1996, p. 500).

Castells defines the network era as essentially informational and global in character (1996, p. 77). The new era is networked because, “under the new historical conditions productivity is generated through and competition is played out on a global network of interaction between business networks“ (Castells, 1996, p. 77; 77-147).²⁸ Castells defines a network as “a set of interconnected nodes. A node is a point at which a curve intersects itself” (Castells, 1996, p. 501). In taking a Foucauldian stance, these networks are seen as relations and constructions that are always innately political, historic and context-dependent, as opposed to apolitical, ahistorical and existing in their own right, independently of context and human interaction.

In this study the purpose is to research whether these postulates hold true in the industry under examination. Can this networking logic be seen to operate in the industry under investigation? Basically, the presence of networking logic is researched by identifying *how* the HRM personnel, on one hand, and workers, on the other, network (have social relations)? Is this (in a personal or business capacity):

- a) with their colleagues from the same professional group in their own company?
- b) with other company workers outside their own professional group and outside office hours?
- c) with their colleagues from the same professional group outside their own company?
- d) with industry people in industry-level meetings, associations and get-togethers?
- e) with their own professional group outside their own industry?

Additionally, is there a sense of belonging to an industry, or indeed, to a certain sub-culture/s to be identified that can be seen to function as a premise or limit for networking?

²⁸ The other two tendencies of the network era are *informational* and *global*: “It is *informational* because the productivity of units or agents in this economy fundamentally depends upon their capacity to generate, process and apply efficiently knowledge-based information. It is *global* because the core activities of production, consumption, and circulation, as well as their components are organised on a global scale, either directly or through a network of linkages between economic agents. It is *networked* because, under the new historical conditions productivity is generated through and competition is played out on a global network of interaction between business networks” (Castells, 1996, p. 77; 77-147).

- a) Among the people working in the industry, who speak of themselves and people in their own industry as distinct from workers in other industries?
- b) Among the people working in the company, who speak of themselves and the other workers in the company as distinct from workers in other companies in the industry?
- c) Among different professional groups in the industry who speak of themselves and the others belonging to the same professional group as distinct from workers in other industries?

2.5.2 The Industry

The mobile content providing industry is defined as the industry that designs, produces and distributes products and services that add value to mobile devices. It is challenging to describe a new, emerging industry, such as the mobile content providing industry, as there is little previously conducted research and indeed no systematically gathered data to draw from.²⁹ I shall start with a short history of the field. In fact, telecom operators were the developers of the first content products and services for mobile phones. Thus they, in fact, initiated the field that has now become an industry of its own. Subsequently they had, and still have, the avant-garde knowledge of new products and services for the industry. Furthermore, they offer distribution platforms for all the mobile content products/services. That is to say, any company wanting to distribute its services must have an agreement with at least one operator. Thus, the operators have a lot of influence, as they can refuse to make a contract with any particular service provider. Hence, in one sense, prior to selling their products/services to the final consumers, the mobile content providing companies must first of all sell their ideas and products to the operator/s. Further, there are also services that the operators purchase from the content providing companies and market as their own. What this all translates as is that the operators have been screening, and still constantly screen, the companies operating in the industry, be they service providers or content providers.³⁰ Thus, overall, it is fair to say that for the time being the operators have unsurpassed knowledge of the industry both in terms of its history and of the present and in terms of overall

²⁹ Thus, there are no industry statistics on average company size, turnover, female/male ratio or average salary that could be drawn upon and which would enhance the description of employment relations in this industry.

³⁰ That said, the operators do not monitor or impact on the internal organisation of the content and service providers. Operators are the clients or distributors and thus their interest lies in the end product and not in its production process.

understanding of the companies operating in the field. Altogether, then, it can be said that the role of the telecom operators in the mobile content providing industry is somewhat unique (Stenbock, 2000, in Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 22-23). There was no list or register of companies operating in the mobile content providing industry. Therefore, in order to form the base for sampling in terms of companies operating in the industry and to get an overall idea of the industry, expert interviews were conducted with heads of content production/products within three operators.

2.5.3 The Services and the Companies

In Finland the first services offered were the sms text messaging services, launched by a Finnish telecom operator, Radiolinja, in 1996 (see figure below). Currently over two billion text messages are sent annually in Finland. The text messaging-based services are still widely used. Ring tones are another product group that has incrementally increased in popularity.

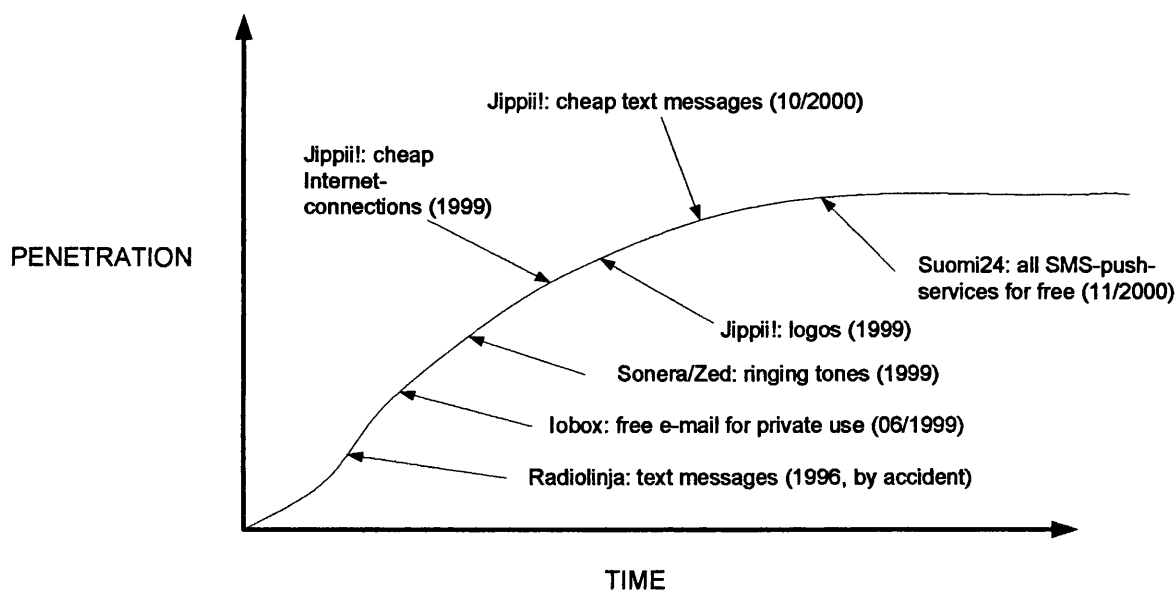


Figure 1: The Entrance of Mobile Content Services into the Market

The development of mobile content products is likened to the development of telecommunications technologies in general (see figure below). The telecommunications industry peaked in 1999 and early 2000 (Valtonen, 2001; Aula and Oksanen, 2000). However, this industry bubble burst later in the year 2000 (ibid.). As a result, several companies faced bankruptcy during 2000-2001. Many of the remaining ones merged and this trend is continuing today. To oversimplify, the bubble burst because the expectations of the investors and companies for the adaptation and purchasing rate of the new 3rd generation mobile technologies were not met by the reality of the consumers. Also, the expenditure needed to build the 3rd generation infrastructure was underestimated. In

essence, advances in telecom technologies have not been taken up by consumers to the extent predicted. Finally, the technologies have not been as flawless as expected.

<p>2G WIRELESS The technology of most current digital phones <u>Features include:</u> -Phone calls -Voice mail -Receive simple e-mail messages [-text-messages]</p> <p>Speed: 10/kilobits/sec. Time to download a 3-min. MP3 song: 31-41 min</p>	<p>2.5G WIRELESS The best technology now widely available <u>Features include:</u> -Phone calls/fax -Voice mail -Send/receive large email messages -Web browsing -Navigation/maps -News updates</p> <p>Speed: 64-144Kbs Time to download the MP3 song: 6-9 min.</p>	<p>3G WIRELESS Combines mobile phone, laptop PC and television <u>Features include:</u> -Phone calls/fax -Global roaming - Send/receive large e-mail messages -High-speed web -Navigation/maps -Videoconferencing -TV streaming -Electronic agenda meeting reminder Speed: 144Kbs-2megabits/sec. Time to download the MP3 song: 11sec.- 11/2 min</p>
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Table 3: The Development of Mobile Phone Technologies

Source: Newsweek, 28 May 2001, p. 22

In essence, the mobile content providing industry emerged in the *mid 1990's*. It marked the coming together of people with information technology know-how and new media know-how. Basically, people from the two industries often joined forces in the Finnish context to establish mobile content providing companies.

BACKGROUND OF THE MOBILE CONTENT PRODUCTION COMPANIES' FOUNDERS

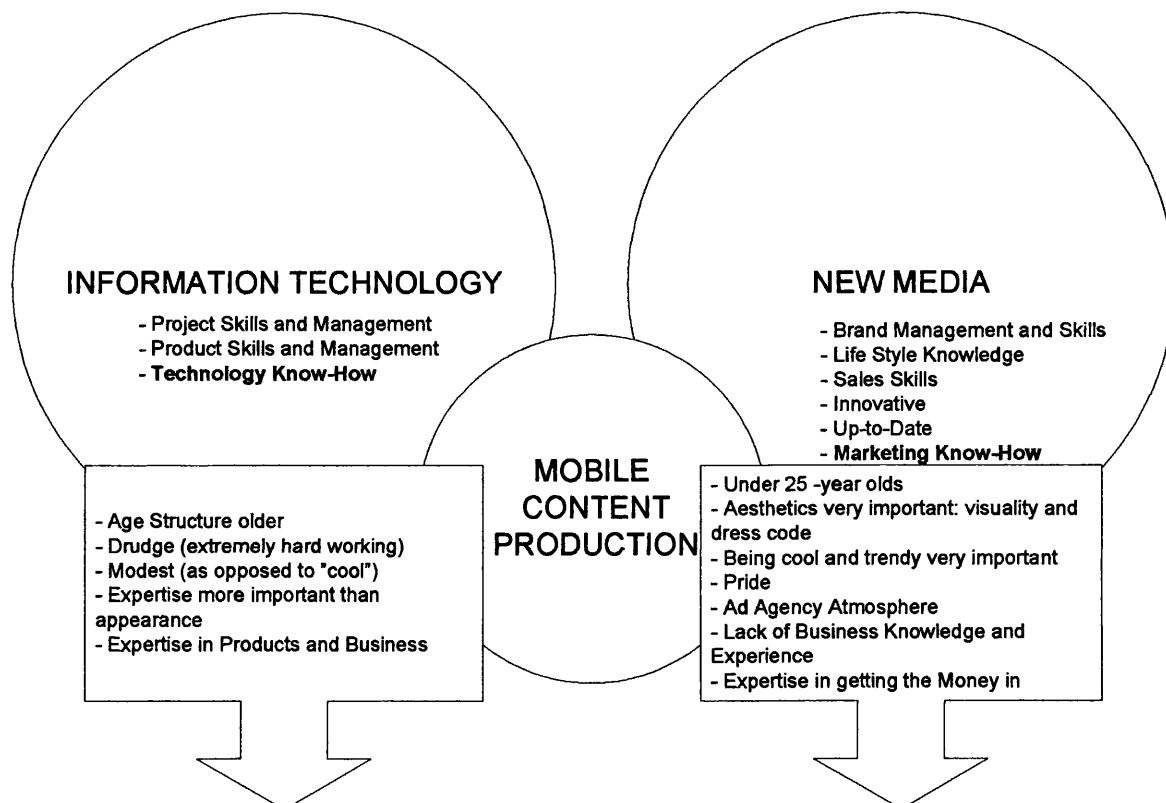


Figure 2: Background of the Mobile Content Company Founders

Source: Interviews with the Industry Experts

There is little documented research on the mobile content providing companies (Aula and Oksanen, 2000). A web-page data search on the companies was conducted. However, the informational content of the web-pages was small for the purposes of this particular research. Typically, a short history including the main partners, products and contact details was provided. According to this information, the companies were established in the later half of the 1990's. They had co-operating partners and clients both in Finland and abroad. They offered technical solutions for mobile content production, provision, platforms and distribution. They were nearly all located in Helsinki-Espoo area, within 15 kilometres of each other. However, very little - if anything - was said about the internal affairs of the companies, their values, practices, culture or employees. For this reason, the data collected from web-pages was not further utilised.

2.5.4 Limiting the Scope

This study focuses on examining the mobile content providing industry in the Finnish context. The interviews were conducted between 7 January 2002 and 30 April 2002. Furthermore, the organisations under investigation are only those whose *main* line of business is mobile content provision. That is to say that the sub-sections or departments of telecommunications, traditional media or IT companies are not included in the study, even if the mobile content providing section of the company was outsourced or a physically separate unit.³¹ In practical terms this means the companies researched are small or medium-sized, with 10-200 employees. If the company size emerges as an issue in the research, it will be addressed in the discussion of the results (Part III). In addition, the empirical examination of the industry and associated companies is limited to the Finnish geographic area. This means that the company offices abroad have been identified and documented, but have not been considered in the sampling. This has been done for theoretical and pragmatic reasons, the theoretical justification being that my interest is in the pioneer industry of the leading information society. As to the pragmatic

³¹ This was because, it was presupposed that the smaller sections of the company are often largely managed through the same practices as the rest of the company. Further, the employees are likely to have been affected by the organisational work mentality and to be attempting to conform to the normative framework of the organisation, particularly as – unless just hired – they certainly, due to the newness of the whole industry, have been recently appointed to the mobile content providing division from some other division of the company.

justification, flying to remote locations to carry out interviews was impossible given the time and financial frames of the research. Also, in reality, the “international offices” of the companies in questions are sales offices typically run by one full-time worker. Finally, all the companies in Finland are spatially distributed within a small geographic area. This geographic proximity of the companies was not a selection criterion for the research. The ability to statistically generalise the findings is limited to that defined by sampling (see next section). However, *analytical generalisations* might be drawn from this particular case. It is also emphasised that, despite the fact the field is technology driven and a hub of much contemporary technological research and development, *the focus in this study is not a technological one in any way*. Thus, this study is not about the impact of mobile technology on the workers’ perceptions, opinions, attitudes, beliefs or subjective experiences. It is only in the chapter describing the context of the study that the fact that the field under investigation is technologically dynamic and innovative is addressed.

2.5.5 Sampling

As stated, the first level of interviews was conducted with industry experts for the purpose of understanding the context and for purposes of sampling. The industry-level interviews established four things. They:

1. defined the industry as the one providing and distributing mobile value-adding services for mobile devices, primarily for mobile phones
2. distinguished the role and function of service provider and content provider
3. yielded a list of companies that would form the base for sampling (figure below)
4. further familiarised the researcher with a specialist terminology of the industry.

The results in terms of the sampling were the following: altogether 20 (21) companies were mentioned by the operators³². 50% of these were taken to the sample. This was considered to be a high enough percentage, and also the maximum amount of companies that one researcher could approach and research in a given timeframe and with limited resources. With regard to forming the sample, all the companies mentioned by all the operators interviewed were automatically included. There were three mobile content providing companies that all three operators mentioned. However, two of these merged before sampling took place. For that reason, the two merged companies were counted as one. Furthermore, all the companies that were mentioned by more than one operator were incorporated into the sample. There were five such companies. In addition, there were twelve mobile content providing companies that were mentioned by one operator only. Using simple random sampling, a further three companies out of the 12 mentioned by only one of the three operators formed part of the sample.

³² More companies were actually mentioned, but as previously said, the companies for which this was not the main line of business were not included. Also, it is important to note that the fact that the operators mentioned these companies does **not** mean that they have a business relation, or any co-operation at all, with the companies in question. The operators know the field and considered that these companies – irrespective whether they have co-operation with them or not – are interesting to research.

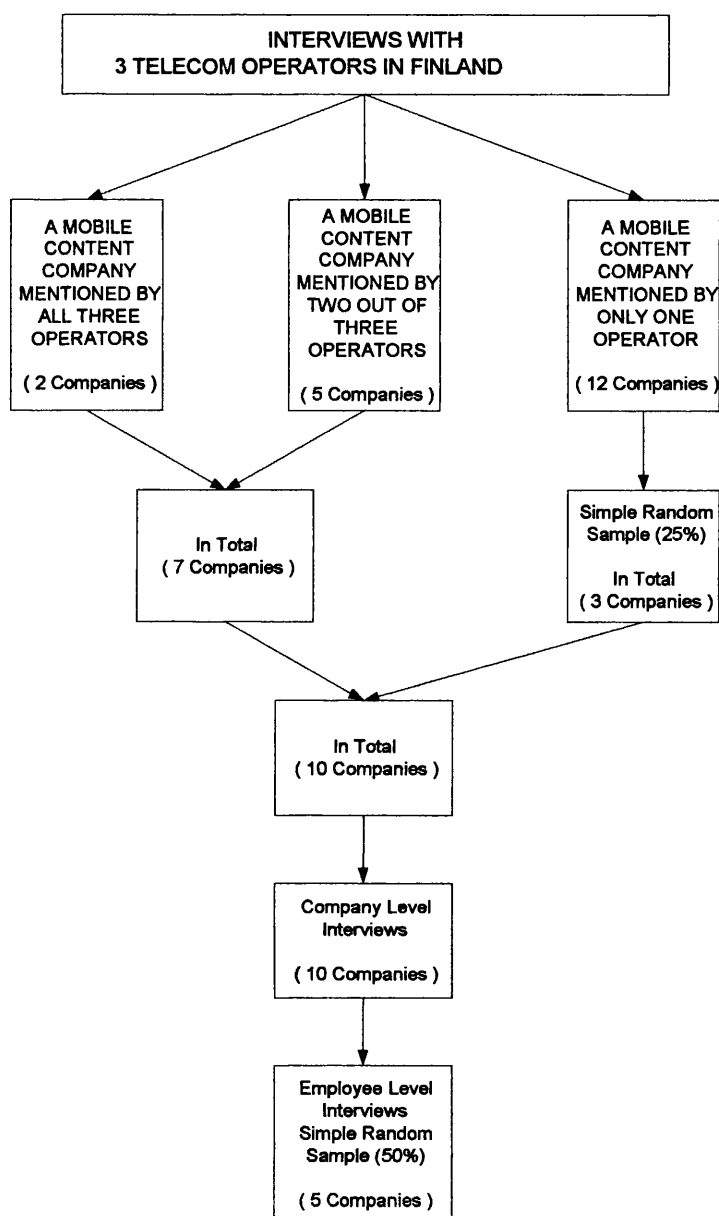


Figure 3: Sampling

Conducting the Interviews

With regard to the *time and place* of the interviews conducted: *The interviews were conducted in Finland between 7 January and 30 April 2002.* The interviews were carried out *in the workplaces of the interviewees* in order to save their time. Finally, the interviews were conducted in the companies *during 'traditional' office hours*, i.e. between 8am and 5pm. Furthermore, *all the interviews were conducted in the Finnish language*³³ (see appendix 4 for an overview of the interviews).

³³ This is justified in that, in taking a Foucauldian view, the role of language in the constitution/construing of subjectivity is essential (Clegg, 1998, pp. 29). Further, it is postulated that the subjects can express their thoughts most accurately in their native language.

In summary, the sample comprised all the companies that were mentioned by more than one operator and 25% of the remaining 12 that were mentioned only by one operator. In these 10 companies, 10 interviews were conducted with those responsible for the companies' HRM. After this HRM interview round, a further sample of 50% of the 10 companies was drawn, by utilising simple random sampling. In these remaining five companies, interviews with workers from different professional groups were conducted. Altogether 15 worker level interviews were conducted in five companies. In each of the five companies an equal number of interviews – 3 – was conducted. The interviewees for this final round were selected through theoretical sampling together with the HRM responsible.

Part II: Methodology and Analysis

3.1 Research Process

The overall research process consists of seven interrelated parts (Flick, 1998). These are: theoretical paradigm, empirical paradigm, research strategy, research design, methods of data collection, data analyses and, finally, discussion of findings (see figure). The discussion at this point starts from the empirical paradigm (for theoretical paradigm see chapters 1-2). This is followed by the explication of the selected research strategy and design. After this, a description of the data collection and data analysis is provided. Part III of the thesis includes the explication of results and discussion of findings. Finally, all these different parts of the research process are closely interrelated. In fact, *the research process is a circular rather than a linear one* (see Flick, 1998, pp. 39-47).

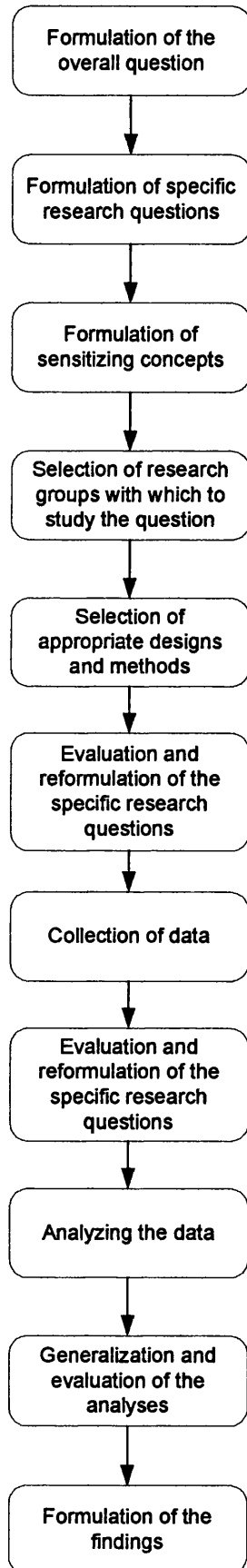


Figure 4: Overall Research Process

Source: Flick, 1998, p. 48

3.1.1 The Research Paradigm

The empirical research conducted falls under the paradigm of *qualitative research*. The main reason for choosing the qualitative paradigm is its suitability for examining the research questions at hand. To start with, the purpose was to establish the contemporary prevalence of conventional control mechanisms within the mobile content providing industry in Finland. The industry in question has been little researched. Therefore, attempting to conduct quantitative research in this particular context is difficult. Indeed, it would in any case require *exploratory qualitative research* of some sort in order to be able to map the core variables relating to the phenomena³⁴. The second purpose was to establish the way in which the working subjects *experience* themselves as workers and *view* their work *in contemporary organisational contexts*. Subsequently, because experiences are difficult to examine in their contextuality by drawing on quantitative methods, this line of inquiry further supports the selection of the qualitative research paradigm and methods.

In addition, qualitative research is more in line with the epistemological premises of the study. After all, the viewpoint taken in the study is that reality is discursive, power-laden and socially constructed (Foucault, 1997, 2000; Hosking and Morley, 1991). For that reason, social phenomena ought to be studied in their complexity and in the entirety of their context, rather than in a deductive manner, in out-of-context laboratories, as Flick vividly posits (1998, p. 10). In addition, qualitative research enables and requires reflexivity and thus also takes into account the researcher's subjectivity (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Despite the fascinating epistemological differences between quantitative and qualitative research the main reason for choosing the particular paradigm was pragmatic (for more on epistemological differences see Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), 2000, p. 435). Consequently, the main criterion for selecting the paradigm and associated methods was to select the methods that would yield the information that addressed the research questions of the study in the most appropriate manner.

³⁴ Indeed, it would also be interesting to attempt to analyse the frequency and distribution of the hypothesised contemporary worker subjectivity in this particular industry or even in the working population at large. However, at this point in time, without knowing any of the core variables constituting such phenomena, this would be exceedingly difficult to carry out in a credible manner.

3.1.2 The Research Strategy and Design

In deciding upon the research strategy the 'three criteria categorisation' proposed by Yin was used (1994, pp. 4-6). Yin's categorisation consists of the following parts:

1. The type of research question(s) posed
2. The extent of control which an investigator has over actual behavioural events
3. The degree of focus on contemporary, as opposed to historical, events.

To begin with, the questions posed are predominantly '*how*' questions. Thus, the questions are more *exploratory and explanatory* than aimed at describing, for example, a particular incident. Rather than attempting to establish frequency, the aim is to establish *how* organisational control operates in contemporary work organisations. Conceptually speaking, the purpose is to establish *how* organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power are operationally linked in the context of contemporary work organisations. Secondly, I obviously have *very little control over the events* taking place within the mobile content providing industry in Finland or in any of the organisations operating in the industry. Furthermore, it is not just the context or settings of the study that I cannot control, but also the research subjects. In fact, one reason for selecting semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection was indeed to leave the interviewees some room to explicate their experiences and views. Thirdly, the *focus is on contemporary phenomena with a real-life context* (Yin, 1994, pp. 1-17). That is to say that I aim at both exploring and explaining what is happening to contemporary organisational control in a specific context at a particular point in time. The aim is both to *explore* what is happening in this avant-garde context to organisational control mechanisms and to *explain* how exactly this is occurring in terms of largely *a priori* defined theoretical concepts. Therefore, *a mixture of an exploratory and explanatory case study* seems to be the most appropriate research strategy.

The Case Study as a Research Strategy

The case study is used as a research strategy for the following reasons. This study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, in which the boundaries between the researched occurrence and its context are not clearly evident. Consequently, using a case study as a research strategy seems very suitable, *as this can take into consideration the contextual conditions that affect the subjects* (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Also, despite some doubt being cast on the case study as a comprehensive research strategy, my views coincide with those of scholars who argue

that “Like other strategies case study is a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of pre-specified procedures (Yin, 1994, p. 15, see also Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), 2000, pp. 435-455). In addition, the case study is a rather flexible strategy in the sense that it allows the collection of data by utilising several different methods, as well as the mixing of these methods (Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), 2000, p. 435). However, at the same time, there is no requirement that any particular research method has to be used in carrying out this strategy. Thus, it does not limit the research in terms of methods. Finally, one might ask why not, in conducting partly exploratory qualitative research and utilising Atlas/ti to facilitate the analysis, draw upon grounded theory? The reason is that I have a set of *a priori* developed research questions, the accuracy of which I wish to examine and explore in the context of contemporary organisation. As opposed to grounded theory, case study strategy requires the *a priori* development of a theory about what is being studied.

The case study also forms the design of this research. It thus provides the logic that links the data collected to the research questions as well as to the conclusions drawn from the data. The research is a single case study of a pioneer industry in the world’s leading information society. This pioneer industry is the mobile content providing industry in Finland. Furthermore, this single industry case consists of multiple companies (more on sampling, in section 2.5.5). Finally, the main rationale for selecting a single industry as a case to research, as opposed to researching multiple industries in a comparative manner, is the *postulated revelatory nature of the case*. This is because no previous research has been conducted in this industry from this theoretical angle. Finally, context, for the purposes of this research, is seen as multi-layered, in that global, national, industry and organisational contexts are viewed as *nested* in one another.

3.2 Data Collection

The main method of data collection is *individual semi-structured interviews*. These are conducted on three different levels, namely: industry level, company level and worker level. The industry-level interviews are expert interviews and the remaining two levels of interviews consist of standard semi-structured interviews. However, each level has its own topic guide as well as research questions specifically associated with it. Altogether, 28 interviews are conducted on these three different levels: three on industry level; 10

on company level and 15 on worker level. The interviews are structured according to general topics and associated questions. The aim is to enable the respondents to talk at length and to give them some time to reflect (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000, p. 45). Therefore the *topic guides* consist of open questions derived from the research questions (i.e. hypothesis-directed questions).

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The industry level interviews are *semi-structured expert interviews* (see Meuser and Nagel, 1991, in Flick, 1998, pp. 130-131.). The purpose of these interviews is to learn more about the industry and to establish the sampling base in terms of companies operating in the industry. The interviewees for the industry round are selected on the basis of their profound expertise in the industry, as demonstrated by job title and job content. The interest is primarily in their expertise and not in the person. On the company level specialists, namely HRM personnel, are also interviewed. However, here both their expertise and their personhood are of interest. Therefore, the interviews conducted with them are not expert interviews but typical semi-structured interviews. The purpose is to learn, on the one hand, about HRM-related control mechanisms and, on the other hand, about HRM personnel and their experiences of contemporary workers, working and organising (for more on semi-structured interviews see Groeben, 1990; Scheele and Groeben, 1988; in Flick, 1998, pp. 130-131). The worker-level interviews are typical semi-structured interviews. The aim of the worker-level interviews is to establish how the working subjects *experience* themselves as workers and view their work in contemporary organisations. *In practice these views and experiences are researched by examining the way in which the working subjects talk about themselves, the organisation and their work.*

Why select individual semi-structured interviews as the main method of data collection? To start with, this study is based upon a Foucauldian theoretical framework and according to that framework the role of *language and discourses in the constitution of subjectivity* is essential. For this reason, it seems rather straightforward to collect data in the form of interviews and to analyse them in terms of themes in the text. Furthermore, the interest is in examining the *individual worker's* experience and views, hence the individual interviews. In addition, the aim is to compare and contrast these individual accounts in order to establish whether the workers share a particular type of

contemporary worker subjectivity. This contemporary worker subjectivity exists if the workers explicate their experience in terms of the same themes. Nevertheless, conducting individual interviews does not entail reducing the analysis to the individual and presupposing individual experiences and talk as reducible to the individual *per se*.

“While experiences may appear to be unique to the individual, the representations of such experiences do not arise in individual minds. In some measure they are the outcome of social processes” (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000, p. 43).

3.2.2 The Limitations of the Method

There are also limitations and dangers in using this method, in this manner, in this study. First of all, there is a danger that the division of the interviewee rounds into “worker” and “company” itself contributes to reproducing the criticised split between organisational structures (company) and human practices (workers and their social relations). However, it is argued that *it is precisely by researching in this conventional manner that the differences from previous organisational findings can be distinguished*. Secondly, examining talk and text poses its own problems, such as: what is the relationship between talk and action? For this reason, many of the questions have sections which examine everyday routines in practice. There are direct questions about people’s actions and way of acting. On the worker level, there is also a section in which the diaries (calendars) of workers are gone through and, for example, the number of meetings, extra hours and so forth are in this way double-checked. Also, many of the questions are researched both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, they are double- or even triple-checked in different ways in different parts of the topic guides (see appendices 1-3 for topic guides). Finally, the answers given at company and worker levels are compared and contrasted and any deviation identified and further explored. Thirdly, longitudinal analysis can be conducted only by comparing this data to secondary sources - in this case to conventional literature and research. Fourthly, there is a danger of reproducing dominant power relations, such as those relating to the central role of the operators within the industry as well as the relevance of conventional HRM. These dangers are explicitly pinpointed here and an attempt has been made to minimise their reproduction.

3.3 Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted with *Atlas/ti*, which is a tool for qualitative data analysis management and model building. The utilisation of *Atlas/ti* enabled an efficient handling of large amounts of data in terms of selecting, coding and retrieving the text, along with simultaneous writing of notes and memos. In addition to these textual-level functions, the program also has another level which facilitated conceptual work by allowing the elaboration of complex networks. In my case, *Atlas /ti* was chosen specifically because of this unique network-building feature and associated textual/conceptual traversability. This feature enabled the graphical construction of concepts and theories in terms of themes and based upon relationships. Finally, the decision on software was made solely on pragmatic grounds. It was essentially based upon personal preference with regard to the program's *usability* and the software's *unique technical properties*³⁵.

The data analysis consists of two main levels, that is *the textual level* and *the network level*. Furthermore, in this research the textual level of analysis comprises two stages. The first, *textual*, analysis includes distinguishing the code categories and codes and culminates in the construction of the coding frames for each interview round (see appendices 5 and 6). After the interview transcripts of each round have been coded to *Atlas/ti*, the further analysis of the material can begin. Thus, in the *second stage of textual analysis* the focus is on organising the coded text by themes. This involves examining quotations extracted from their interview context in order to distinguish the recurring themes in relation to the research questions. The focus is primarily on establishing the common themes. However, the themes that are missing in relation to the research questions are also identified. Finally, the *network level of analysis* consists of elaborating the relationships between the different themes associated with each research question or with different parts of these. This culminates in distinguishing the common themes relating to each research question and illustrating in a graphical form

³⁵ Therefore, the theoretical underpinnings functioning on the premises of the computer software are not discussed, nor are their possible inconsistencies with the theoretical framework of this thesis addressed. This is because *Atlas/ti* is computer software which *assists* in handling a large amount of data, but does not do any of the thinking or interpreting on the researcher's behalf; it is merely a technical facilitator. Also, it does not force one to alter one's thinking or interpretation in one direction or another, which would necessitate drawing upon particular types of theoretical framework, to the relative neglect of others. *Atlas/ti* is based upon grounded theory; however, this does not pose any relevant limitations to the usage of the program with regard to this study. Thus, it can also be used with *a priori* structured frameworks as has been done in this study. If the program had limited the selection of the mode of interpretation or impacted on the results in any significant manner, the epistemological grounds for this would have been explicated. However, as this is not the case and *Atlas/ti* is only used as a technical facilitator, there is no need, in the author's view, to explicate the epistemological premises of this computer software.

(in a form of figures, i.e. thematic networks) both these and the sub-themes of which they are made up. The networks are used, in the results and discussion part of the thesis, to assist in theory building. It is also at this point that the results emerging in relation to each research question are examined jointly. Finally, although the analyses have been set out here in a linear manner, the process of analysis has in practice been a more *circular* one. That is to say that, for example, the analyses conducted on the network level have in practice largely been performed in parallel to the textual level of analysis.

The method and process of analysis are examined below. The outcomes of the analysis are examined, research question by research question, in the results and discussion part of the study. I shall start by explicating the process of analysis in more practical terms, i.e. in terms of how the analysis was actually conducted. This explication of *the analysis process* is divided into three sub-sections, namely:

1. *The coding process*: coding the text as categories and codes
2. *The organisation process*: organising the coded text by common themes in relation to the research questions
3. *The network-building process*: elaborating the identified themes into networks.

3.3.1 The Coding Process: Coding the Text as Categories and Codes

In essence, in the coding process the interview transcripts are coded as code categories and codes. Altogether, the coding process consists of four mutually interconnected steps, namely:

1. Distinguishing the main categories
2. Establishing codes under the categories
3. Redefining the categories and further specifying the codes
4. The development of a coding frame [for each of the two rounds of interviews]

The steps might seem straightforward; however, before any coding in Atlas/ti could take place the data needed to be prepared and assigned to Atlas/ti. The interviews were first transcribed into a format compatible with Atlas/ti. Each of the transcripts was approximately 15-20 pages long. Furthermore, each transcript was read through approximately twice in the first instance. Whilst reading through the interview transcripts initial category suggestions were made *manually*. Also, notes and memos were written on the emerging categories and associated issues and peculiarities. This

same procedure was carried out for each interview. After this, a couple of interviews were read simultaneously, section by section, to cross-check the commonality of the categories emerging. In this process, the research questions, as well as the topic guides, were also referred back to and, for example, the category names were largely drawn from the specified research questions. This was done for the most part in order to facilitate memorising. With regard to the internal order of the coding, the main categories emerging were first coded (step 1). After distinguishing the main categories, the codes under each category were coded (step 2). Finally, the main issues emerging in relation to each code were further specified and, often as a result, the code was subdivided (step 3). This process was time-consuming and included re-coding, deleting codes and merging codes. Then, as a result of abundant manual coding and re-coding, the coding frame was formed and the interviews coded accordingly to Atlas/ti. Finally, each interview round was coded separately, but following these same steps. *Each round of interviews had its own coding frame and subsequently also its own hermeneutic unit in Atlas/ti.* Nevertheless, some of the code categories and associated codes were the same in both coding frames. This was simply because the examination of some of the research questions required a comparative examination of both interview rounds.

After all the interviews were coded to Atlas/ti, the coding list was printed out and all the quotations were printed out code by code. At this stage, after reading through the material again, some codes were merged. Also at this stage, the codes that had only a few quotations relating to them were noted; In practice, this was done by printing out the coding frame from Atlas/ti *sorted by rate of recurrence* [frequency] *of quotations*, along with the *code tables* indicating the number of times the code is found in each interview transcript [i.e. primary document]. The purpose of examining these lists was to identify the codes that had quotations associated with them across the majority of the interviews. On the other hand, the aim was also to distinguish the codes that gained support in less than 50% of the interviews. These codes were not included in the analysis. Only the codes that had quotations linked to them - in 50% or more of the interviews - were written out and included in the analysis. Thus, *the first stage of textual analysis culminated in the establishment of the coding frames, which indicated the code-categories and codes used in the analysis* (appendices 5 and 6). Furthermore, this established coding frame would function as a premise for the second stage of the analysis. However, before proceeding to explicate the second stage of the analysis, let

me illustrate the way in which this first level of textual analysis was conducted in the HRM round and in the Worker round.

Coding the HRM Round (i.e. Company Level)

The purpose of the HRM round was, first of all, to identify the extent to which conventional HRM techniques, personnel and departments are present in the contemporary organisations being studied (see research question 1). Therefore, preliminary examination of the texts began by distinguishing the main categories, such as “HRM techniques” and “HRM personnel and departments”. Preliminary examination of the texts also initially established the codes within the categories in the interviews - such as “recruitment”, “job descriptions”, and “career development” - under the “HRM techniques” category. These were coded accordingly, with the aim of distinguishing and establishing the emerging codes and categories that related to the research questions. In many cases the names of the codes were derived from the topic guide topics and the names of the categories from the research questions. The aim of the first level of textual analysis was to establish the codes and categories that emerged and maintained *consistency across the majority of the HRM-level interviews*. As the process continued, the categories were further defined, sometimes even re-defined. Also, the codes were further specified, e.g. recruitment became “HRM 1A1: recruitment practices” - HRM 1A1 referring to research question 1 and its sub-section A. The final 1 after the letter A refers to the number of the HRM technique in question. Furthermore, “recruitment practices” specifies that it was indeed the everyday practices of recruitment that were under examination and not, for example, the ideals, best practices or specialities of recruitment. This *further specification of the codes* was often a result of repeatedly reading through and deliberating upon the data collected. Finally, at the end of the first level of textual analysis, the coding frame comprising the list of codes taken to the analysis was formed (see appendix 5 for HRM-round coding frame).

Coding the Worker Round (i.e. Worker Level)

Overall, in the worker round the first level of textual analyses was slightly more straightforward to carry out, *as the coding frame came to be formed in such a way that each question in a topic guide had particular code/s to which it was linked* (see appendices 6 and 7). The examples below illustrate the way in which the worker-round topic guide is coded (see appendix 7). The coding of the worker round was carried out by myself and my research assistant. The inter-coder reliability was high, in that that we

had a difference of opinion only on 4 occasions. This is because both the coding frame and its links to the interview transcripts were straightforwardly explicated in a manner illustrated below.

1. How did you enter this industry and how did you enter this workplace?

Codes: "Framework 1: entry to industry and company" AND "Background 1: entry"

2. How do you define the industry in which you are currently working?

Code: "Framework 2: defining industry"

3. How do you define your own professional reference group?

Code: "Framework 3: defining sub-groups"

16. How well do you, in your opinion, manage to distinguish your spare time and your work time? Do you think about work-related matters or do extra work after office hours?

Code: "Work Attitude 4A4: leisure time and work"

Finally, let me explain how the codes should be read, i.e. what the names, letters and numbers stand for. In looking at the codes and the associated coding frame, the first words, written in upper case illustrate the name of the code category, e.g. CAREER or WORK ATTITUDE. Most of the time this refers back directly to a particular research question and even has a number for the research question following the word(s). Due to the fact that some of the research questions have "A" and "B" parts, the capital letter after the name distinguishes which specified research question is in question. Furthermore, after the code category names written in capitals there is frequently a number, followed by a code specification written in small letters, as illustrated below:

CAREER4B2: value of work

CAREER4B3: work motivation

Here CAREER4B refers to research question 4, part B. The specification following 4B refers to a sub-dimension that further specifies and relates to a specified research question on career, in the light of the first stage of textual analysis. In the case of career these further specifying issues seem to be, for example, "value of work" and "work motivation". *These illustrate different dimensions emerging as results from the first stage of textual analysis.* In other words, they are preliminary results that further explicate the code. For this reason they have been labelled as code specifications.

3.3.2 The Organisation Process: Organising the Coded Text by Common Themes

The overall aim of the second stage of textual analysis is to explore and elaborate the common themes in the interviewees' accounts, in relation to the *a priori* set research questions. The research questions have been put forward already in the theoretical part of the study, prior to conducting any primary research (in chapters 1 and 2). The purpose is to explore the interviewees' accounts *in terms of themes* emerging in relation to the research questions. More precisely, *the purpose is to distinguish and elaborate the common themes in relation to the a priori set research questions*. The themes that were hypothesised but are in fact *missing* are also distinguished and explicated. Also, the missing themes and common themes are often compared and contrasted in order to see if they are consistent. This is done because it enables the examination of the uniformity of the common themes and hence facilitates their explication. The analysis method used could be called "theoretical thematic coding", because the themes are examined in relation to the research questions, which in turn have arisen from assumptions made in the theoretical parts of the study. Finally, in the author's view, using thematic analysis by drawing on research questions in the aforementioned manner is *consistent with the research strategy and the design of the study i.e. case study*. This is because case study strategy requires the *a priori* development of a theory of what is being studied, beginning from the design phase of the study (Yin, 1994). In other words, from the start the research has been designed to explore and explain a particular phenomenon from a particular theoretical framework and in terms of *a priori* specified research questions. Thus, in the analysis phase of the study, the data collected is also explored and examined in a consistent manner in relation to the research questions.

Finally, let me say a few words on *the consistency between data collection and data analysis*. It should be noted that the coding frames have also been constructed in a manner which is interrelated with the topic guides (see appendices 1-3). To be more precise, in the HRM interview round each coding category is, by and large, linked to a particular section(s) of the topic guide. In the worker interview round this interconnectedness between the topic guide and the coding frame has been taken furthest, as each of the coding categories and codes in the coding frame are linked to particular topics and questions in the topic guide. Ultimately, in both interview rounds, each topic in the topic guide links back to a particular research question/s of the thesis. For that reason, *the a priori postulated research questions form the framework for*

coding and analysis in this research. In other words, instead of using open coding, axial coding and selective coding *à la* grounded theory, i.e. without *a priori* developed theoretical postulates, in this study *a priori* defined research questions *form the backbone of the analysis*³⁶. That said, *the author would like to emphasise that it is indeed the research questions that have been proposed beforehand and not the themes explicating and explaining these.* That is to say that, in conducting thematic analysis and coding, the research questions have been defined beforehand but the themes, with the help of which these research questions are tackled, explicated and explored, have not been postulated *a priori*, but emerge from the data collected as a result of the analysis. For that reason, despite having set out the research questions before entering the field, there is plenty of room for discovery. I have merely selected the concepts, such as work, career, organising and organisational control, and postulated some changes in these in the light of theoretical examination of the literature and the field. This deliberation has culminated in seven research questions. The role of research questions in conducting the analysis is important, as these form the backbone of the analysis. However, they do not say anything about the thematic content of the analysis *per se*. Let us therefore turn next to explicating the actual thematic analysis in more detail.

Common Themes

The first level of thematic analysis is aimed at distinguishing *common themes* in interviewees' accounts. Commonalities were sought because the aim was *first to establish the most consistently and frequently expressed themes in the interviewees' accounts in relation to the research questions.* The common themes were examined by reading through the quotations linked to each code which was associated with the same research question, again separately. The recurring themes emerging in relation to each *code* that had supporting quotations in at least 50% of the interviews were noted. Then the quotations linked to each code were read through again, this time together with other codes associated with the same research question. Subsequently, the recurring themes emerging in relation to each research question were written down. Finally, the quotations that most clearly illustrated the core of the theme were selected to be used in the explication of the results. A network illustrating those themes linked with each research question was also elaborated at this stage.

³⁶ For more on grounded theory see, Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987, references given in Flick, 1998, p. 179.

Against the backdrop of establishing the common themes, the aim was to look for the missing themes. To be more precise, the aim was to identify the *missing themes* in relation to the research questions. This was done because it is assumed at the outset that sometimes what is left unsaid can also be a finding. This is particularly the case if this missing information is examined together with what is commonly found. Therefore, examining the missing themes and the common themes in a comparative manner was often used to cross-check the findings. For example, the fact that the workers would talk of their work as having intrinsic meaning to them was further supported by the fact that they did not talk of their work in terms of instrumental means such as career, money or status.

In summary, then, the analysis provided the account of the most common themes. The commonality was understood as a combination of *frequency of the theme* (i.e. both within and across interviews) and *prevalence of the theme* across the interviews in a round (i.e. the theme is mentioned in at least 50% of the interviews). In addition, the missing themes in relation to the research questions were extracted. Distinguishing these missing themes was a result of having the common themes established, on the one hand, and having clearly specified research questions, on the other hand, and thus being able to examine the disparities between the two.

3.3.3 The Network-Building Process: Elaborating Themes into Networks

The network-building process took place throughout the textual analysis. In practice thematic networks (i.e. networks in terms of themes) were drawn on each research question. This facilitated *elaborating links between different themes and with theoretical concepts*. In brief, the networks formed the premise for conceptual illustration of what is happening to the phenomena put forward in the research questions. Furthermore, the elaborated networks assist in the explication of the results and discussion of findings in the next part of the thesis.

3.3.4 The Limitations of the Method

The study draws on Foucault, so why not use discourse analysis rather than thematic analysis? It is precisely this drawing on Foucault that makes discourse a problematic term to use in the analysis. In a Foucauldian view discourses are omnipresent and can be seen on many levels. Thus, in this study, discourse is a theoretical concept used in the theoretical sections, for example in explaining the theoretical underpinnings (in sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2). However, due to its omnipresence, it is difficult to use it as the premise for the analysis. Thematic analysis is conducted because themes are more straightforward to identify and examine. The themes and their presence can be explicated as manifestations of certain discourses; however, explaining discourses emerging from discourse analysis as manifestations of yet another set of discourses would be confusing to the reader, to say the least. Finally, with regard to interpretation, research in general and qualitative research in particular always entails interpretation. For that reason, the process through which the final interpretation has come about has been explicated here in detail. This has included, on the one hand, explaining the way in which the text was broken up and reorganised and, on the other hand, explicating the way in which research questions were drawn upon in the interpretation.

III Results and Discussion

The purpose of this section is to examine the outcomes of the analysis and to discuss them in terms of theory. The outcomes of the analysis are written out, research question by research question, starting from question one and ending with question six. Then the results are explored in terms of the core concepts of the study, namely power, subjectivity and organising. This is done by comparing and contrasting the results of all the related research questions in a combinatory manner. All the findings are then explored in terms of organisational control and emancipation. Finally, throughout the chapter the quotations extracted from the interviews are labelled according to the following system: the first number indicates the interview round in question; the second number refers to the number of the interview, and the final number indicates which quotation from the interview is in question. For example, the quotation labelled as II:6:17 is the 17th quotation of the 6th interview in the 2nd interview round. With regard to the graphical illustrations presented in the thesis, there are *conceptual figures* and *thematic networks*. The conceptual figures arise from theory alone, whereas the thematic networks arise from the data analysis and thus illustrate the results of the study. Throughout the thematic networks, themes are labelled according to the following system: the common themes are in boxes and the sub-themes which make up the common theme are in circles. Finally, the associated themes, which further specify the sub-themes, are only discussed in the text.

4. Control in Contemporary Organisations

The examination of organisational control starts by exploring the contemporary relevance of the conventional way of controlling human resources in organisations, namely Human Resource Management. Therefore, the ways in which and the extent to which HRM operates in the contemporary organisations under study are at first established. After this, the locus of contemporary control is examined. This entails exploring whether the control mechanisms in use are external to the worker or, conversely, involve the worker's self and entail aligning the subjective experiences of a worker to work, for example in the form of intrinsic motivation or organisational commitment. This is established in part by re-examining HRM practices through “disciplinary power”, on the one hand, and “pastoral power”, on the other (Foucault,

1997, 1998b, 2000). After this the structures of control are examined. The structures are explored first through the split between organisational structures and human practices (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). The purpose is to find out whether contemporary organisational control is supported by conventional structural arrangements such as bureaucracy and hierarchy (Clegg, 1990, pp. 25-42; Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 128-133). On the other hand, the structures of control are examined by exploring the materialisation of classical models of management in the context of contemporary organisations (Guillén, 1994, pp. 1-20, 31; Barley and Kunda, 1992). Management is explored particularly in terms of the split between the managed and the managers (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). The considerations of the more subtle methods of control are then examined. These include examination of the work mentality and the associated meaning attributed to work. Also, the materialisation of control through the idea of career is examined in the context of the contemporary workplace. After this, the extent to which workers can have agency in contemporary organisations and how this materialises is looked into. Finally, the existence and distinctiveness of a particular type of worker's subjectivity, which could be seen to be shared by the contemporary workers of the information age, is examined.

4.1 The Control of Human Resources

Research Question 1

How does organisational control – understood in terms of Human Resource Management - operate in contemporary work organisations and what is its <i>modus operandi</i> ?

In the following, the outcomes of the analysis relating to research question 1 are explicated in stages. First, the continuation of conventional HRM departments and their personnel is discussed. This is followed by an examination of the results in relation to HRM techniques. This section finishes with a brief explication of the contemporary HRM mentality through associated language, discourses and fads.

HRM Departments and Personnel in Contemporary Organisations

There are no HRM departments. In fact, there is not one single HRM division or department mentioned in any of the companies that took part in the research. This is not merely the case because the companies do not have departments *per se*; there is no HRM team, project team, unit or even outsourced function. *There is no entity of any official or*

standardised kind that is dedicated to HRM. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that this is just short-term situation, in that the companies might, for example, be experiencing a financial downturn and have downsized this function for the time being. This is not merely some temporary phase, but a normal everyday reality.³⁷

With regard to HRM personnel, most typically there is *one person* handling the company's HRM.³⁸ What is more, this seems to be the case whether there are 10, 50 or indeed 100 employees working in the company. Furthermore, s/he may do this on either a full-time or a part-time basis. Often those who are supposed to handle HRM on a full-time basis also have other additional responsibilities, making HRM in practice a part-time job. In conclusion, there are not many full-time staff working on HRM-related matters in these contemporary organisations under study. Thus, there is a lack of HRM departments and *a lack of HRM personnel*. In addition, with a few exceptions, the person handling HRM *does not have specialist professional training* in HRM. Typically, they have a generic business degree. However, they do have previous work experience, but from other industries and other tasks. In fact none of them has previous work experience primarily in this field. Thus, the HRM personnel tend to lack formal education and experience of the field. As to why they then work in HRM, the answer is mostly that they have landed the job by chance.

However, HRM personnel seem very aware of their organisation's needs. This is despite their lack of professional education and previous work experience in the field. This alertness is illustrated by the way they go beyond listing the techniques present and absent in the company to describe the way in which the techniques are used, and often also how they should be used, in their organisation. Thus, they seem to be very *aware* of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's current way of organising. They are also self-critical and even reflexive with regard to both the HRM system and their own role in it. Furthermore, they are *sensitive* to what they themselves, as well as the people working in the company, need. Basically, they seem to care. The problem is *the shortage*

³⁷ When the industry peaked there were, in some of the companies, more people handling HRM-related matters, on either a full- or a part-time basis. However, despite there being more manpower, the techniques used and the way in which they were used did not differ in terms of being more organised, structured and conventional. If anything, on the contrary, there was an even greater shortage of time to conduct HRM-related matters, except recruitment, as the companies were growing exponentially.

³⁸ In addition to this person there are specialists, such as a lawyer who puts together the employment contracts or a payroll clerk. These other specialists have their own main tasks, but they also carry out administrative and contractual tasks linked to HRM.

of time available to handle HRM-related matters. Finally, if there were more time, they would not use it to create structures and standardised HRM operations, but to talk with people and improve the utilisation of the existing techniques *in the current fashion*. Hence, they do not, with a few exceptions, tend to opt for more structural and standardised HRM. Consistent with the finding, goal-orientation in the form of technical and systematic improvement of HRM practices and techniques is also absent. Also, the functional approach, whereby the operation of an organisation might be seen as susceptible to improvement by engineering the HRM system, is obsolete. Instead, *the approach is people-centred, activity-based and informal*.

HRM Language and Mentality

The lack of specialised HRM language and jargon is striking. There is hardly any specialised terminology used in relation to HRM. This is not just because in these organisations there is a more general tendency to use non-specialised terminology. On the contrary, people use highly technical terminologies and specialised language in other areas of the organisations. So it is not just some organisation-wide attempt to keep communication short and simple that would account for this lack of specialised language. Furthermore, there is hardly any ‘HRM mentality’ to speak of. This is illustrated by the fact that the interviewees do not speak through the paradigm of HRM, utilising its terms, concepts or language in general. This is consistent with the finding that there is a lack of specialised HRM terminology and language. They speak above all of the company in terms of its personnel, but not of HRM or in terms of HRM. Furthermore, their main source of HRM-related knowledge is a specialised forum for HRM personnel. They also talk with their colleagues and use the facilities offered by the library of the Helsinki School of Economics. So they do actively search for information related to their job. They do this independently, and on their own initiative. Thus they too share the work mentality of other workers in this industry (more on worker subjectivity in section 4.8 and on agency in 4.7). However, apart from this search for HRM-related knowledge, they do not attempt to progressively enhance their HRM consciousness in any official manner, for example through formal courses. Furthermore, they largely lack the urge to progressively develop the HRM system *per se*. When asked about priorities in relation to HRM, often just a need to improve a particular technique, such as feedback, is indicated. In fact, there was not a single case in which the HRM system as a whole was likely to be under reconstruction, even on the level of an idea.

There is a *lack of general business jargon* in relation to HRM. That is to say there is no talk of strategies, tactics, budgets and so forth. This is despite the fact that the HRM personnel generally have a business background. Thus, this cannot be explained by a general lack of business knowledge. The HRM personnel view is that there is no pressing need to change the HRM system and the way in which it operates: it is satisfactory as it is. This more generic view also seems to be lacking in the companies, as there was no indication put forward by their superiors - as indicated by job title - or colleagues of any extra resources or requirements to change the system. Thus, it seems that this is *the normal way* in which HRM works in contemporary companies and the way in which it will probably operate also in the future. Finally, the predominant organisational discourses are missing. There is a lack of HRM discourses such as self-actualisation and self-development (O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246; Rose, 1999, pp. 103-122). Discourses relating to the concept of career are also absent (Fournier, 1998), as is a discourse on individuality (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). With regard to 'management fads' (Kieser, 1997), knowledge management raises its head once or twice in the form of a reference to the importance of knowledge sharing. Nonetheless, the prevalent management fads such as those centred on emotional intelligence or tacit knowledge are largely absent in these contemporary organisations.

HRM Techniques

The main emphasis of the research is on examining HRM in terms of its techniques. This is because the main interest is in the everyday production and reproduction of organisational control. For this reason, rather than examining HRM policies or budgets, the focus is on examining the practical implementation and arrangement of techniques in everyday organisational reality. In exploring HRM techniques, *the extent* to which conventional HRM techniques are used in the organisations under study is first examined. After this has been established, the focus shifts to explicating *the way* in which HRM techniques are used in contemporary organisations. Finally, *the type* of HRM techniques used is explicated in discussing the results of research question 2.

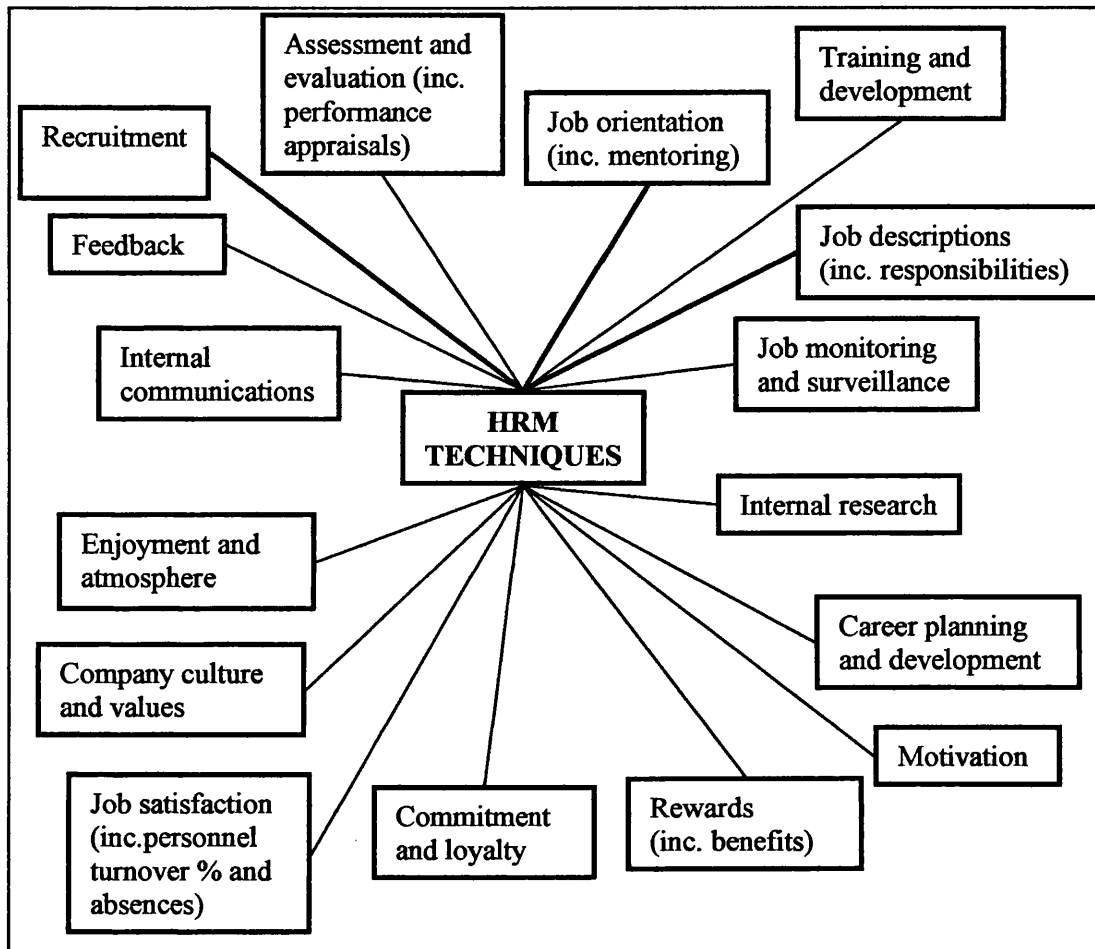


Figure 5: HRM Techniques

All in all, some conventional HRM techniques are lacking completely, and the remaining ones are arbitrarily used. More exactly, out of the 17 HRM techniques that the interviewees were asked about, 11 were used in some form and the remaining six were largely absent. The techniques most frequently used are *recruitment* and methods related to enhancing *organisational atmosphere*, along with *internal communications*. Techniques relating to the enhancement of workers' commitment and loyalty and motivation are also used, in some form, in the organisations. However, rather than merely stating what techniques are in use in the organisation, the interviewees' emphasis is on *describing the way in which* the techniques are used in the company. There are also many techniques that are absent in a large majority of the organisations. Thus, *surveillance systems* and *internal research* seem to be lacking almost completely, as are systems for feedback and reward. This is also the case with career planning, monitoring of job satisfaction, and job orientation.

No, we do not have [any official job orientation system] we are after all such a small and hectic business that we do not have time for this sort of thing. The person [entering the organisation] needs to be ready to step in. Of course this needs to be directly brought out already in the recruitment interview, to find out: hey, how do you experience such a thing? and then you just start doing. We do not have any sort of training period where we would go through some cases, but you are in, at once, and in the front line (II; 2:47).

No, we do not have any official [evaluation or assessment] (II; 1:37). We do not have any amazing career planning. The situation is one in which companies go down, as you know. Therefore, it is rather trivial to start thinking in terms of a person's career planning in such a situation ... It is not relevant at the moment (II; 1:41).

No, we do not have [any sort of internal research] (II; 6:33).

No, we do not have any kind of reward system (II; 6:39).

The absence of many HRM techniques is striking. However, this comes as no surprise for the interviewees. On the contrary, it seems to be the *normal* way in which HRM is handled - or not handled - in contemporary organisations. Accordingly, they do not seem to be bothered by the absence of HRM. This is not attributable to the companies being still fledging companies. They might have been established only five years ago, but they nonetheless have clear business ideas and tangible products, the development of which is monitored by their financiers. They also have their workers on permanent employment contracts and seem to have established a particular way of organising human resources that they recognise as their own. Overall, the question of whether techniques are used seems to lead to a parallel question that needs examination: namely, how are the techniques that *are* present in the organisations used? Thus, the way in which different HRM techniques are used becomes more interesting than the extent to which they are used. For this reason, let us next examine in detail the way in which the techniques are used.

There are six main themes that emerge in the interviewees' accounts in relation to the way in which HRM techniques are used/operate in contemporary organisations (see figure below). Furthermore each of these six main themes has a number of sub-themes which are closely associated with the themes and also widespread in themselves. The main themes are: *unorganised; time; change; good character; social and proficiency*. In the following I shall go through each theme and its associated sub-themes one by one.

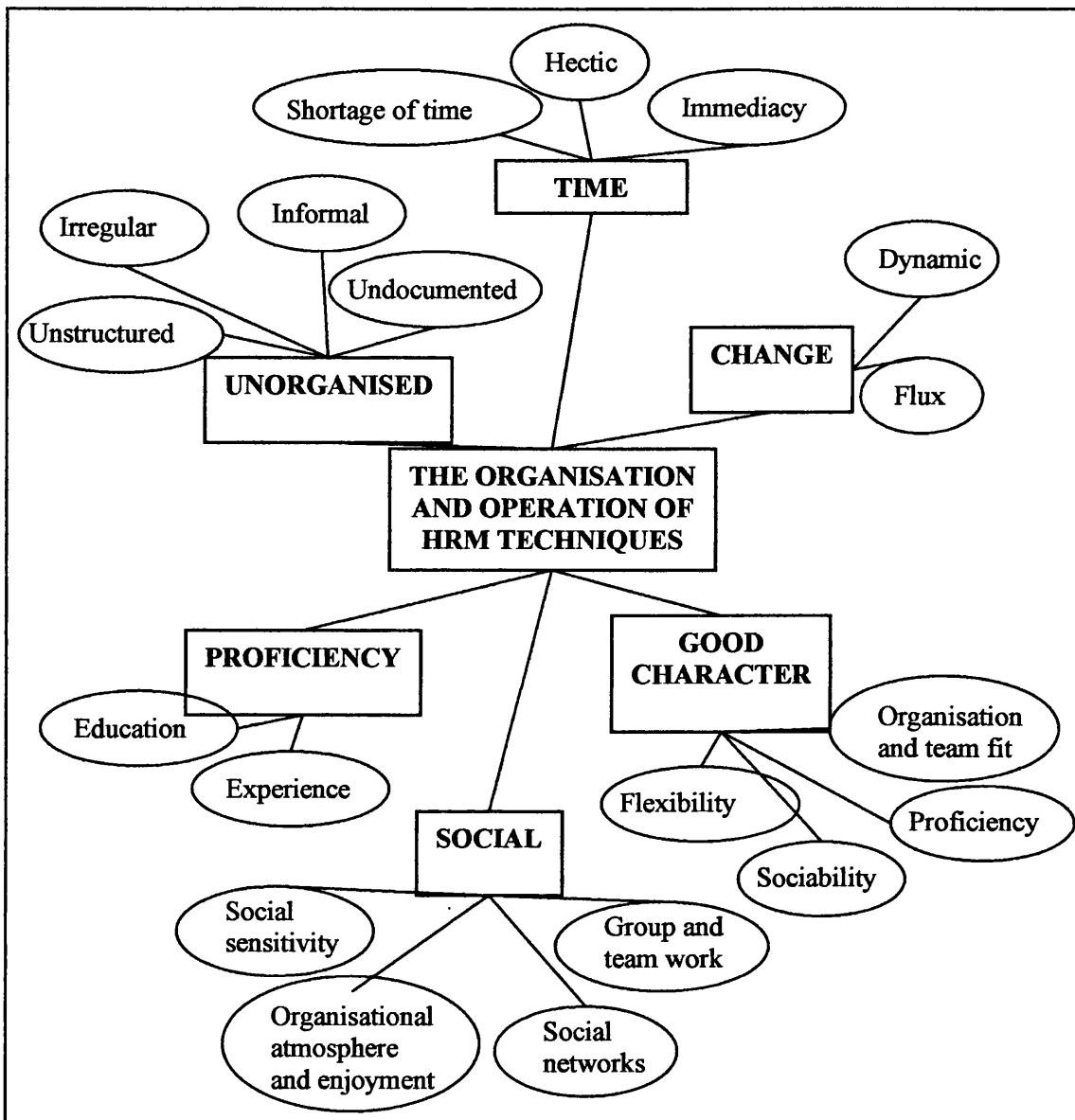


Figure 6: Thematic Network of the Organisation and Operation of HRM Techniques

Unorganised

HRM techniques are used in an arbitrary manner. To be more precise, the techniques are used *informally, unofficially, irregularly and altogether in an unstructured manner*. Correspondingly, hardly anything is documented, monitored or systematically followed up. *Systemised techniques and structures for their usage are simply not there*. Furthermore, there is no indication that this is just be a particular phase leading to something more conventional. Altogether, then, techniques seem to be either absent or used in an unorganised manner. Moreover, people seem to be very conscious of this, so it is not that these techniques are lacking merely because people are not aware of their existence. Quite the opposite, despite the HRM personnel not having specialist training and extensive experience in HRM, they do know HRM techniques. Furthermore, they

also have clear opinions on these techniques, in terms of their usage as well as their fit with that particular organisation.

There is no planning. There is nothing regular. It is based upon the person's own activeness. A few people have come to me to say that they would like to focus a little bit on other areas. I have said to them that I will do my best and try to arrange it (II; 3:64).

No, [we do not have surveillance or control systems]. The boss checks and colleagues check that people are approximately present. "Researcher: this is informal?" Yes, it is. We are free and have no system and we have had no malpractice. "Researcher: Do you think this is a good system and that you will continue using it?" Yes, if problems emerge then we have to reconsider it [a system] will probably come. "Researcher: Do you have any particular things that you monitor?" No, not in an official manner (II; 6:32).

Correspondingly, most of the companies use *very little documentation* of HRM-related matters. They usually have standard employment contracts, generic job descriptions and some sort of outline structure for development talks. Some have, in addition, packages containing information on the company and its practices that are used in job orientation. Finally, a few have a standard psychological test that they use in recruitment. However, on the whole *the way in which the techniques are used is non-bureaucratic in that it includes very little planning, documentation and follow-up*. Therefore, it is also interesting to compare this later on to the accounts of workers on the level of the bureaucracy of the organisation. Thus, is this lack of bureaucracy a more general trend cutting through the organisation as such or, indeed, is it just HRM techniques that are no longer used in a bureaucratic manner?

At one point everyone was putting down their working hours, but many people got frustrated with that. They said that this is childlike way of operating, as nobody in actual fact is reading them. The people who are on hours-based contracts still do it, as do some of the salespeople, just in order to be able to follow up projects, but others do not do it anymore. I do not do it either (II; 9:39).

We do not address anyone formally in this organisation. Everyone is spoken to by their own nickname. That is the case from the very top to the lowest level. Whoever comes in, you do not need to take a position. Everyone is relaxed and just the way they please (II; 2:57).

Flexibility

In an everyday reality, in which projects change and one's job descriptions are transformed, workers must be able to adapt. For this reason, in organisations founded on a premise of flux, the ability of a person to change and be dynamic is at a premium. This means that the person's ability to work in other parts of the organisation is already

monitored in the recruitment phase. This is because within months the person is likely to have, at least to some extent, a different set of duties and certainly new projects. Flexibility is not merely recommended, it is a taken-for-granted personal characteristic that someone working in the industry must have in order to be able to fit into the organisation, as well as into the way of working and doing business in the industry.

We do not have the possibility of wasting time on carrying out some large recruitment process and starting to select someone. We need good people who understand what the intention is... we cannot have it that we have established job descriptions. When a person comes in they have a certain job description but in six months they do completely different things. Someone can say that this is a weakness, but it can also be a strength that people find their own places in the organisation (II; 2:40).

However, it is not merely workers who need to adapt and be flexible, this flexibility is also reflected and replicated in everyday organisational structures and routines. Thus, the point is not to give an impression that there is a forcible demand on the workers to have these characteristics, or that they would be somehow subjugated in the process, but that flexibility is inherently present in the organisations and in the way of working in this business on many levels. Furthermore, it has both positive and negative effects and implications. No doubt workers at times feel mentally strained due to the vast amount of modifications and flexibility required in everyday work. On the other hand, flexibility also means that they can determine their own job content to a great extent, while having a strong say in what sort of duties they perform and what roles they take on in different project groups. They can also choose when they have their holidays, as well as when they start and finish their working day – every day. Thus, they are impacting on the construction of their working reality on an everyday basis. Finally, sometimes they can even have an impact upon some of the forms of monetary compensation they receive.

The industrial safety inspector thought we do not have any working hours practice. So far we have had free working hours because nerds live by a different rhythm. They come here at midday and are here until late. Thanks to the industrial safety inspector we probably have to change this somehow... we were just trying to explain to the safety inspector that it really is not in the interest of the workers to change this as they prefer to have flexible working hours (II; 1:13).

What everyone aims for is established and we try to find a corresponding place or area in the organisation, in which one can develop accordingly. Also, if one wants to change one's duties and develop oneself in that area, we aim to arrange that (II; 8:52).

If we find a person in house who can do the job and wants to change jobs. ... then we first try that. We also give workers the opportunity to help in recruitment. (II; 4:34).

Flexibility, along with some other characteristics, is discussed by Valerie Fournier from a Foucauldian stance (1998). She argues that these characteristics are called forth by the “new career” discourse circulating in [contemporary] organisations, where people are called upon to recognise themselves as essentially flexible and self-actualising entrepreneurs in expressing their lives and themselves through work (ibid., pp. 67-77). However, the findings do not indicate that there is a “new career” discourse or equivalent discourses circulating in the organisations, in the way put forward by Fournier. In fact, there seem to be a lack of dominant organisational discourses in general and a lack of thinking in terms of career in particular. Essentially, there is much more talk of “time” and “change”, or indeed of a “character” as a whole, than of a particular set of individual characteristics that a person should essentially possess. Thus, rather than just internalising some prevailing discourses circulating in the realm of organisations, it seems that it would be more up to the individual to select suitable models of working life. There has been talk of the selecting self, who is persuaded to select for him/herself rather than the organisation or institution (Rose, 1999, pp. 217-232, 244-258; Giddens, 1991, pp. 214-220). The selective self is usually placed in the context of increased individuality. However, *as opposed to an aspect of individual or individuality, in these contemporary organisations most talk is centred on different dimensions of the social*. Thus, the social is emphasised, and often to the relative neglect of the individual. Correspondingly, *individuality is not the prime focus but interaction, communication and togetherness*. Accordingly, themes raising their head are those such as group spirit, atmosphere, networks, negotiation and social sensitivity. Let us therefore consider next firstly “character”, then “proficiency” and finally the “social” with its different emergent sub-dimensions.

Character

It is not just flexibility that is highly appreciated, or indeed any particular characteristic or ability *per se*. Interestingly it appears that *more weight is given to the whole character than to any specific characteristics, skills or abilities which a person possesses*. Furthermore, the value placed on the whole character seems to outweigh the value placed on a person’s proficiency. The importance of character is exemplified in

recruitment, in that it is considered as the single most important factor on which the recruitment decision is based.

We always aim to get someone to work by checking whether the person is a good character - that is the starting point. Well, business is... if you understand something about life you learn business rather fast. That, you see, is the important thing (II; 2:20). We get good characters from many sources. As our CEO often says, he first interviews the character and only afterwards thinks about whether we can come up with some work for him. This is one way in which people have come to work for us; we see that this is really a good character and he can add value for us (II; 2:40).

Furthermore, this good character is usually found through *personal networks* as opposed to direct channels. In practice this means that direct channels are not much used in recruitment. In fact, those who have used direct channels often have regrets about the experience(s).

Well, only a few come through the direct channels, usually they have just been good characters that you see will fit here (II; 9:26).

For example, now we have not been recruiting actively, but of course if some brilliant characters come knocking on the door, we will hire them (II; 9:2).

Interestingly, what sort of character constitutes a 'good character' remains unanswered. There are some characteristics, such as independence, proficiency and social abilities, that are referred to. However, good character seems to be more than the sum of a particular set of characteristics, no matter how highly rated those characteristics might be. It escapes straightforward definitions. One would assume this to be stressful for the worker - you can never be quite sure if you measure up to the "good character" as you do not know what it precisely is. In this sense, it can also be seen as a means of control, in that a worker constantly needs to bear the uncertainty of not knowing whether or not s/he is a 'good character'. This in turn, can drive workers to constantly do their utmost. Nonetheless, there are no themes emerging that would support such a reading: not one interviewee says anything about the pressure of not knowing how to be or how to behave *per se*, let alone of its impact on her/his work or productivity. Then again, it might be so subtle that the workers do not quite realise it themselves. Or maybe they cannot express it verbally. Perhaps "good character" escapes clear-cut definitions or words *per se*, because it is based upon a subjective experience and a socially shared understanding of this.

Proficiency

Proficiency is expected and taken for granted. In practice, proficiency translates, on the one hand, as specialised training and education and, on the other hand, as previous work experience. Professional education is considered a prerequisite. There are only a very few exceptions to this norm. These are the self-taught coders, who began by doing their own coding, and are nowadays founding partners in the companies. Work experience is also usually required. However, due to the newness of the sector, experience is often not directly from this particular sector but from the more established neighbouring sectors of IT, telecommunications or new media. There are also a few exceptions where young professionals who do not have this work experience are preferred because they are free of preconceived ideas about how things operate in business. Thus, they can potentially bring fresh perspectives and ideas. However, taking on people without prior work experience is more an exception than a rule. For the most part, *proficiency is associated with the lack of time* in a rather peculiar manner. In other words, proficiency is required for a person to get a grasp of things immediately and be able to operate in a hectic, constantly changing, environment.

You need to have proficiency to that extent; we aim to establish already in the first phase that you can start operating immediately. Because we do not have much time to train in basic operations, they need to be grasped already. Then we create the mentality that asks, asks and asks (II; 2:47).

We take on a person because of character and we do not take on any feeble people... the basic assumption is that the person understands what s/he has been hired for and for what purpose... there is no need to hold the person's hand (II; 4:37).

You just notice that you need to take on people with strong experience, so that they can get in fast. On the other hand, I understand that it is not easy on the person, but then again after some months the activity is such that the person experiences it to be their own. There is no temptation to be too dependent on others, because the most annoying colleague is the one who leans all the time on others (II; 7:47).

There is also professional pride. In practice this means that people appreciate and value colleagues and their know-how. Even more, they often say that they are proud to work in a company with such a professional group of people. Finally, the valuing of proficiency is also illustrated overall in the companies by encouraging people to finish

their degrees. It is also illustrated by a positive stance on further training and development of proficiency. In practice this is exemplified, for instance, in by company's approval of re-organising one's working hours according to the demands of university. In addition, working in the industry is viewed as valuable experience of working life and as increasing one's proficiency.

So, when a 26-year-old says that salaries are high, you can say so is the workload. It is mentally strenuous and you have an enormous flow of information to deal with (II; 7:60).

Character is important, but then comes proficiency and experience (II; 6:25).

The Social

The social is emphasised. However, the social has several dimensions and meanings. On the one hand, there is *group and team spirit* and the associated way of working, namely group and team work. Group and team work often also implicitly refers to *co-operation*. Co-operation is seen as a way in which teams work and essentially what they are about. A good deal of the work is conducted in *teams formed around particular projects*. In addition to work, a team is often the primary unit for dialogue and the sharing of information. Finally, there is awareness of the importance of group spirit and dynamics. These are stressed and often consciously impacted upon.

We have one way of thinking about how a team operates: that is that we get together a lot and discuss stuff (II; 2:20). The aim of the team is to find the right guy, because if you have to find out you have the wrong guy through the actual operation, you have already destroyed quite a bit of the team. You can cause damage beyond repair. That is the difference between the large company and us; they can sack people or move them to other parts of the organisation. They have many different alternatives... we are on the side of the individual. We do the groundwork better than large companies. That is the difference. We are such a small unit that we can destroy it easily, therefore, we need to be well prepared (II; 2:65).

The way of understanding and experiencing teams boils down to *the relationship between the individual and the social*. There is an interesting relationship, at times even a tension, between these two phenomena. This is particularly the case when an attempt is made to prioritise between the two. Individuality, even though rarely mentioned *per se*, is praised and illustrated indirectly. This is evident in the talk of "good character" and the highest importance given to a person's character from the moment of recruitment. Then again, the most essential characteristics of this character are

flexibility, sociability and social fit, which in practical terms translate into the ability to work in teams, to get along with colleagues and clients and so forth. Hence, on the one hand, it looks as if the social has become a set of personal characteristics of an individual. On the other hand, the social seems to go beyond individuals and particular characteristics and to be something which exists among and between individuals, whether in groups, teams or on the level of whole organisations, as something which needs special sensitivity in order to be sensed and understood. It appears to be inter-subjective. Accordingly, rather than seeing individuality and the social merely as opposing poles, they can also be seen as complementary to one another.

Networks

Networks seem to play a particularly important role in the recruitment process. Interestingly, they are hardly present in the form of official networks such as professional associations or industry affiliations. On the contrary, *the nature of the networks is fundamentally informal*.

I came to work here via a friend... now that we have the new director level formed of new experienced guys who have pretty good networks, we have got people through them, but meanwhile we also used head-hunters and advertised jobs (II; 1:28).

I think we have had one single advertisement in the paper and we have not found anyone via the employment agency. It is more through hearsay, via friends and so forth. We have looked for skilled persons from among those close to us(II; 4:31).

Castells talks of networks as the predominant way of organising in the contemporary era (1996, p. 77; 2001, pp. 1-2). He sees networks, among other things, as a means by which businesses can increase their productivity and competitiveness (1996, pp. 77-78). Increased productivity might be an *outcome* of networking; however, what the networks *are and mean* to the individuals in them seems to be different. It is not that contemporary workers have internalised the ethos of neo-liberalism, and network in their professional capacity to boost their or their organisations' productivity. Quite the opposite, the networks are above all informal, *personal* relationships. The networks are formed of people who were university friends, relatives, people who play in the same sporting teams and so forth. Thus, they exist above all among people in their personal capacity, not in their professional position or capacity. Secondly, networks do not seem to be mainly about communicating or exchanging information (Castells, 2001, pp. 1-2; Castells, 1996, p. 77). Instead, they are centred on *activity*. Thus, people in networks do

things together rather than merely communicating about them. *The networks are informal and personal and centred on being and doing together.* This is also despite the regularly organised industry affiliations, exhibitions and so forth. The close geographical proximity of the companies to one another might make you think they would try to get together on a more professional basis (Pratt, 2001). One would also assume that more networking takes place because of the small size of the industry and the fact that the companies have the same distributors and at times also the same clients. However, this is not the case.

Altogether, personal relationships outweigh the more formally established networks. This is consistent with the talk of “good character” in that in hiring a friend or relative one usually has a pretty good indication of the character in question, though not necessarily of the individual’s working character or that person’s way of working, only of *their way of being and behaving.* This is an interesting observation, taking Townley’s, Deetz’s and Fournier’s view on the colonisation of the subjectivity of the whole (1998, pp. 191-211; 1992; 1998, pp. 55-80). Thus, has the whole being of a contemporary individual come under scrutiny, to be categorised, typified, evaluated, assessed and monitored? Is it the very *being* of this contemporary individual that can be altered, modified and shaped through these subtle HRM techniques? These questions are deliberated on when I explore organisational control in section 4.2.

Organisational Fit and Organisational Atmosphere

A person’s fit with the organisation is essential. This request for fit is consistent with the value placed on the social. The person needs to fit, in order for the social atmosphere and relations to remain good and for the project teams and professional groups to remain feasible. It is interesting to notice that the fit was not only, or even primarily, with the organisation as a whole, but *with the professional group* of which the new person would become a member. Accordingly, this “team/group fit” often carries a lot of weight in recruitment. In practice this means that there are often several interviews, and one of these will be with someone from the professional group that the individual will become part of. The recruitment decision is made in part also by a group ‘leader’. Also, the request to recruit someone often comes from a professional group in the first place.

The first important thing is talking with the person, the so-called recruitment interview, so that we see the stance s/he takes on things we tell them about us. That is the most important thing. If s/he starts to say what s/he has done elsewhere, that is not what we want to know, we want to know how s/he can fit into our affairs (II; 2:47).

Well, even if they have been known through family or otherwise, we go through [interviews] first with them individually and then we go through it with the professional team so that we see if it works. We try to see if it works as far as possible before we hire the person... so last time we interviewed a person five times (II; 4:35).

Even though “team fit” is at times more important than fit with the organisation as a whole, the prevalent discourse is of *organisational atmosphere*. To be more precise, atmosphere is talked of alongside *enjoyment*. Atmosphere is also talked of alongside the “good characters” that form a working community with a good atmosphere. Also, having experienced and professional people working in the organisations impacts on the atmosphere. Furthermore, the words openness and transparency are often mentioned in describing the atmosphere. The general way of operating, *based upon discussion and negotiation*, also seems to play an integral role in matters relating to atmosphere.

It is a rare thing that you have so many people and no internal friction. We have tried to think of all the possible reasons why this is the case... maybe it is just the approving and open atmosphere (II; 6:47).

Atmosphere is also linked to commitment and motivation. A good atmosphere is seen to entail commitment (more on this in section 4.5). Enjoying one’s work, along with the organisational atmosphere, is also seen as improving people’s motivation (more on this in section 4.5).

Of course they know that if you have a good atmosphere here it has a direct impact on commitment. How do you get people to commit to a demanding organisation if you just demand work and the atmosphere is secondary? (II; 8:29)

Enjoyment

Enjoyment is important. Enjoyment is talked about a lot and activities contributing to enjoyment described at length. As stated, organisational atmosphere is also directly linked to enjoyment. In practice, atmosphere translates as activities organised and arranged for people to enjoy themselves. There are different sorts of activities, ranging from organisation-wide events to drinks with a few colleagues after work. Usually there are two to three big organisation-wide events arranged annually. These are, for example, a “Winter Day”, a “Summer Day” and a Christmas party. Typically, the events begin with a more “formal” element, for example a training session. This is

followed by activities such as downhill skiing, football, horse riding or film making, which are then followed by taking a sauna, eating and drinking. Frequently the location of the event is outside the organisation, often in another place or city altogether. In addition to the large events intended for everyone in the organisation, there are also activities organised by professional groups and teams. In fact, the teams often receive an annual fixed amount of money to be spent for recreational purposes. Some teams go out to eat together a few times a year, whereas others use the money, for example, to go bowling every week. It is up to the group/team to decide among themselves. *In addition*, in many companies colleagues just spend time together; they play sports together and go for drinks or dinner at their own expense. However, in all the companies there are those who like to see each other in their spare time and those who prefer to separate their spare time from their work time, even in terms of people. Furthermore, the companies also have their own teams, such as a football team or a bowling team. However, the teams are rarely fixed in terms of members and positions. *The only thing that is fixed is the place and time for training.* These training sessions are then attended by those who feel like participating at any one time.

Finally, it is not just activities, special events and shared spare time that offer enjoyment, but in actual fact *enjoyment is often talked of in terms of everyday things* such as office vending machines, free Pepsi Max, fruit baskets, games at the office and comfortable couches. Enjoyment is also sometimes associated with benefits such as mobile phones, computer connections at home and company cars. However enjoyment is not just linked to material things; it is also equally linked to having lunch and coffee with colleagues, having a laugh and being able to joke with colleagues and exchanging funny stories on the internal chat-line. Whether tangible or immaterial means it doesn't matter, enjoyment is seen overall as important. It is derived, on the one hand, from activities and doing things together and, on the other hand, from lateral relations, social togetherness and a good atmosphere at the workplace.

Furthermore, despite the fact that enjoyment is deemed to be important, surprisingly little effort is put into organising events and activities contributing to enjoyment. Also, the organisation of these events is not standardised. In fact, the organisation of enjoyment-related activities remains arbitrary, spontaneous and unstructured. There are events committees and often the organisers vary. Thus, despite enjoyment being

considered important; little more goes into its preparation than into any other matter. This would suggest that the arbitrary organisation of HRM cannot be explained away by its relative unimportance to those matters which are valued more highly. Finally, *enjoyment is not seen as something extra*. On the contrary, it is taken for granted and viewed as self-evident, as an integral and normal part of these contemporary organisations and their way of working.

It is a lot like work needs to be fine. This is what all these vending machines, going to exhibitions, company parties and trips to Tallinn are all about (II; 3:78).

Enjoyment is essentially seen as social. Thus, despite the material benefits linked to enjoyment, *enjoyment is described above all as a collective phenomenon*, for example in terms of the enjoyability of the organisational atmosphere. Thus, enjoyment is not construed as the hedonistic endeavours of egoistic individuals. Enjoyment in practice involves having a laugh with colleagues, participating in events with them, getting along with others and altogether having a good and open atmosphere in the workplace.

Negotiation and Social Sensitivity

Negotiation was often implicitly referred to as a way of conducting organisational matters, as an inherent part of contemporary organising. It was also referred to in terms of 'on-going communication', 'constant discussion' and as 'talking things through'. Additionally, it was closely linked to openness, honesty and transparency. All of which were highly valued. In actual fact, these were often seen as forming a premise for discussion and negotiation. The importance of 'information' and 'knowing what is going on' were highlighted. However, it is *the way of gaining* the information and knowledge of what is going on, namely negotiation, that is given most importance.

We have development discussions on a team level, and then our CEO is a good character in the sense that he sees individual workers to see how things are going and to ask how they are feeling. The discussions are based on knowledge management. So it is not only when you have a salary rise in mind that you go to see the CEO, but you can go any time to discuss and talk about your own work. People go a bit too much to discuss, but that is the way he gets the information that he then shares with the rest of the board, particularly if there is something that doesn't come through in normal everyday life. You can tell him completely openly what is going on, both positive and negative things (II; 2:42).

I think discussions every four months, plus having an open communication connection all the time. Because doing work and communicating is easy, the need for updating is not so great. It updates itself (II; 4.30).

There is a special understanding of other people's needs. There is also an awareness of the general atmosphere, and a feeling of the internal dynamics of teams and personnel. I grouped these phenomena together and termed them "social sensitivity". In practice, "social sensitivity" is seen, on the one hand, as an understanding of individuals in groups and teams, sensing their personal needs in social contexts in particular. On the other hand, it is seen as sensing the social bonds and atmosphere. In other words, instead of seeing merely individual subjectivities, characters and needs, as in the case of the former, social sensitivity refers also to seeing the social, which is beyond any particular individual. Altogether then, *social sensitivity* encapsulates the understanding and sensing of the inter-subjective phenomena occurring between individual characters in the everyday life of a contemporary organisation.

The most important thing at the moment, in thinking of all the staff, is that you can divide the tasks *in such a way that everything holds together...* that you can see no one individual in the group is burdened too much.... We are growing very fast, and there is the risk that we grow first and get the workers only afterwards, there is always the difficulty of finding the moment when you need more workers, it is crucially important that it is not too late. You need to remember to ask: can you do this? and how are you feeling at the moment? that you do not just give the task but *feel out* first whether it is worthwhile to give the person the task (II; 2:53). Money is not important in motivating; this is their first job so they, in any case, have more money than ever before. So the motivation is more that we organise things together. So, one thing is that you can participate. Then again it is interesting that for some people the motivation is that they do not need to take part in these things, some people prefer to work than to participate to these things. *You just need to sense it* (II; 2:54).

Overall, contemporary organisation seems to be social and to work within such organisations seems to require special 'social sensitivity'. The organisation is based on lateral personal relations among professional people carrying out projects together. It is informal, with a relaxed atmosphere and with a special effort put into sustaining enjoyment. The three words central to contemporary organisations seem to be *social, activity and personal*. There are not many conventional techniques used to attempt to manage the workers, i.e. the human resources, let alone to try to control them. In place of techniques for control, there are lateral relations centred on shared activities. In place of an HRM unit or personnel there is a structural vacuum. In place of structures and techniques implemented by specified personnel, the organisation of control in contemporary workplaces is unorganised and social, whilst underlining the "good character" and proficiency of the workers. Let me next try to look for some reasons that could explicate this peculiar way of organising that seems to underpin the way in which

human resources are managed in contemporary organisations. Thus, let us turn to examining the context-related themes of *time* and *change*. The focus is not on describing the context in terms of the industry or the companies *per se*, but on examining two prevalent themes that are omnipresent in this context. Thus, these two themes depict the way the industry *is*, as well as underpinning the way of working in the industry. The constant change and continuous haste also have implications for the sort of characteristics that workers essentially need

Time

Time is highlighted - in particular *lack of time*. Accordingly, there is a great deal of talk of *continuous haste*, and of work being *hectic*. A sense of rapid change and fast pace is strongly present in the companies. There is a clear indication that the companies are very dynamic and that time is of the essence. Also, people working in the industry seem to be *living in the moment*, not wanting to think in the long term or, indeed, experiencing that they cannot think in the long term - that it simply does not make any sense given the industry's circumstances. There is, all in all, *immediacy* in the air. Everything is in the here and now, as if there were no tomorrow, as if the Latin words "*carpe diem*" were the premier strategy of the companies and constantly echoing around the offices. This also has implications for HRM techniques, in that there is often no time to implement them.

We have this type of development talk allocated once a month with a direct boss, but now we have had *so much work* to do that we have forgotten to keep to them. We have not kept to them for approximately three to four months. Someone actually came to ask me about it around a month ago and said that it would be nice to sit down and reflect a little bit. But there is *no time* (II; 3:61).

At least with this regularity, they can go on with such light organisation. They can live their own lives, when there is one or two you can dash about as you please and there is no planning required beforehand. You do not need to plan ahead much what you are going to do next week. So it is *living in the moment* (II; 3:68).

We go through discussions like that on a continuous basis, but for the time being we have so much to do that we have had *no time* to make any decisions in relation to career planning (II; 2:41).

Change

Change is constant. Thus, it is not the specific type of changes that occur that take priority, but the constant flux that is omnipresent. As a consequence, it is permanent, continuous change that is talked of and constantly in the air. This is often encapsulated in the interviewees' accounts as a reference to the *dynamic* way of working and doing

business. Interestingly, change is not even once viewed in a negative light or as something abnormal shaking the normal organisational way of life. On the contrary, *change is viewed as a matter of fact*, as a normal way of organisational and business life. Furthermore, change is often embraced, in that it is seen to be closely related to, even synonymous with many-sided and challenging work. In fact many view these two as the most important qualities of their work and the reasons for working in this very industry. It is explicitly stated again and again that if you do not like constant change, flux and living on the edge, you should not come to work to this company or this industry. This constant change also has an implication for the way in which HRM techniques are handled. There seems to be no point in documenting things and systematically following them up, as everything is outdated and bound to change anyway in a matter of a few months. Also for this reason, there is not much emphasis put on career planning and even the use of job descriptions seems rather pointless.

A job description is usually written when a person is hired, but the problem is its updating. Descriptions change so fast that in three months' time they are no longer valid (II; 5:37).

When a person comes in they have a certain job description but in six months they do completely different things (II; 2:40).

Thus, "time" and "change" emerge as prevalent themes. However, they are not referred to in relation to the market and the changing market situation or, indeed, in relation to the industry. The market situation is referred to only a few times and even then indirectly, mainly through its impact, for example, on recruitment.

We have not had much external training as the money flows are a bit different from "the money time" [i.e. when the industry hyped] (II; 1:41).

Then at one point around a year ago we had job advertisements in ... Now, we have not advertised jobs for a while anywhere (II; 9:26).

Altogether, the way in which techniques are organised is more illuminating of contemporary organisations than the mere examination of the extent to which techniques are used. In a nutshell, *the way in which techniques are organised is that they are unorganised*. Thus the contemporary way of *organising* HRM differs largely from the conventional *organisation* of HRM techniques. Another way in which the usage of the techniques differs from the conventional is that the industrial and company *context* seem to have considerable implications for the way in which the techniques are used. Indeed, context-related factors are often the reasons for *not* using the techniques.

Finally, HRM techniques are conventionally individual-centred, i.e. examining individuals' progress, abilities, career and so forth. However, in contemporary organisations the HRM techniques in use are primarily focused on examining and enhancing intrinsically *social* phenomena such as communication or co-operation, or communal phenomena such as organisational atmosphere and group spirit. Also, even when an individual's characteristics are examined in contemporary organisations, the characteristics that get the most attention are those closely associated with the social, such as the individual's fit with the group or the organisation. Thus, the results, rather surprisingly, seem to indicate that in the pioneering organisations of the information age, the organising of HRM takes place through a 'soft' system rather than a 'hard' one (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15). This change in HRM systems poses further questions, such as: is the organisation, *as a system per se*, changing in the information age?

Summary

Finally, let me end this section by returning to the associated research question. The research question was: how does organisational control – understood in terms of Human Resource Management (HRM) - operate in contemporary work organisations and what is its *modus operandi*? The empirical evidence clearly indicates that *conventional HRM control mechanisms based on external control are missing from contemporary organisations*. HRM departments are obsolete. They are absent in terms of structure, procedures, systematised techniques and practices. Also, professional full-time personnel solely working on matters related to HRM are largely absent. With regard to HRM techniques, some are completely absent. Some techniques are implemented in a rather arbitrary manner whenever time and resources are available. Finally, a few techniques are implemented regularly but even then in a non-bureaucratic manner. Thus, *the way in which* HRM is implemented and handled is very different from the conventional way in which HRM is implemented. Conventionally HRM is its own separate department with specific HRM personnel who utilise standardised HRM techniques and have clearly specified and documented responsibilities, budgets, targets and visions. After discovering that conventional HRM structures are indeed largely absent, my interest shifted to further exploring the way in which HRM is handled. Indeed, this *how* question became more illuminating than the question of whether there is any HRM.

The contemporary *modus operandi* of HRM was found to be “unorganised” and innately “social”. Also, character-centeredness was notable and particularly exemplified in the emphasis on “good character”. In addition, the “proficiency” of a person was deemed to be important. Furthermore, themes associated with organisational *context*, namely “time” and “change”, seemed to have strong implications for the way in which HRM-related matters are handled. These themes illustrate the impact that context has on structuring the everyday life of contemporary organisations. Ultimately, the contemporary *modus operandi* of HRM is essentially based upon *negotiation*. However, this does not mean that workers are sitting around and chatting about the latest news, but rather that they negotiate on, for example, how to carry out projects and co-ordinate particular project activities. Thus, negotiation is on pragmatic, work-related matters; it is often a matter of *co-ordinating, information sharing, and problem solving*. Furthermore, this is done in the context of lack of time and constant change and thus negotiation typically translates as *dealing with the pressing issue at hand*. Furthermore, the emphasis on the social does not mean that the social overrides the individual and the tension between the social and the individual has been resolved. On the contrary, the interplay between the individual and the social continues, and no attempt is made in these organisations to resolve it. Instead, they accept this tension and see it as an integral part of organisational reality. Furthermore, instead of concentrating on resolving the tension they focus on *sensing* the tension and attempt to work with and through it, *via negotiation*.

Overall, the focus is on *sensing, understanding, organising, enjoying and being*. These words, *sensing, understanding and being*, clearly, in my view, lead us in the direction of the inter-subjective. Interestingly, there is hardly any talk of values or (corporate) codes of conduct, i.e. of topics that social psychology normally tackles and terms generally used in organisational rhetoric and HRM jargon (A Dictionary of Human Resource Management, 2001, pp. 392, 62). On the contrary, these terms are almost completely missing. What is underlined instead is *the way of operating*. This way of operating is referred to as open, transparent and honest. However, above and beyond explaining and describing the end results of this way of operating, the interviewees describe *how* something is or *the way in which* something operates. Furthermore, the words that have emphasis are descriptive words such as *understanding* or *being*. What is more, these

descriptive words lean towards social psychology. They also *lean towards the inter-subjective*, in that they are situated somewhere between individual subjectivities and the realm of the social, and new concepts such as “social sensitivity” are needed in order to describe them. Finally, these inter-subjective themes are not just in the air, but *contextual*, even situational, and thus clearly dependent on time and place.

What does this tell us about organisational control? In essence, workers are no longer managed as resources. They are still, to a certain extent, allocated as resources to particular projects and teams; however, they are not managed as resources which are monitored, assessed, examined and externally controlled. Workers are no longer objectified in this manner through the HRM system and techniques. In fact external methods, mechanisms and systems of control are obsolete in these organisations. The lack of HRM personnel further supports this. Finally, the fact that HRM-related expert knowledge, with its associated language, discourses and fads, is also missing makes it implausible to explain this as a change from position-based power to expertise-based power. The end result is clear: there is a lack of HRM, a lack of HRM expertise and thus a lack of HRM-based control mechanisms. At the same time there is strong emphasis on “character” and the “social”, as previously explained.

What does the absence of HRM and its associated techniques tell us about contemporary organisations? It seems that the concept of organisations as systems consisting of workers who can be managed and controlled externally is gone *per se*. The system itself is also not seen as something which can be manipulated, engineered and changed altogether. There is no talk of the organisation as a whole as a system that can be managed, changed and engineered (see Checkland, 1999, pp. 9-11: ‘hard’ systems). Instead, there is talk of workers’ lateral relations, personal networks, social togetherness, enjoyment and good characters. The approach is human, people-centred and informal. There is a lack of systems thinking *per se* and instead a concentration on human activities, relations and realities.

One might ask what we are to make of this simultaneous uplift of the social and the personal and disappearance of conventional HRM-based control mechanisms. Can we make sense of these within a framework of organisational control, in that we might be witnessing yet another upswing of discourses associated with the Human Relations

Movement? Have we developed yet another disguise for a set of normative techniques aimed at controlling workers in more subtle ways? Is this but another attempt to capture and alter worker's subjectivity and, indeed, to subdue it in the process? In order to answer these questions, let us next examine research question 2, which explores the way in which control, as well as the locus of control, might be changing in contemporary organisations. In examining research question 1, the focus has been on *describing* the results in relation to the different parts of the contemporary HRM system. In examining research question 2, the focus turns to exploring these results of research question 1, as well as new results related to research question 2, but more from a viewpoint of organisational control.

4.2 The Locus of Control

Research Question 2

How is worker's subjectivity operationally linked to contemporary organisational control?

Research question 2 examines the ways in which controlling, along with the locus of control, might be changing from exterior to interior. External control is examined first. This is followed by an examination of internal control. In practice, in examining external control, the outcomes of research question 1 are re-examined *from a Foucauldian view*. After explicating external control, the focus shifts to elucidating the forms of internal control found in contemporary organisations. In discussing internal control, the results relating to research question 2 are introduced.

HRM: Foucault and External Control

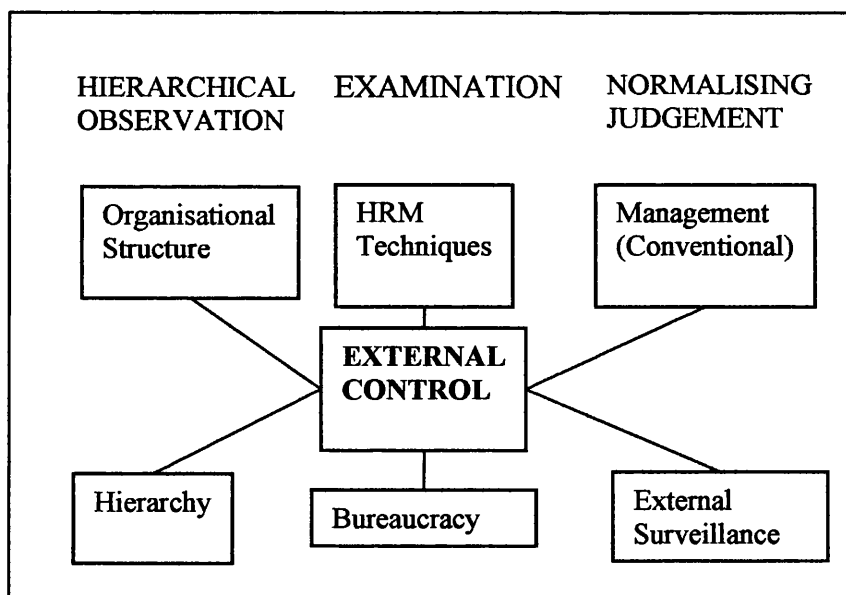


Figure 7: External Control

This study draws upon the later works of Foucault and the works of some Critical Management Scholars³⁹. Therefore, it is assumed at the outset that external control is principally based upon “disciplinary power” (Foucault, 1977, 2000) and internal control

³⁹ For example, Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Fournier and Grey, 2000; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994; Townley, 1998

on “pastoral power” (Foucault, 1997, 1998a, 2000). Disciplinary power is the modern form of power mainly associated with external control (see section 1.3.1.1). Disciplinary power can be considered as a specific technique of power; a technique that regards *individuals both as objects and instruments*. According to Foucault, “discipline makes possible the operation of *relational power* that sustains itself by its own mechanism which substitutes the uninterrupted play of calculated *gazes*” (1977, p. 177, emphasis added). Finally, there are three instruments from which the success of disciplinary power derives, namely hierarchical observation, normalising judgements and a combination of these: examination (Foucault, 1977). Let us next examine how these three are brought into play in contemporary HRM.

Hierarchical Observation

The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single *gaze* constantly to see everything. However in order to increase its productive function, particularly in workshops and factories, the gaze has been broken down into smaller elements. This new type of surveillance has also taken into account the activity, promptness and skills of men (Foucault, 1977, p. 174). In the realm of organisational discourses and practices the utilisation of the disciplinary technique of surveillance is evident, for example in factories, where workers are constantly under *surveillance* by foremen or by electronic surveillance. Another example is that of telephone service centres, where workers are randomly monitored while they are working by the recording of their phone calls, and indeed they are aware of this. Yet another example of contemporary organisational surveillance is the computer surveillance of workers, where their superiors [and in some cases also their colleagues] can log in and see the work of any given worker at any one point in time.

Disciplinary power measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value of the abilities, the level, the “nature” of individuals. It introduces through this value-giving measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved” (Foucault, 1977, p. 183).

The results of this study indicate that in contemporary organisations there is *no consistent gaze*. In other words, surveillance and monitoring systems are largely absent. If they are used, they are used in an arbitrary manner. Further, there are no specific personnel or structures assigned to carry out such monitoring tasks. There is no established system of surveillance - no system of surveillance *per se*. Finally, there is no understanding of surveillance as a system - as neither the HRM personnel nor the

workers recognise such systems as in operation or indeed *experience that they are under surveillance of any kind*. Furthermore, there is a lack of hierarchy. It is not just that the HRM system lacks ladders, but the hegemony of hierarchy is missing *per se* in the contemporary organisations under study (more on this in section 4.3). In practice this means that there is no HRM division, system or personnel with associated titles or subject positions monitoring the workers. Overall, this is in sharp contrast to the conventional way in which HRM is implemented.⁴⁰ On the contrary, in these organisations HRM departments are absent in terms of structure, procedures, systematised techniques and practices. Also, professional full-time personnel, solely working on matters related to HRM, are largely absent. Altogether, in the absence of hierarchy, observation and observers, there is not much “hierarchical observation” to discuss.

Normalising Judgements

A small penal mechanism can be found to operate at the core of disciplinary systems, where a large number of rather subtle techniques are employed, for example light physical punishment, minor humiliations and so forth. What makes this penalty more specific is its *non-observance* - there is an *intrinsic requirement for conformity*, since what does not measure up to the rule is perceived as departing from it (Foucault, 1977, p. 178-179, emphasis added).

“Through this micro-economy of perpetual penalty operates a differentiation that is not one of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, of their potentialities, their level of their value.” (Foucault, 1977, p.179)

Thus, the perpetual penalty supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions as it compares, hierarchises, homogenises, excludes and differentiates. In sum, it *normalises* (ibid. p. 183). Thus, fundamental to the disciplinary mechanism is the *‘penalty of the norm’*.

“In the sense the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it *individualizes* by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities, and to render the differences useful by fitting them on to one another” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184, emphasis added)

⁴⁰ That is, by a HRM department with its specific HRM personnel in associated subject positions, who utilise standardised HRM techniques and have clearly specified and documented responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is typically monitoring, assessment and follow-up of workers in terms of their careers.

In the realm of work, this scrutinising observation of workers, as well as the development of set of standards of work, is exemplified in the selection of the ‘worker of the week, month or year’. Normalising judgements can be seen to culminate in ‘codes of conduct’ in the context of work organisations. These ‘codes of conduct’ can come to function as norms for the workers, and hence workers who deviate from the norm are penalised.

There do not seem to be many normalising judgements in use in contemporary organisations. My results indicate that there are hardly any conformity requirements in terms of codes of conducts. In fact, there are no official codes of conduct documented or in use anywhere in the organisations studied. Thus, there are no dress-codes, lunch practices or even standardised working hours. There are also very few unofficial codes of conduct. There is a reciprocal request for *open communication* and *transparent operation*. So possibly these could both be seen as unofficial codes of conduct. However, even these are expressed in so many different ways that they can hardly be seen as a consistent framework for conduct. Furthermore, there is a lack of documentation. There is hardly anything on paper, filed or regularly monitored in a written format. Even job descriptions are often not updated and in consequence become outdated. In this context, where there is simply a lack of documentation, it is difficult to make feasible comparisons among workers. There is little feedback given in any form, let alone in the form of punishments. Also, the concept of offering rewards is little used. Therefore, withholding rewards cannot be considered to be a form of punishment - unless the absence of a system of rewards is considered to be just that. In general, whenever HRM techniques are drawn upon, this is done in an arbitrary and random fashion. This is also the case with the feedback mechanism and system of reward.

Furthermore, homogeneity or conformity is not highly valued in itself.⁴¹ Finally, there are no expressed intentions to change any of the aforementioned. Altogether, in this context where there is a lack of codes of conduct, documentation and standardised comparison systems, it is difficult to see the disciplinary technique of “normalising judgements” in use. In fact, the situation is quite the opposite: workers have few – if any - norms or codes to draw on. They have to discover for themselves the proper way of being and behaving in the organisation. They have no ready-made guidelines indicating

⁴¹ The workers do not experience, and the HRM managers do not recognise, that there is an attempt to make workers conform or become a homogeneous group.

what is right and what is wrong, what they should say and do, how they should behave and be – they are required to find that out themselves through everyday practice and working in the organisation. In essence, they largely need to manage themselves without the support of external structures, established normative frameworks or associated codes of conducts. Hence, they need to be self-managed in this respect. One might assume this to be a straining itself; however, in the interviewees' accounts it is understood as a prerequisite for genuine self-conduct.

Examination

Disciplinary power is based above all upon the method of *objectification*. The purpose of objectification is to turn subjects into objects. The core technique through which objectification operates is *examination*. Examination is the combination of the previously discussed techniques of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement (Foucault, 1977). “The examination is at the centre of procedures that constitute individual as an effect and object of power, as an effect and object of knowledge” (Foucault, 1977, p. 192). In practice this is done by documenting each worker as a separate ‘case’ that thereafter can be compared and contrasted with the other workers (‘cases’), as well as with his/her own performance over time. Typically, the techniques of performance appraisals and annual development talks exemplify this. Examination is the core technique that holds individuals in the mechanism of *objectification*, *thereby making the individual an object of knowledge*. This means that the individual becomes known ‘objectively’ and is manageable in a particular way. In essence, the *worker is made an object that can be controlled externally* through specific techniques, such as those of HRM (see table below). Furthermore, objectification makes the worker self-perceptive, and the gaze of an external controller is internalised into subjectivity.

Form of Foucauldian Power	Core Method	Core Technique	HRM Techniques used in Work Organisations; examples
Disciplinary power	Objectification	Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments and evaluations - Job monitoring and surveillance - Career planning and development - Internal research and follow-ups - Rewards - Reviewing and re-assessing the meeting of targets - Job descriptions (updating of)

Table 4: Disciplinary Power and HRM

However, these results show that techniques based upon “disciplinary power” are not much used in contemporary organisations. Also, as stated, there is hardly any documentation. Therefore, it is difficult to compare, contrast and follow up *per se*. Also, in a situation where a person does not even have an updated job description, it is rather hard to effectively monitor the person’s development. Techniques are used arbitrarily and are often not compulsory. Also, *workers are not encouraged in any way to compete with each other*, rather maximum value is placed on co-operation, negotiation and team effort. However, this is not to suggest that only the unit of comparison is different, i.e. that instead of individuals, teams are compared. This is not the case. There is simply no internal benchmarking, ranking or comparison between individuals or follow-up and monitoring of individuals as such, or as members of groups and teams.⁴² In summary, just like hierarchical observation and normalising judgement, *examination is largely absent*. That said, in spite of the lack of formal or informal comparison between teams and individual workers, lateral relationships and the ability to co-operate in teams is essential. It is self-evident that a person needs to be a team worker and that co-operation is the only way to get the project completed. Thus, despite the fact that qualities are not assessed or examined, this does not mean that certain qualities are not necessary – even mandatory – in order to be *able* to work in these organisations. However, rather than retraining people in order to obtain or improve certain qualities, professional, “good characters” with an ability to learn are already selected at the time of recruitment.

To conclude on external control, there simply does not seem to be any interest in putting resources of any kind into in-house surveillance, monitoring or follow-up. It is interesting to deliberate upon *why* this might be the case. Could this be due to the more general lack of long-term perspective? Or could it be just that the role and function of HRM is perceived differently? Could it be that there are simply different priorities, both within HRM and within the organisation? Or could it be that these matters are not deemed important in this context? Last but not least, could it be that *there is no need* for these types of external control mechanisms based upon “disciplinary power”, because *there are different control mechanisms in use; control-mechanisms that are essentially based upon different forms of power per se?*

⁴² This is not to suggest that there is no competition *per se*: surely there is. It is just not one of the defining characteristics of the contemporary way of working in the companies researched.

HRM, Foucault and Internal Control

In many HRM techniques it is not just “disciplinary power” that is in use (Deetz, 1992). *In addition*, many techniques draw on “pastoral power” (Foucault, 1997, 1998b, 2000, pp. 329-335) and associated “technologies of the self” (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-252)⁴³. “Pastoral power” has its premises in the Christian method of confession (Foucault, 1997, pp. 178-179, 223-224, 237, 242-245).

”[Pastoral power is] a form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the insides of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies the knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it” (Foucault, 2000, p. 333).

Subjectification is based upon the technique of *confession*. This process *constitutes an individual as a subject*, since confessing the self is attached to an ‘inner reality’ which needs to be discovered through self-knowledge, which in turn requires self-examination to have taken place. Rose suggests that, as a consequence of the individual’s self-direction becoming increasingly aligned to work, the mind is all the more important in gaining knowledge of the worker’s performance (Rose, 1999; Townley, 1998). Therefore, technologies are required for “self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the deciphering of the self by oneself” (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-252). However, the faults depicted are seen as the result of bad intentions confession is therefore *judgmental*. Thus, “each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to know what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires, and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community and hence *to bear public or private witness against oneself*. The truth obligations of the faith and self are linked together. The link permits the purification of the soul, impossible without self-knowledge” (Foucault, 1997, p. 242). However, self-revelation, according to Foucault, equates *with* self-destruction, as *it entails reconstitution of the self, and thereby the alterations sought after have oneself as an object* (1997, pp. 246-249).

⁴³ Thus, there are also many HRM techniques that draw from both powers in a combinatory manner, such as company culture and values, job orientation (inc. mentoring) and recruitment.

Form of Foucauldian Power	Core Method	Core Technique	HRM Techniques used in Work Organisations; examples
Pastoral power combined with technologies of the self	Subjectification	Confession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Performance appraisals -Development talks -Career planning -Mentoring -Training and development -Feedback - Motivation - Commitment and loyalty - Job satisfaction

Table 5: Pastoral Power and HRM

In practice there are two main ‘technologies of the self’ employed in HRM through which the self is altered, namely *examination* and *confession* (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). Examination was already looked at in discussing “disciplinary power” (see previous section). The core difference in examination in “disciplinary power” and “pastoral power” is that in “pastoral power” the examination is *self-examination*, carried out internally by the subject. On the other hand, in “disciplinary power” examination is something external conducted by someone external to the worker’s self, in addition to which the worker can also self-monitor. However, despite this fundamental difference, the mechanism itself is the same whether a person is examined or self-examining. In both cases, a person is monitored, examined and assessed in comparison to others. In the case of “disciplinary power”, examination is carried out externally by comparing the progress of workers to each other and to the individual him/herself over time. Over time a worker can also internalise the examining gaze and begin self-examining. In the case of “pastoral power”, examination is conducted solely by the person him/herself comparing and contrasting his/her development in competences and character to his/her own development over time, with that of an ideal or with that of others.⁴⁴

Let me next explicate the results in relation to confession. HRM techniques based upon confession are examined particularly in relation to *character and competences*. Character and competences are discussed because when one examines oneself, one does this by and large in terms of one’s character and abilities [i.e. competences]. In the context of work, Townley argues that the utilisation of these techniques based on examination and confession has increased, particularly subsequent to the personal

⁴⁴ For more on different types of self-examination see Foucault (1997, p. 247).

character of the current and prospective worker becoming a prominent issue, in contrast to the more 'conventional' functions of HRM such as education and training (1998, pp. 191-211; on training, Holden, 1994, pp. 335-370). In consequence, the focus in HRM has shifted from scrutinising technical skills to examining whether workers have certain *personal competencies and characteristics* and exploring how those can be further developed (Rose, 1999, pp. 103-119). Hence, current HRM techniques study, for example, how motivated and disciplined workers are, their level of initiative and ability to communicate and, moreover, how these competencies can be enhanced through particular HRM techniques. Furthermore, competencies and personal characteristics have come to be used as a foundation for recruitment and promotion systems as well as for career-pathing, succession planning and benefits (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). As a consequence of aligning personal character and competencies to the realm of work, the 'individual' is presented in HRM in terms of components of the self, such as motives, traits, self-image, social role and behaviour. According to Townley, HRM has dedicated itself to examining, measuring and acting upon [workers] by imposing the use of 'the technologies of the self':

"Training in competency acquisition involves... self-assessment or instrumented feedback on the competency [examination and confession]; experimentation with demonstrating the competency; to be followed by practise using the competency [re-constituting the self]" (Townley, 1998, pp. 201-202).

As to what makes individuals strive towards self-improvement and towards altering the self, Boyatzis suggest that:

"...It is through the realization of personal discrepancies between the ideal and the real on such competencies that people can perceive and feel a need for change" (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 254, in Townley, 1998, p. 202).

In essence, *competencies* involve "the presentation of a set of images which the individual *should* strive to achieve" (Townley, 1998, p. 202). Furthermore, this is mutually implicated with the view that contemporary 'individuals' seem to have of themselves, namely that they see themselves as someone who can do better, who can improve and moreover, who *should* improve. However, in the light of the empirical data, this does not seem to be the case. It is not the improvement of some particular characteristic which is seen as essential, but the person's *character per se*. Additionally, it is not the improvement of personal character, but the character *already is as it is*. Thus, you are what you are and you either fit into the organisation right away, with your character, or you do not fit in, in which case you are not hired and will never work for

the company in the first place. There is no time, energy or money to waste on having the wrong type of character ruining the team spirit and organisational atmosphere.

The aim of the team is to find the right guy, because if you have to find out you have the wrong guy through the actual operation, you have already destroyed quite a bit of the team. You can cause damage beyond repair. That is the difference between the large company and us; they can sack people or move them to other parts of the organisation. They have many different alternatives... we are on the side of the individual. We do the groundwork better than large companies. That is the difference. We are such a small unit that we can destroy it easily, therefore, we need to be well prepared (II; 2:65).

Furthermore, the results do not indicate that contemporary workers are simply taking on ideals and using them as a catalyst for personal change, particularly if these ideals are externally set by an organisation. In fact, when interviewees were asked about employees' work, as well as about their way of working, rather interesting results emerged. Individuals are *already* working in their ideal way and doing work that is, by and large, ideal work in their view. Thus, it is not something that individuals need to strive for, as it is *already* their everyday reality (more on this in section 4.5). Finally, Townley's view (*ibid.*) easily leads to a presupposition of contemporary workers as passive and obedient subjects, who are subjugated and subdued without resistance or thought of their own. This does not seem to be the case, as workers see alternatives in terms of other professions and industries. They also have a say in organisation-wide matters and can largely define their own work (more on this in section 4.7). Thus, it seems that the character, the way of working and the work itself are *already* rather ideal – at least according to the workers' experience. Therefore, it seems somewhat unlikely that workers would be willing to improve and change just like that, in order to meet some externally set need for improvement, as they already seem to be satisfied, even enjoying themselves. The only thing that emerges in relation to improvement is the wish to improve their professional skills and experience. Thus, contra to Boyatzis' and Townley's view, it seems to be *professional skills rather than personal competences that are being improved* (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 254, in Townley, 1998, p. 202). Professional skills and the need to improve these are mutually, laterally checked and personal competences and discrepancies in these self-assessed. Thus, with regard to "judgementality" in contemporary organisations, *confession is not judgemental in the conventional sense*, whereby one's supervisor would be judging one's actions or performance. The person him/herself does this, rather than an external manager. Also,

colleagues probably estimate and judge to some extent, within the constraints of time and the need to also manage the self. Thus some form of *mutual checking* takes place in project groups. However, this mutual checking is not formalised in any manner. Probably workers do it in part for purposes of self-comparison, as, in the absence of external guidelines and established normative frameworks, one needs to find self-assuring benchmarks somewhere.

So, how are we then to interpret the results which clearly indicate that it is not some personal characteristics, but the person's character that is of core importance? Does this imply that in fact the whole character has come under scrutiny in contemporary organisations? That there is no escape; that, indeed, the whole person is being judged, classified, assessed and analysed in contemporary organisations? Has the contemporary individual finally become completely subdued and, in consequence, the whole character turned into a working character? But how, then, does this subjugation occur in practice? What is its *modus operandi*? What is it based upon? What is its locus? Thus, let us turn our focus from external to internal control. Townley suggests that, with the help of techniques such as mentoring guidance, HRM practices enable change which, rather than being coercive, is now self-directed (1998, p. 202). Let me take this a little further and propose that it is not merely that HRM techniques have changed from coercive to self-directed, but that *there is a change in the locus of control and ways of control of human resources per se*. I suggest that *the locus of control is no longer external but internal*. Thus, that rather than external control based upon "disciplinary power" and associated disciplinary techniques, contemporary organisational control is primarily internal and based upon "pastoral power" and "technologies of the self". In practice, this is illustrated by the fact that ways of controlling are no longer based upon bureaucratic HRM techniques and procedures, but instead on individual's self-discipline, self-directedness, self-monitoring and self-empowerment, all of which necessitate self-awareness and an ability to work on the self.

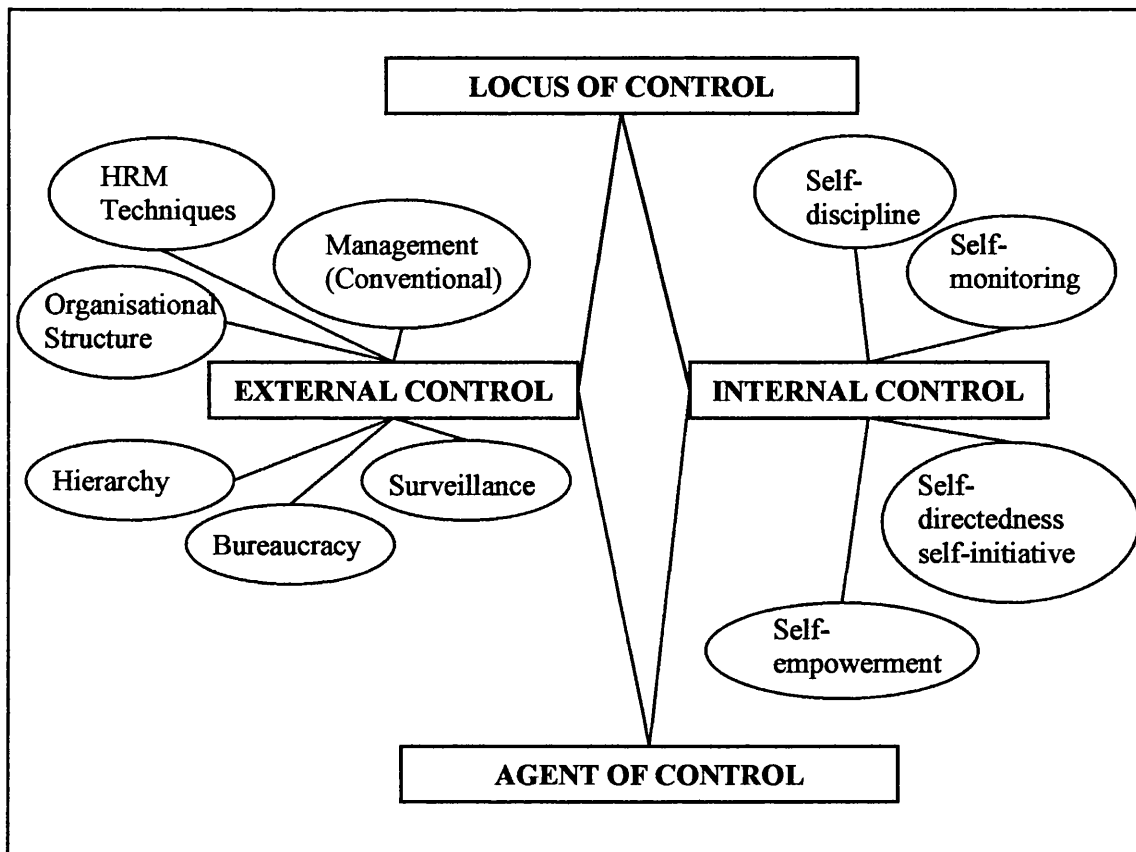


Figure 8: Locus and Agent of Control

Thus, I am in essence arguing that workers are *not just self-directed, but in fact altogether self-managed*. Therefore, let us next examine self-management in detail.

Contemporary Control and Self-management

Self-management is the primary way of managing in contemporary organisations. However, self-management is not something referred to as a fad or discourse, something which workers invariably seem proud of and try to emphasise. On the contrary, it seems to be an everyday reality that filters through workers' accounts when they explain and describe their everyday working practices. To be more precise, it seems to encapsulate how they organise their work and working lives day in and day out. Thus, rather than a fad governing their speech, it is an outcome of their accounts of *how they work in reality, as well as how they experience their work*.

First of all, this becomes evident in that each person largely *defines the schedules and targets* for their work themselves. At times the timetables come from clients or project teams, and there are clear deadlines that need to be met. However, on an everyday basis,

timetables and schedules are constructed by workers themselves. Accordingly, most of the planning, for example in terms of order of tasks, is decided by the worker. Once in a while a boss might also ask for something of high priority to be done, but even in such cases the matter is *negotiated as opposed to delegated*. Also, the interviewees spontaneously say, time after time, that their work is *autonomous* and they are able to make many *decisions*.

I can make decisions very autonomously. Also working hours are very flexible. I can also pretty much decide for myself what I do and when I do it. Of course you have to take into account that clients have certain requirements, as do the projects. But no one comes to tell me you need to do these in this order. Instead, doing the work is self-initiated and self-directed (III; 4:42).

Timetables are often decided by the client, but the targets are set by me (II; 5:29). I experience my work to be very independent. As I said, I do have certain things that I need to take care of, but I can decide myself how I schedule them (III; 13:35).

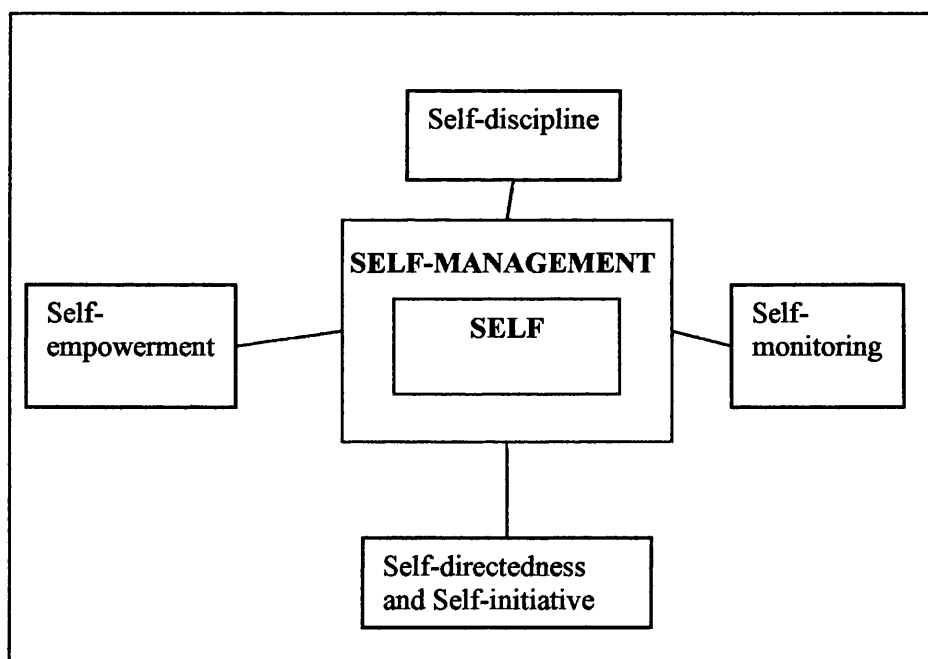


Figure 9: Internal Control

Workers also largely *define their own job content*, i.e. what they actually do. They can also decide not only what they do, but also in what order they do it in. They also have the opportunity to alter tasks. At times they even have the possibility of moving to work on other projects instead. Freedom and responsibility emerge as a pair and are repeatedly brought into the discussion on autonomy and independent ways of working.

I can impact myself on the outcome of what I am doing - I have the freedom and the responsibility for it. Therefore, successes come also almost completely to me. Then again, if something goes wrong I take the main responsibility... I can see and demonstrate the outcomes of my own work and do things the way that I see is best (III; 6: 46).

I experience my work as very autonomous - very. This is because I can really make decisions and I am given opportunities. But it is also because, for example, my job description is not defined in a detailed manner. So, the creation and construction is self-initiated and self-directed. (III; 8:36) I can have a very large impact upon my work. Then again, I am expected to bring in new ideas and develop stuff, therefore I can very much define what I actually do (III; 8:54)

Furthermore, there is hardly any external surveillance. Workers *monitor themselves and also largely the quality of their own work*. Therefore, even the words of external monitoring and surveillance seem strange to them. Workers explicitly state that they do not experience themselves as monitored or under surveillance. Thus, surveillance is not recognised either by HRM personnel or by workers. There is some reference to *informally* checking that people by and large show up. Also, there is *electronic surveillance* in use in a few of the organisations. In practice, however, the electronic surveillance is not circumspectly monitored. Nonetheless, in reality there is some *mutual checking* in project teams and professional groups, as the work needs to get done and deadlines need to be met. If someone fails in these respects in a joint project, it is of course noted. Finally, the *architecture* in these offices is open and thus supports lateral peer surveillance, as in open offices everyone can see what the others are doing and indeed if they are present or not. That said, people seem to be so busy that there is hardly any time to be lurking around, and then again, if you are lurking around *that* is also easily noticed.

No, [we do not have surveillance or control systems]. The boss checks and colleagues check that people are approximately present (II; 6:32)

No, there is no lurking or surveillance (II; 10:31).

Lack of surveillance is associated with autonomous work, in that there is 'no one holding you hand' or there is 'no one cuddling your head', or simply 'no one telling you what to do'. Independence and an autonomous way of working is taken for granted in contemporary organisations.

I have to say that I experience my work to be pretty autonomous because no one is breathing down my neck and asking: what are you doing now? (III; 14:35).

Workers might be laterally checked in project teams. However, the surveillance of projects and products is lacking in any standardised or systematic form. Hence, there

are hardly any standardised monitoring systems for quality. The project manager or the main architect is in charge. However, besides this, if something goes wrong it is the client's complaints which indicate this.

Workers also *decide their own working hours*; in fact, most of the companies have flexible working time. However, the work place is usually the office and this is compulsory. Thus, despite the fact that many have computer connections at home *they are obliged to come to the office to work*. There are only two exceptions to this, the salespeople who are out of the office meeting clients and some of the musicians who have their equipment elsewhere. The rationale for being in the same place is that it enables the exchange of information, face-to-face communication and working together. This is, however, pretty much the only thing that is obligatory in contemporary organisations.

The Constituents of Self-management

It is interesting to notice an element of *self-discipline* in the interviewees' accounts. They often describe how it is *up to them*, how they need to initiate and be self-directed. They also need to actually do the work without having anyone telling them to do so. Often they also need to initiate projects and even start projects on their own. New ideas need to be brought in and it is necessary to ensure that there is enough time to carry out all the projects within the timeframes set by themselves or by clients. They also need to make sure that they have enough work to do at all times, despite work in the industry being rather periodic. Altogether, a contemporary worker seems to have rather a lot to take care of and to be responsible for. In fact, all the aforementioned are difficult to accomplish without self-discipline.

Also, in the absence of someone looking over their shoulder, and in the absence of surveillance systems, workers are the ones who end up having to monitor their own work. Thus, they need to *self-monitor*. It is not just the quality of their work that they need to monitor but also that timetables are kept to and targets met. Also, they need to monitor that they put in the necessary hours of work, frequently in the absence of official monitoring systems. They also need to check that they take their annual holidays. Sometimes they also need to monitor that some HRM techniques, such as annual development talks, are actually implemented.

When you have a project no one is monitoring what you do. It is very autonomous; you do everything to the end. From the very beginning I have experienced that here you do not expect someone to come and stroke your head and you do not ask: what do I do now? ... Most of the time you have to work independently (III; 5:37).

I experience my work as very; very autonomous... I have to say that this is a way of working that does not necessarily suit everyone - that no one is pushing you to do things all the time (III; 10:27).

Also, workers seem to have a *strong urge to learn new things*; however, this is *not* expressed via a discourse of self-development, but instead closely related to improving one's proficiency. Thus, the target of development, i.e. what is being developed, is *not* a particular personal characteristic or one's self as a person, but one's proficiency. In fact there is an *almost complete lack of talk about self-development*, and a *complete lack of talk about self-actualisation*. Instead, there is a strong emphasis on improving one's proficiency in terms of skills and experience. In addition, workers need to be *self-directed*. They do not only need to be in charge of the construction of their everyday working realities in terms of job content and way of working, but also to bring in new ideas and innovate. However, self-directedness is not forced or monitored but *self-initiated* by workers.

Furthermore, there are hardly any reward systems or standardised feedback mechanisms. In addition, superiors are largely absent and work is conducted in an independent manner. In the absence of superiors and/or standardised structures, workers largely need to empower themselves. Thus, in addition to being self-disciplined, self-directed and self-monitored, they need to be *self-empowered*. This is illustrated rather well in their decision taking and making. Decisions about their work and way of working are largely made by workers themselves. Often they can also have a say in organisation-wide matters (more on this in section 4.7).

Everyone here has some expertise or expertise from several fields. Therefore, everyone has to be the innovator of one's own things (III; 4:73).

I can rather ideally [take part and make decisions regarding my work](III; 9:65).

Yes, [I can sufficiently take part and make decisions regarding my work], because the decisions that I cannot impact on are the ones that I do not have the expertise for or nothing to say about in any case (III; 10:52).

Yes, you can have an influence here. In fact you can influence so much that you do not have time to influence everything that you could influence (III; 15: 65).

Thus, *workers are self-disciplined, self-directed and self-monitored, as well as self-empowered*. The word which encapsulates all these dimensions of contemporary control is *self-management*, thereby making *the locus of control the worker's self*. Workers also experience themselves as self-managed to the relative neglect of any external management. Thus, when asked about the ideal manager, workers often express a hope for managers who would be closer, set them a target, follow up a little more on what they do, and most of all *give feedback*. Workers seem to be feeling rather alone with their work, with no one at "management level" really commenting upon it. Some also ask for more clarity in terms of tasks, and particularly in terms of *expectations*. Despite the lack of standardised feedback, there is *some* recognition randomly given, for example by colleagues, superiors and clients.

The ideal is that the manager would work much more closely, and would support and advise on work and could keep up targets. The manager could reward for reaching targets, and give feedback (III; 1;61).

Therefore, it is not just the locus of control that has changed but also the *agent of control*. Thus, it seems to be the alteration in the subject position of the manager that has in part enabled the emergence of self-management. Managers are simply not filling their subject position in a conventional way in terms of monitoring, supporting and telling workers what to do. Workers are not left with much choice - they need to self-manage, as no one else is doing it for them. This is also reflected in the *way of communicating*. *There is a shift from delegation to negotiation*. When issues are talked about with a boss they are discussed and negotiated. There is no talk of bossing or delegation. Matters are negotiated, at times even re-negotiated, and often *decided together*.

Summary

Finally, let me go back to explicating the research question in the light of the empirical evidence. The question was: *how is worker's subjectivity operationally linked to contemporary organisational control?* To sum up the results, on the one hand the majority of the randomly sampled organisations contacted were found *not* to utilise established HRM techniques, personnel or departments, while, on the other hand, the majority of the interviewees were found to describe themselves and other workers as self-managed. This leads us to the conclusion that *ways of controlling have changed*.

They are no longer based upon external bureaucratic methods of control, which have their premises in disciplinary practices of documentation, examination and surveillance. Instead, contemporary ways of controlling are based upon *internal* methods of self-discipline, self-direction, self-monitoring and self-empowerment. These together culminate in self-management, where the *locus of control* is the worker's self. Thus, not only have ways of controlling changed but also the locus of control, which is no longer external but primarily internal. It is reasoned that this has been brought forth by the disappearance of external control-mechanisms. Accordingly, it is postulated that the supporting structures of external control, namely management, hierarchy and bureaucracy, are also losing their hegemony and changing their character. Therefore, it is not just the locus of control that has changed, but also the *agent of control*, which, *instead of the manager, is now the worker's self*.

Therefore, are we to make the interpretation that through self-management, contemporary control essentially operates by aligning the subjectivity of the worker with work? In other words, that contemporary HRM techniques and practices are not to be perceived as contributing to new way(s) of being that escape the established forms of control? That, instead, they are merely another form of subjugation, functioning at an even deeper level, the level of self-constitution and subjectivity? (Rose, 1999; Townley 1998; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998).

"Western social and psychological sciences subtly deconstruct the ancient philosophical connection between truth and freedom, and *refashion the pursuit of enlightened self-knowledge as a tactic of subjugation*" (Allen, 1998, p. 190).

In taking such a stance, HRM techniques encourage workers to employ 'technologies of the self' on themselves, but only in a manner which is aligned with the desires of modern workplaces. Thus, the power/knowledge/discipline employed would be masked as self-creation through self-management. Furthermore, this would be done in contexts where self-understanding is construed in the matrix of social and discursive practices which encourage self-development and self-realisation through work. It follows from such a reading that self-development is just another 'discourse of truth' aimed at defining a particular type of worker subjectivity and subduing workers accordingly. This brings us to ask: have we developed yet another disguise for a set of normative techniques aimed at controlling workers in more subtle, subjective and social ways? Is this but another attempt to capture and alter the worker's subjectivity and, indeed, to

subdue it in the process? The research results indicate the opposite of these intriguing postulates. The results clearly point out that there is a *lack of both self-actualisation discourse and self-development discourse*. Thus, that the discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement are in fact *missing* from contemporary organisations. This is one factor that would lead us to believe that the legacies of the Human Relations Movement are not just being repeated in another guise.

The possibility of agency is another point in support of the suggestion that this is indeed something different from the mere subjugation of subjectivity in the manner of the discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement (more on agency on section 4.7). Thus, it is not just that the locus of control is the worker's self, but also that the *agent of this control is the worker's self*. Contemporary self-management is the culmination of self-discipline and self-monitoring, but also of self-directedness and self-empowerment - the latter two of which require some form of agency in order to operate. There is no one initiating and innovating apart from workers themselves. Also, there is not much external empowering in terms of reward and feedback, but workers are empowered by allowing them to decide upon their own way of working, the content of their work and so forth. Further, there are no restrictions, no codes of conduct and no structured requirements for how workers should use their creativity, innovativeness or energy *per se*, or indeed whether they should use these. Workers largely find their own levels and ways of working, innovating and creating. All in all, workers are not externally monitored, assessed, examined or managed, because *only objects can be externally controlled –subjects cannot*. The work of contemporary workers might be facilitated and laterally checked, but they are not externally controlled. This is not possible, because the contemporary worker is no longer an object, but has become a subject for him/herself. Correspondingly, contemporary HRM methods are about *allocating* workers to certain roles and projects, though even these are negotiable. The conventional HRM system, whose function was the *management* of human resources, has become obsolete because the object of management is no longer manageable in the conventional way.

The third factor supporting the argument that the contemporary control of human resources is different from its predecessors is that *it is based upon a different modern form of power*. Thus, there is a change in the modern form of power, mainly in its use,

in that it is no longer merely “disciplinary power” but above all “pastoral power” with associated “technologies of the self”. “Pastoral power” has a different way of operating, as it requires self-understanding as well as *conscious and active working upon the self* (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-252; 2000, pp. 331-333). Thus, it requires a worker to be a subject rather than an object. Accordingly, it is not possible for a worker to be a subjugated object, in the sense that s/he would be just internalising the discipline and the externally set requirements of the workplace. (Also, the externally set requirements to draw from are absent). Instead, the worker now needs to consciously work with him/herself, to examine oneself and to confess one’s mistakes to oneself or to others; hence the requirement for openness, honesty and transparency. The power and the way it functions in the premises of organisational control is different – it is “pastoral power”.

Also organising is different, depending on the power operating. A conventional HRM system can be seen as a *socio-technical system*, functioning according to the functional and partly disciplinary understanding of power.⁴⁵ Then again, the contemporary organisation of HRM escapes systems thinking and associated models based upon understanding organisations as systems that can be engineered and managed or as entities that exist in their own right independently of people (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-42; Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). In contemporary organisational reality, the HRM system is history, as seems to be the case with thinking about organisations as socio-technical systems or entities *per se*. Instead, an informal (systems-escaping), people-centred way of organising and working is already an everyday reality in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age.

Ultimately, does not this operation of pastoral power provide evidence that we are indeed witnessing the all-encompassing constitution of subjectivity? I would tend to agree, if it were not *for* the previously discussed possibility of agency (more on this in section 4.7). Therefore it is argued that it is not a mere resurgence of normative control, but something novel that is emerging – this is, relating to the worker, working as well as organising. Thus, as a final point, subjectivity and organisational control are seen to be linked - not only in an all-encompassing, restrictive and subjugating manner, but in a *constructive and contextual manner that also allows for agency*. However, the stance is

⁴⁵ For socio-technical systems, see Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15; on HRM see Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211.

taken here that it is not merely organisational control that has changed, but that there are also changes in the functioning of organisation and management *per se*. These changes have been reflected in the changes in organisational control and *vice versa*. Thus, these changes are mutually implicated. Therefore, let us next explore in more detail the results relating to organisation and management.

4.3 The Structures of Control

Research Question 3	Specified Research Question
How are organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power operationally linked in the context of contemporary work organisation?	3. The splits at the core of organisational studies are changing a) The structure-human factor split is changing b) The manager-managed split is changing

Research question 3 explores the validity of the conventional conceptualisation of organisation and management in the context of contemporary organisations. To be more precise, research question 3a, specifically, examines whether the “entitative” view of organisations, in which structures and human processes stand apart from each other, remains accurate in contemporary organisations (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-42; Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). On the other hand, research question 3b, specifically, focuses on exploring management and the way in which it operates in present-day organisations. Furthermore, both organisation and management are explored by examining their production and reproduction in contemporary organisations. The hypothesis is that the understanding and functioning of organisation and management found here depart from the conventional understanding and functioning. In exploring organisation, the particular interest is in exploring the validity of the “split” between organisational structures and human processes. In explicating contemporary management, the prime focus is on exploring the “split” between the managers and the managed.

In practice, the relevance of these splits is explored by examining the *way of organising, the way of deciding, the way of working and the way of communicating* in contemporary organisations. More accurately, the focus is on explicating how organising, deciding, working and communicating occur on an everyday basis in the organisations and, thereby, how management and organisation are constructed and re-constructed in everyday organisational practices. The validity of the organisational split is explored predominantly by explicating the contemporary way of organising. On the other hand, the split between the manager and the managed is examined by looking at the way of deciding, working and communicating among the personnel. Also, in examining the splits, the structural reality of hierarchy and bureaucracy are explored. Therefore, let us next explore: what are the main themes emerging in relation to

organising, working and communicating in contemporary organisations? What do these tell us about the contemporary understanding of an organisation and the functioning of its management? Finally: do the same themes emerge from the accounts of both the HRM personnel and the workers or are there indeed different views on how management and organisation operate?

Conventional Organisation and the Contemporary Way of Organising

In conventional organisational literature, organisations are essentially seen as entities which exist in their own right (Humphreys, Berkeley and Jovchelovitch, 1996, pp. 1-3). Thus, it is assumed that *persons and organisations are independent of one another*, as illustrated by the notions that people work *in* or *for* organisations. This way of seeing organisations and people as independent actors culminates in a split between the two. As Humphreys, Berkeley and Jovchelovitch posit, this fundamental split between organisational structures and creative human practices results in overestimating the importance of organisational structures and tasks *per se*, and underestimating the human factor and social interaction of which the organisation consists (ibid.; Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-43). Thus, this 'entitative' approach has led to theorising and researching organisations as independent of human subjects and their relational processes (ibid.). This in turn has caused organisations to be viewed as actors in their own right, having their own motivational forces, missions and goals akin to those of people. Subsequently, this view has contributed to legitimating the theorising about organisations independently of workers. To be more precise, *this 'entitative' view has contributed to alienating workers from their experiences, from their relational processes as well as from their contexts*. However, the empirical research findings here stand in sharp contrast to the 'entitative view' of organisation. The empirical results indicate that *organisation in practice translates as organising, whereby organisation is not the core but the process of organising*. Furthermore, the contemporary way of organising primarily consists of four different activities, namely: negotiation, co-operation, group work and communication. Thus, *contemporary organisations are essentially and innately constructed and re-constructed by negotiation, co-operation, group work and communication*. Furthermore, all this takes place *in the context of action*. In fact, these are what organisation comes down to in an everyday organisational context, i.e. these in practice constitute a contemporary organisation.



Figure 10: Thematic Network of Contemporary Organisation

Negotiation

Negotiation is the organising principle of contemporary organisations (see also Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 153-169). It is an *ongoing process* that occurs all the time and everywhere and takes place among and across project teams and professional divisions. It often takes the form of spontaneous group-forming or corridor talk. Negotiation is a way of life in the contemporary organisation; it is frequently the way in which decisions are made as well, as the most common form taken by organisational communication. Negotiation is mostly informal and spontaneous. However, it is such an established way of dealing with projects and people that it has become *the way of organising and the principle way of communicating*. Negotiation takes place between the manager and the managed, among and across board members, with clients; with group/team members and with colleagues. The matters negotiated vary from job descriptions to the dates of one's holiday. In other words, pretty much *everything is negotiable and also negotiated*.

We are and do things by ourselves but different sorts of groups are formed really on a daily basis. We have standard meetings and group meetings, they are not written in stone, but we attempt to keep to them... *there is continuous negotiation and group activity*. At the very moment we decide that it relates to that topic, and then we just start doing it. It is like that... We do not have anything formal. People know who to go to... we do not use project diaries, only deadlines (II; 2:64).

We have enough people and communication works so well in each department, that despite their individual work they can also do each other's work. Holidays work feasibly in such a way that the whole professional group is not away at once. Each professional group can negotiate among themselves when they take their holidays (II; 4:17).

Knowing what is going on in the organisation is deemed important. All in all, communicating is perceived as a way of sharing this information. Communication is important in order to share information on the projects. It is also a necessity for people to be able to carry out their work. However, communication is not just some mechanical task with a functional aim - it is linked to an experience of sharing. This also impacts on the organisational atmosphere. In fact it is repeatedly emphasised that a particular type of organisational atmosphere is created by *sharing* and by people *experiencing* that they know what is going on.

We always start the week with a group meeting on Monday morning... so that *everyone knows what is going on*. This is how you build a team... so that everyone has to and can share the information on what is the current situation. This is how we survive. Everyone is part of the team and no one is left out. The whole company is headed in the same direction (II; 2:64). You go to lunch when you go to lunch and you come back from lunch when you come back from lunch... the most important thing is that the others know what is going on. *Our way of managing is information*. No one acts if the others do not know. The intranet works well, if you are at home ill you put a message on the intranet or on the text messaging service to tell everyone that you are away. That is how it goes. Not that the information would be left with one person, but that it goes to *everyone*. Everyone has a common shared responsibility for what is going on. We do not want to force people to share information, but they should figure out for themselves who and in which groups needs the information (II; 2:32).

Negotiation is not political in the conventional sense, in that it is not aimed at improving one's subject position in terms of taking one up the career ladder. There are hardly any career ladders, and people have subject positions based largely on their expertise. They are on rather *egalitarian* terms with regard to their positions as subjects; however, they need to co-operate in order to get the job done, so perhaps they negotiate because of this. Perhaps they negotiate because they have simply learned that it is a convenient way of getting things done. Whatever the prime reason might be, the way of getting there is the same, namely *negotiation*. Furthermore, negotiation seems to function as a premise for sharing and sensing. Thus, *it has a clear social function*. This is to shape the organisational atmosphere by creating a sense of equality, openness and transparency. Hence, it is not merely a convenient way to get projects done and decisions made, but negotiation also serves important social functions. Finally, negotiation is the practical way in which organising occurs in contemporary organisations. It is not a fad in the sense of being theory or rhetoric; it is a principle in

practice. Negotiation is directly related to action. In fact, *negotiation is largely on action*, on how to get projects done and problems within them solved. So, what takes place through negotiation is development of action plans, updating other people, listening to other people, and sharing ideas.

How does this emphasis on constant negotiation fit with self-management? It was previously established that workers are largely self-managed. In practice, self-management translated as workers being able to impact upon and decide upon their own job content, way of working and so forth. However, negotiation is also emphasised by workers, not only by the 'HRM personnel'. It is described as *a way of deciding*, as *a way of dealing with practical issues* as well as *a way of dealing with work-related matters in project teams*. In a nutshell, despite workers being self-managed and experiencing themselves as such, *negotiation is seen as the primary way of communicating* in everyday organisational life. In practice this is illustrated by the time given to negotiation on a daily basis, for example the number of corridor conversations per day. This varies from 5 to 25 per person/day, so that some people have over 125 corridor conversations during a 5-day week. Negotiation is also understood as the way of deciding as opposed to delegation. Negotiation is on-going and constant. Despite the industry's cyclical nature, negotiation is not periodic or cyclical. It occurs constantly. Finally, negotiation is seen as an essential part of organising and working as, in the context of constant shortage of time, it would not be allocated so much time if it were not considered to be fundamental.

Co-operation

Co-operation is taken-for-granted. In fact, it is so much taken-for-granted that it is not even emphasised, it is just seen as the normal way of working; sometimes you ask for help and sometimes you help others, and most of the time you work together towards a common goal. Co-operation is a way of working in contemporary organisations. In particular, there is a great deal of co-operation in groups and teams. Furthermore, co-operation is often centred on projects (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 175-210). In practice this translates as working together, specifically in groups and teams. Apart from assigning teams to particular projects, co-operation is not formalised, but unstructured and lateral.

It is fifty/fifty individual and group work... But, I would say that on average co-operation... (II; 1:18).

Yes, it is mainly working in groups. I do not think there would be a single day when someone would be just in front of his/her own computer, working alone (II; 3:28).

Yes we work together, the doors are always open and indeed it is very much co-operation (II; 4:22).

Quite a bit. You need to be dealing with other people... there really is nothing that you could be doing that would entail you merely working by yourself in some corner (II; 8:22).

Group work

In practice, group work is understood as a synonym for co-operation. This is because much work is done in teams and in groups.⁴⁶ However, working in a team/group does not mean that people would be literally working together, but often in reality means that everyone does their parts separately and the project is put together from these parts. However, there is brainstorming, negotiation and discussion going on throughout the project between the team members. It seems that negotiation and communication is the glue that holds the team together and essentially forms the group. Finally, people are members of several teams at once. They can also have different roles in different teams. Also, there is a clear understanding that, even if the work is being done individually by professional people, they *need each other* in order to reflect and to get the projects completed. However, most of the actual working and doing is carried out separately by the workers, in that each one does his/her own part. Throughout the project the team/group members working on the same project meet to communicate, innovate, discuss and share what is going on and what and how everyone is doing.

Yes it is in a group, but in a way that one does one's part and the other does another part and then when you put them together you get something (II; 7:75).

Individual work in groups... all the time people communicate with each other but do the actual work by themselves (II; 6:15).

You can work at home only in exceptional situations. People come here to work, because it is group work... we have a lot of group work, almost any activity requires group work (II; 1:14).

Yes, it is always a group. Typically 6-7 people belong to one project or team and these people work intensively together (II; 4:22).

⁴⁶ The words team and group are not distinguished from each other but generally used as synonyms by the interviewees.

Communication

Communication is considered vital. Communication occurs both informally and formally. In quantity, informal communication outweighs formal communication. Formal communication translates as meetings where everyone is present. These are typically held either once a week or once or twice a month. In addition, teams often have previously scheduled meetings at least once a week. Also, those who work directly with clients have prearranged meetings with clients and potential clients. The rest of the communication is unplanned and informal. Part of this communication is directly to do with work, for example team members meeting to discuss project-related matters. However, there is also on-going communication with colleagues at lunch times and coffee breaks and in the corridors. Therefore, the work place is important; *everyone must work at the office*. The only exceptions to this rule are salespeople and musicians. Working at the office is compulsory, despite the flexible working hours and frequent home connections which make distance work possible. Also *office design is often open-plan*, thus further enabling communication. With regard to the means of communication, these are for example, intranet, phone, text messaging, set meetings and internal mail. Nevertheless, despite the advance of modern technology widely in use in these companies, face-to-face communication is still the main way of communicating.

We have internal mail. We have weekly meetings and a meeting once a month at which everyone is present. Then we have three big events annually for personnel. In addition, the teams get a lump sum of money annually and can do what they please with it (II; 1:22).

Well, we attempt to work here [at the office], because you need a good deal of other people's know-how. But of course we give people the opportunity to work at home if there are some tasks that are possible to do at home... or of course you can organise it and do it like that as long as you make sure that the communication works (II; 8:16).

Well, sales and marketing work quite a bit together. The coders of course work by themselves, but then again I look at the brainstorming sessions that they have there in order to share what they know about a subject and to discuss how they should deal with something. That sort of *natural problem-solving* occurs a lot in groups. And every Friday the coders have a meeting, where they go through new ideas. Sales and marketing also have their weekly meeting (II; 9:19).

All the themes associated with organising have an element of the social inherent in them. Thus, negotiation, co-operation, group-work and communication are essentially social phenomena. Moreover, they mostly involve more than just two people. Also, all

of these are of an on-going nature. Further, they are ordinary and regular. They are accepted and not contested. However, they are not fixed but ad hoc and altogether, spontaneous. Also, they are informal. Furthermore, there are no pre-set or monitored structures or standards for any of these, such as for instance pre-set group structures or guidelines for negotiation. Finally, except for the meeting where everyone is present, they are non-compulsory. Altogether, they are simply *the way in which the organisation works on an everyday basis*, ultimately forming what is considered the *normal* way of organising and re-organising everyday organisational life. In actual fact, people do not talk of organising but of four themes: *organising seems to be the culmination of negotiation, co-operation, group-work and communication*. This stands in sharp contrast to the conventional way of understanding an organisation, i.e. understanding it as an entity or a system independent of human practices and social processes.

The Way of Working

The way of organising is consistent with the way of working emphasised in contemporary organisations, in that self-management and social aspects are underlined. Correspondingly, *the ideal way of working* is described by HRM personnel as co-operative, flexible and responsible. The implicit demand for self-management filters through in the emphasis on using one's own initiative and being responsible. Social aspects, on the other hand, are stressed when highlighting cooperativeness, team-work and respect for others. Thus, *self-management and the emphasis on the social are not in conflict, but co-exist harmoniously*. Overall, the way of organising seems to correspond to the way of working, as both are primarily unstructured and flexible.

Flexible is absolutely one; co-operative, hmmm... and a fast learner (II; 1:11)

Flexibility is very important, also a sort of high stress-tolerance and rapidity (II; 2:23).

... own initiative, ambitious and responsible (II; 3:12). Own initiative, because I do not have time to hold everyone's hand. In small organisations you cannot have people who would hang on to structures and support systems, asking what do I do next? In such a small group everyone needs to know what is a smart thing to do and what they ought to do next... This is vitally important in a small organisation (II; 3:13).

Commitment, team work and respect for clients and quality. Commitment is self-directedness and responsibility (II; 5:16).

Pretty free, independent and responsible (II; 6.10).

General positive attitude to things... respect for others and trying to do your best and also share your knowledge (II; 8:14).

Also, *flexibility* and *freedom* are highlighted in working practices, for example in flexible working hours and in the lack of codes of conduct. Thus, the general code of conduct is based upon freedom. Also, people are on permanent employment contracts, to the relative neglect of temporary contracts. There is *trust* in workers and in turn workers take on a lot of responsibility. However, trust is not much directly talked about; it is somehow perceived as self-evident. Finally, people have high work morale, to such an extent that there are even at times difficulties in getting workers to take their holidays.

Around half of the people come to me and ask: hey could I keep some holiday?, for example an extended weekend. But then there are people, quite a few of them, that I have to go to and say: hey you could take a holiday of a week or two after this project, so start preparing yourself for that (II; 3:24).

In describing the way of working, *team work*, *knowledge sharing* and *being up to date* are stressed. Furthermore, it is typical for people to work on several projects at any one time. What is more, they work in different roles in different teams. Therefore their work is diversified and their job role multi-faceted. There is also a conscious effort to make people take on varied tasks. People also often themselves strive towards this. The aim of internal communication is twofold. On the one hand, to keep up to date with what is going on both in the organisation and in the industry. On the other hand, by sharing information, to make workers feel they are part of the same group, headed in the same direction.

If you do not even have time to give direction, you do not have time to monitor what people are doing. Therefore, everyone needs to be responsible for their own work. If they are responsible and ambitious then they do not need to be monitored. You can trust that if you give them a task they carry it out. You do not have to use your own resources for surveillance, watching over and rewarding... *the people thrive successfully forward the task with their own internal ambitions* (II, 3:19).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Thus, there is explicit reliance on the functioning of “pastoral power” and a subsequent reliance on self-management.

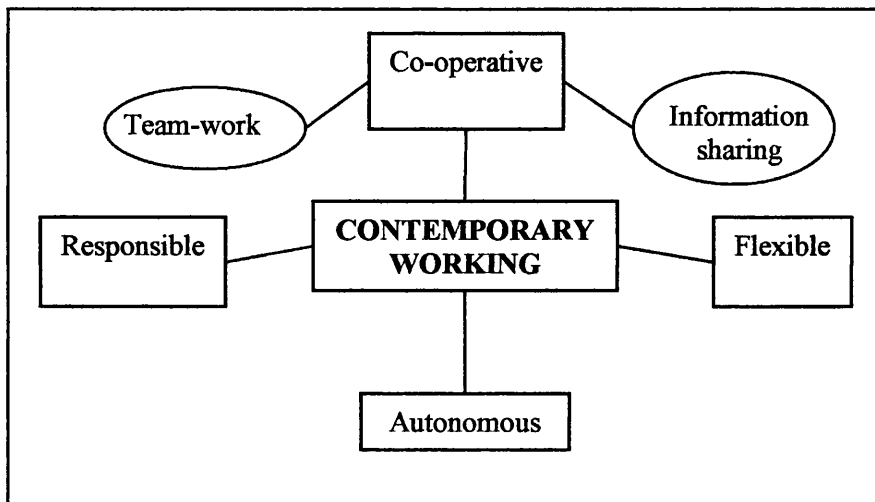


Figure 11: Thematic Network of Contemporary Way of Working

Structures in Contemporary Organisations

How is it possible that there is so much negotiation, since surely there are hierarchies and bureaucracy that serve to legitimise delegation, official communication and associated documentation? Could it be just that people believe that they are self-managed and that social aspects, along with negotiation, are important, but in fact structures of hierarchy and layers of authority are still very much their everyday reality? Perhaps it is all just nice talk, a mixing of the real and the ideal? Therefore, let us next examine the extent to which conventional organisational structures are present and then contrast this with the previous findings on organising in contemporary organisations. In the following sections, organisational structures are examined particularly in terms of bureaucracy and hierarchy. Organisational structures are examined in this manner because, traditionally, ever since the bureaucratisation of organisations, hierarchies and bureaucracy have been omnipresent in modern organisations (Clegg, 1990, pp. 33-41; 50-73). They have been the unquestioned reality of modern organisational life. They have in part legitimised management by setting managers apart from workers in very visible way. They have also formed the core structures of external control. Thus, external control has been based upon bureaucratic methods of documentation, on the one hand, and surveillance enabled by managers in their hierarchical positions, on the other hand. Therefore, conventionally, management, power, hierarchy and organisational control have been closely linked. These have been working together for the purposes of organisational control and organisational order. This has been underpinned by the logic of socio-technical systems, whereby structures as well as the people within those structures can be modified, managed and controlled (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15).

Bureaucracy and Hierarchy

Bureaucracy and hierarchy have been part of the *rationalisation* of the modern workplace. Weber discussed the rationalisation of work (Weber, 1947, 1976, in Clegg, 1990, pp. 27-29). He saw a modern bureaucracy in which any desire to do meaningful work, involving passion and enthusiasm, is subordinated to requirements to comply with regulations and rules (Clegg, 1990, pp. 29-33; Ritzer, 1996, pp. 28-35). In consequence, he saw bureaucracy as having disempowering implications for employees in terms of the dehumanising effects of rigid rules and procedures, since bureaucracy “suppressed human emotions and communal sentiment” (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 131).⁴⁸ Furthermore, in Weber’s view, the advent of modernity saw the ‘discipline’ of bureaucracy encroaching on almost every sphere of life and the ‘iron cage’ of rationality spiritually impoverishing the captive individual (Starkey and McKinlay, 1998, p. 4.). In essence, Weber saw the following tendencies as leading to bureaucracy:

Specialisation	Careerisation	Centralisation
The authorisation of organisational action	A process of status differentiation (stratification)	Legitimation of organisational action
Hierarchisation	Specific configuration of authority	Officialisation of organisational action
Contractualisation of organisational relationships	Formalisation of rules	Impersonalisation of organisational action
Credentialisation	Standardisation	Disciplinisation of organisational action

Table 6: The Defining Tendencies of Bureaucracy

Source: Clegg, 1990, pp. 39-41

Bureaucracy was a mode of organisation for Weber. Furthermore, the defining characteristic of an organisation functioning in this mode was *the presence of a leader and an administrative staff* (Clegg, 1990, p. 33, emphasis added). It is interesting to contrast this with the empirical evidence of this study, which clearly points out the lack of administrative staff as well as the absence of conventional managers and clear leaders. What are we to make of Weber’s postulates in the context of these findings? The answer

⁴⁸ Throughout the section on career, the term employee is used rather than worker, because employee is a term more associated with the bureaucratic mode of organising.

seems to be that the contemporary organisation is no longer functioning in bureaucratic organisational mode, at least in terms of management and administrative staff.

Also typical of bureaucracy have been *calculability, authority and rules* (Weber, 1947, p. 185; Weber, 1976, pp. 181-182, quoted in Clegg, 1990, p. 36-37). However, the results indicate that all of these are largely absent in contemporary organisations (section 4.3). To be more precise, calculability and planning in all forms are missing from contemporary organisations. In fact, there is hardly any planning and no long-term thinking of any sort. Also, *there is a lack of authority as well as lack of belief in authority*. As a replacement for external authority, there is a strong emphasis on self-management, both in practice and in theory (section 4.2). Furthermore, the usage of negotiation rather than delegation as a way of organising and deciding further supports the lack of authority. In addition, there is a clear lack of rules and codes of conduct and, instead, organisations are informal, unstructured and altogether unorganised (section 4.1). Finally, *the disempowering implications of bureaucracy are absent*. Instead of “loss of communal sentiment” there is just the opposite, namely the emergence of the social aspect such as social togetherness, which is illustrated by co-operation and negotiation. Instead of “loss of human emotion” there are frequent, explicit references to feelings such as satisfaction, passion and joy.

However, there is one positive side effect that bureaucracy is seen as having, and that is *clarity*. Due to this one side effect, bureaucracy divides opinions. On the one hand, there is a wish to have more clarity and an increase in bureaucracy is seen by some as the way of achieving this. On the other hand, there are those who despise bureaucracy and would like to see the end of even the little that they have. However, the fact remains that there is hardly any bureaucracy, whether it is hoped for or not.

I do not experience bureaucracy here. There could be more. If there was more bureaucracy here, things could function more clearly. You would get leading figures. Here, we do not have enough authorities to ascertain the general order... I think that this is quite a general opinion here (III; 1:34).

I experience bureaucracy in an increasing manner. I have been taking part in creating it, just because I feel it is necessary... at some level bureaucracy is necessary, but too much is too much. If you need to get approval for going to toilet you have gone too far... of course bureaucracy brings systematisation and safety to work, in that when I do this and this I know that [by following this certain procedure] I have done it correctly and well (III; 4:41).

It is precisely this lack of hierarchy. In this way work can be interesting and fun instead of an unpleasant compulsion (III; 7:22).

When we do have it [bureaucracy] I experience it as extremely annoying. I am not the sort of person who can tolerate it easily. Luckily we have very little of it here. We have consciously tried to avoid it (III; 10:26).

One characteristic of bureaucracy is hierarchisation; the idea that personnel with functional specialisations and precisely delegated powers have some relation of hierarchy between them (Clegg, 1990, p. 38-41). However, the examination of empirical evidence casts serious doubts on the hegemony of hierarchy in contemporary organisations. To start with, in these organisations there are typically *no organisational charts* available and even when asked people are reluctant to draw these. There is simply no use or policy of using such charts. Furthermore, without exception workers spontaneously refer to the organisation as a *flat organisation* in terms of hierarchy. Thus, the ‘specific configurations of authority’ in terms of superiors are largely missing. Also, *there is a lack of titles* as well as *a lack of desire for titles*. In fact, fancy titles are joked about. Hence, there is lack of ‘status differentiation’ in the classical sense. In cases where the interviewees were willing to sketch organisational charts, *there were 3-4 layers of social structure*, whereby on paper there is a CEO “at the top”; below the CEO are the directors of different functions, units or divisions; directors have heads of teams “underneath” them, and finally there are the executors. However, as stated, people take part in various teams and their roles can differ in each team. Thus, the same person can be a team leader in one project and an executing member in another. Positions are diversified and change; even job content is modified and altered completely. *In sum, then, there is little hierarchy to talk about*. Furthermore, there is no point in talking about the little hierarchy there might be - because of its instability, it largely differs from one project or situation to another.

Closely associated with hierarchy is the concept of a career. Indeed, Weber (1978) saw the concept of the career as a common feature of rational (modern) society, since societies based upon *rational-legal authority* needed to ensure that “those individuals in position of power would not be inclined to use such positions for self-aggrandizement” (ibid. p. 66.). Careerisation is one of the 15 core tendencies of bureaucracy. Clegg defines it in the following manner: “Differently stratified credentials are required in order to enter different positions in the hierarchy of officers; thus, there is a career structure and promotion is possible either by seniority or by merit of service by

individuals with similar credentials, depending on the judgement of superiors made according to the rules. Without the appropriate credentials one cannot be promoted to the next rung in the hierarchy: thus, there is a tendency towards *careerization* (striving to be bigger cogs in the machine) within organisation” (Clegg, 1991, p. 39, emphasis in original). Thus, in organisations the concept of a ‘career’ was there to remind employees that they could wait for moves between jobs and therefore should not treat any job as a sinecure. This also encouraged employees to establish a ‘professional’ orientation to their jobs. Thus, the ‘career’ facilitated “an impersonal, rationalized mode of administration by new legions of bureaucratic employees” (Savage, 1998, p. 67). However, the empirical evidence highlights the absence of a career as well as lack of thinking in terms of a career (section 4.6). Hence, *organisational structure is not present in the form of careerisation* either.

Overall, not many of the 15 core tendencies of bureaucratisation can be found in contemporary organisations. Particularly striking is the *absence of hierarchy, stratification and careerisation*. Also, the associated *credentialisation, configuration of authority and formalisation of rules* are missing. There is a complete lack of *contractualisation* of organisational relationships and of a specific configuration of authority combined with the authorisation of organisational action. In the absence of documentation and filing, it is difficult to see *standardisation* as present. Also, almost nothing is centrally-managed, co-coordinated or monitored. Thus, one cannot seriously talk of *centralisation* in the context of contemporary organisations - unless one thinks of each worker as a separate centre. Also, the capabilities and capacities that people use in their work time and spare time are not clearly distinguished. On the contrary they have been mixed and altogether boundaries between work and non-work are disappearing, according to Fournier, (1998, pp. 54-55). In contemporary organisations, people often seem to voluntarily mix their private life and work life by spending time with colleagues after working hours or indeed by becoming friends with their colleagues. Also, a person’s character is already deemed the single most important thing at the time of recruitment. Thus, the *officialisation and impersonalisation* of organisational action are hard to find in contemporary organisations. In fact, the findings indicate quite the opposite.

Finally, *specialisation* is defined as follows: “task discontinuity is achieved by *functional specification*. Tasks are specific, distinct and done by different formal categories of personnel who specialise in these tasks and not in others. These official tasks would be organized on a continuous regulated basis in order to ensure the smooth flow of work between the discontinuous elements in its organization; thus, there is tendency towards specialization” (Clegg, 1990, pp. 38-39). This could not be further from the description of specialisation in terms of the expertise present in contemporary organisations. In contemporary organisations, tasks are not clearly defined and specific, nor are they independent and distinct. Tasks are not often clearly defined; they are mutually implicated with other parts of the project, and thus by no means distinct. Also, there are no formal categories of personnel in use. At times, people do some parts of each other’s tasks and help each other. Furthermore, almost nothing is organised in a formal manner, let alone monitored and regulated. In sum, contemporary specialisation seems to have a different meaning in comparison to its modern predecessor.

Finally, let me next explore *profit-orientation* in contemporary organisations, in order to see whether the mentality is altogether un-businesslike, and thus whether this could explain the variation in the mode of organising. However, I very much doubt that this could prove a valid explanation, for the following reasons. The organisations that took part in the research are operating in a very dynamic and competitive market. The whole industry is struggling for survival, as are many of the companies. The companies are self-funded or funded by venture capital and thus there are serious obligations to the financiers to be met. If the companies fail to meet these they lose their funding or, if self-funded, the owners might even lose their homes. Thus, we are not talking about some sort of charity organisations that exist primarily to please their workers. No, rather, we are talking of relatively young companies struggling for survival in an extremely unpredictable industry. Also, profit-orientation is not something that only the owners are aware of - everyone working in the organisation experiences profit-orientation as self-evidently part of the picture and also as impacting on the work.

Profit responsibility is essential, particularly in client relationships. The money that comes in to this organisation is tied to the success of the projects. When a project has been accepted it usually has a price associated with it that indicates the money flowing to this organisation. It is through that [that profit-orientation is felt]... profit-orientation has been conscious all the time. In fact it has been underlined. In all the common meetings it is underlined (II; 3:36).

Well, you can see it especially now during the economic downturn, in that more is demanded of you. It is obvious that if the company is not making a profit and if you are not doing your job the company cannot benefit from you. You have to be able to bend according to expectations (II; 4:40).

Bureaucracy, Organisational Structures and Contemporary Organisation

Organisational structures are largely legacies from the bureaucratic mode of organisation. For this reason, in looking at the structures we looked at the structural tendencies of bureaucracy and contrasted and compared those with the structures of contemporary organisations. The conclusion is that there is a lack of bureaucratic tendencies and formal structures. The finding that there is hardly any formal structure to speak of is consistent with the findings on self-management and negotiation. Overall, *rather than tasks there are projects; rather than structures there are on-going negotiations; rather than authorities there are characters*. What do these findings entail in terms of conventional organisation in general and the organisational split, in particular? Let me first go back to the *conceptualisation of an organisation* and reassess the validity of the 'entitative' conceptualisation in the context of contemporary organisations. The relevance of the entitative view was examined mainly through the organisational split. Organisational split results from separating organisational tasks and structures from human experience and relational processes. Instead of organisational structures there are on-going relational processes of negotiation, co-operation, group work and communication. Thus, *contemporary organisations are essentially and innately constructed and re-constructed by negotiation, co-operation, group work and communication*. This is located *in the context of action*. All of these are innately social processes nested in communal sense and togetherness. What is more, there is a simultaneous lack of official structures of bureaucracy and its other tendencies, such as hierarchy and impersonalisation. Thus, the human experience is not planned, categorised and deprived by formal rules and the rationalisation of work. The human experience is not split from the tasks and the communal sentiment is not split from the structures. For these reasons, it is suggested that *the split is no longer present in contemporary organisations. There is no socio-technical system from which social processes and human experiences can be split*. In a context where there is a lack of conventional organisational structures and social technical systems, the organisational split is also absent. Also, the socio-technical system idea is embedded in the entitative understanding of an organisation. Thus, if the socio-technical system is obsolete, the entitative understanding of an organisation ought also to be obsolete. Therefore, new

organisational theories for understanding contemporary organisations are called for. These theories should try to get beyond these conventional spits. For that reason they ought to take as their starting point, for example, human emotion, social interaction and communal sentiment (Weick, 1995, pp. 17-61; Morgan, 1997, pp. 138-141; Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 65-86).

Beyond the Split: Organising, Contextualising and Negotiating

There have not been too many attempts to go beyond the split. It is suggested that one way of attempting to do this is to concentrate on explicating inter-subjective phenomena such as organising and power. The former has been well explicated by Hosking and Morley (1991), who, in their book *A Social Psychology of Organizing*, examine *the interdependent relationship between person and organisation* (p. 69). In particular they have focused on examining the cognitive, political and social processes through which, they believe, an organisation is created and transformed (pp. 89-112; 118-148; 67-86). Since this book is original and rather unique in terms of the ideas presented, it is discussed here at some length. Basically, Hosking and Morley draw on a constructionist view and take this view of organisational theory and context (p. 31). "Constructionist view essentially holds that the knowledge is constructed in the relationship between the knower (subject) and the known (object). In this process, both the knower and the known are transformed. Thus, reality, for human beings, is defined in relation to others" (Gervais, 1999, pp. 1-3).

Furthermore, Hosking and Morley suggest that *persons and contexts are interdependent* (p. 31). As a result, the identity of the person is seen as a collective construction of the social processes to which the person continuously contributes. This collective construction of the social order is believed to be occurring through these cognitive, political and social processes. Furthermore, these processes are seen as being performed both individually and collectively. Further, these processes are contextualised in relation to projects such as teamwork and negotiation. The projects are believed to be set partly by the person and partly by their context. In fact, the aforementioned political, social and cognitive processes of organising are seen as the means through which people set these projects of team-work and negotiation. In other words, Hosking and Morley suggest that through these processes people negotiate their understanding of the project [teamwork and negotiation] as well as attempting to influence the understanding

and action of others in relation to these projects. The processes are also symbolic in nature and in principle enable joint action. Essentially, then, these cognitive, political and social processes of organising are seen as the means by which an organisation is created and transformed.

Hosking and Morley also make *a link between these processes and the social order*, by illustrating how such processes largely contribute to the social order (pp. 74-81). In essence, *social order is constructed in interaction*. Furthermore, there is no 'design logic' that can produce a social order that is desired by any one individual actor. This is because organisational membership, organisational action, organisational relations and social order already mean different things to different individuals. Individual actors have differing amounts of influence. Finally, *people are dependent on each other* because they need the assistance of others in the construction of the social order and reality, as well as in reaching their own goals. They also highlight the fact that these cognitive, social and political processes should be seen as *collectively performed qualities of organising* through which an organisation is created. Finally, these social, political and cognitive processes should also be seen as relational, historical and emerging.

As a final point, Hosking and Morley believe that high-performance systems are *characterised by cultures of productivity* (p. 240). Moreover, in the development of such a culture the processes of networking, enabling and negotiation are, in their view, essential (pp. 250-259). However, Hosking and Morley link these processes of networking, enabling and negotiation above all to the concept of leadership (pp. 241-259). Their view is that these processes culminate in leadership in order to create a culture characterised by high productivity. Thus, despite regarding workers as intelligent social actors, they rely on *leadership to create culture*. The empirical evidence supports Hosking and Morley's view for the most part. However, the findings cast serious doubt on the role of leadership in creating the culture of productivity. The results make one wonder how this leadership is illustrated in practice in a contemporary organisation where structures, management and authority are largely absent. In contemporary organisations people are essentially self-managed, but work in groups, carrying out projects and negotiating their everyday reality. There is not much

conventional management, authority or leadership. What is more, with a few exceptions, leadership is not even wanted, since the present situation is deemed good.

Hosking and Morley view people as intelligent social actors who, through these processes, attempt to shape their social settings in a way which is consistent with their values and interests. Some succeed better than others. Therefore, they argue that *the social order can be seen as a negotiated order* (p. 81). My view is consistent with that of Hosking and Morley in viewing organising through interdependencies between person and context. Our views coincide also in understanding people as intelligent social actors. However, my understanding of power, political processes and political agency departs from their view. In my view, Hosking and Morley see power primarily as an influence on others (i.e. as an ability to influence others). “..Actors attempt to manipulate commitments to particular contexts. Individuals and groups attempt to mobilize power so as to influence other individuals and groups with whom they are interdependent”(p. 134). Hence power, when equated with influence in this way, is seen as a quality of an individual (pp. 124-125; 134-135). As suggested earlier, in sections 1.2.3 and 1.3.1.1, power is not a structure nor is it a quality or possession of a person; it is a productive force which is omnipresent and innately discursive.

Also, they do not bring up subjectivity and its role in the different relational processes. Rather than subjectivity they talk of identity. It is as if organisational actors had identity and a hint of self, but no subjectivity. In a Foucauldian view of working subject power, subjectivity and knowledge are instinctively intertwined (Foucault, 1980, pp. 78-109). Because modern forms of power operate through subjectivity, the mere understanding of a person in terms of identity, or even identities, is not enough. In consequence, political processes, whether talked about in the context of workplace, home or society, should not be seen as merely the negotiation of a social order in which different people compete and play with different agendas, interests and stakes. Instead, the participants themselves are impacted upon and altered by power relations that are omnipresent. They operate through subjectivity in all situations. Therefore, subjectivity is also enmeshed in the everyday construction and reconstruction of organisational reality.. For this reason, the exploration of subjectivity and how it is impacted upon by power/knowledge is important in exploring contemporary organisations.

Finally, what does this all entail in terms of a contemporary organisation? Thus, how are we to conceptualise it? A suggestion is that *instead of an organisation we ought to be talking of organising*. In practice, this entails researching social processes such as negotiation, communication, group work and co-operation in the context of action. Taking this view also shifts the focus from an examination of an organisation as an entity to examining the way in which an organisation is produced and reproduced through everyday organising. These ways of producing and re-producing organisational reality are the social processes, such as the aforementioned negotiation, communication, group work and co-operation. Thus, contemporary organisational research ought to examine the way in which these processes take place in the everyday reality of contemporary organisations. Furthermore, political and social processes should not be set apart, but instead ought to be seen as mutually implicated, in that power is omnipresent in all human relations and interactions. Also, *the understanding of context* is deemed important and in consequence organising should also be understood in the particularity of its context. This is because people and contexts are interdependent.

In the context of questioning the conventional conceptualisations of an organisation - as a social technical system and as an entity - and denying the associated split between organisational structures and human processes, this study also questions the taken-for-granted split between the manager and the managed. Thus, is contemporary managing still about managerial decision making, about the exercising of position-based power and about 'bossing people around'? Or are these just outdated popular discourses that we once used to believe in? What if, instead, the members of an organisation hold continuous participative negotiations on how to construct their everyday reality and practices? Furthermore, what if this increase in negotiation, along with the simultaneous decrease in the hegemony of hierarchy, is impacting on the *split between the managers and the managed*? This brings us to examine decision-making: how are decisions made, what sort of decisions are made, and by whom? On the other hand, the split between the manager and the managed is examined by looking at *the way of* deciding, working and communicating among the personnel. Also, in examining the manager-managed split, the structural reality of hierarchy and bureaucracy is explored. These questions are examined in the operational everyday practices of contemporary organisations. The disappearance of the manager-managed split is also examined in another way, namely by examining the extent of self-management in contemporary organisations and thus by

contrasting it with self-management on one hand and the decrease in traditional structures supporting management on the other. Thus, let me next explicate in more detail this manager-managed split in contemporary organisations.

4.4 The Management of Control

Research Question 3	Specified Research Question
How are organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power operationally linked in the context of contemporary work organisations?	The manager-managed split is changing

Contemporary management and the accuracy of the management split are explored next. Contemporary management is examined by contrasting it with traditional practice. The particular focus is on comparing conventional and contemporary management in terms of the split. This particular split between the manager and the managed is primarily examined by looking at *ways of deciding*. In addition, *ways of working* and *ways of communicating* among the personnel are also examined. These are explored specifically in terms of their consistency with the finding on the contemporary way of deciding. Finally, the existence of conventional structures supporting management in contemporary organisations is investigated.

Decision Making and the Way of Deciding

Managing is essentially about decision making (Merkle, 1980, cited in Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997, p. 46). Therefore, contemporary management is first examined by looking at decision making, i.e. *who* decides, *what* they decide and *the way* in which they decide. Furthermore, decision making, as it is described as taking place on a daily basis on both HRM and worker levels, is compared and contrasted. Finally, conventional and contemporary management are also contrasted and compared in terms of decision making. In practice this is carried out by explicating the logic underlying much of the conventional decision-making literature and comparing it with the empirical evidence collected from contemporary organisations.

Let us start by examining *who* decides, *what* they decide and *the way* in which they decide. The research results indicate that *job content* is largely decided by the workers themselves. On many occasions managers are not even aware of all the projects and tasks that workers are carrying out. Also, *targets* are often set by the workers themselves rather than by managers. This is also the case with *timetables*, which are by and large decided by workers and clients. In addition to the content of work, *the way/s of working* is to a great extent also decided by the workers themselves. Furthermore,

practical everyday issues such as working hours, lunch times, daily work schedules and so forth are also decided by the workers. Overall many of the everyday matters relating to work, as well as to the way of working, are decided by workers rather than managers.

They [the workers] can pretty accurately define their assignments. This is where one's own initiative comes in. If you take initiative and are active, your job description can definitely be altered to anything (II; 3:38).

[The workers' level of independence is high.] Freedom comes with responsibility. It is responsibility; if you want freedom you also want responsibility, but *if you want to be in a support organisation and lead an easy life you are not free* (II; 3:86).

Interestingly, decision making is described routinely by the workers as part of their everyday work content as well as part of their way of working. Also, the HRM personnel underline the autonomous nature of the workers' work. Again, autonomy is directly linked to freedom and responsibility.

The workers are pretty independent, a little bit too much, but the purpose is to be so. Actually you need to be if you are going to make it here (II; 1:54).

Yes, workers have responsibility and they are accustomed to taking it. We have the specific outcome that we aim for... if the activity is not going as it is supposed to we take time out and group together and think what to do... it is independent work, but the support is always next to you (II; 2:26).

I have had many workplaces, this is without doubt the most enjoyable and free. And then you can work autonomously. I think that that is the finest way [to get people committed](II; 6:40)... what makes it autonomous and free is that everyone here wants to come to work in the morning. They want to do their thing well (II; 6:42).

You can say that there is as much freedom and responsibility as you can take... you can decide for yourself independently, but you always have projects (II; 9:53).

Altogether, then, despite emphasising negotiation as the primary way of deciding and organising, *personal autonomy* is also strongly highlighted in the way of deciding. This is consistent with self-management, in that workers take part in decision-making - both planning and execution (more in section 4.2). Therefore, *the split between managers who plan and decide and workers who execute is no longer valid*. In contemporary organisations, planning, deciding and executing is done, by and large, by all organisational members. The results illuminate the fact that there is no talk of management as the decision makers. Management and decision making are only linked when discussing project management and one's closest superior, or self-management. The same finding emerges from both the HR personnel's accounts and the workers' accounts. Could this signify the end of management-centrism?

Finally, even the things that managers want their “subordinates” to carry out are *negotiated instead of delegated*. Often it is not merely the individual him/herself who makes the decision or negotiates it with the manager, but the working groups and project teams. Thus, decision making is *social*, in that in practice decisions are often negotiated in groups.

We do work in projects, so each project has a leader and that leader tries to put the activities in order. As a general rule this occurs by some sort of mutual understanding. [So the activities and responsibilities are negotiated in a group]. (III; 1:26).

The division of assignments/tasks is negotiated in project groups (III; 1:58).

I am responsible for matters relating to my own area of expertise. In groups we impact, for example, on the division of resources, and timetables emerge by themselves. We discuss quite a bit in groups and think what is the best way to go about things.... Decisions are brought out in two ways, someone can already come with an idea that we then start to consider, or an idea is spontaneously brought out. People are very open. There is more negotiation and discussion (III; 4:65).

Thus, *who decides*, i.e. the decision maker, varies. The decision maker is the individual in matters relating to his/her job content and way of working. The group decides on project-related matters: how to generally approach the project and divide resources and tasks. A working group is also the place to test one’s ideas and to bring them forward for further discussion. The closest superior does not decide upon many matters on his/her own. Instead these are negotiated together with the project group and/or the subordinate/or in the board. The traditional power of one’s closest superior in terms of decision-making is absent. This is illustrated by the way matters are *decided mutually*. Finally, decisions are largely made by the workers, either in project groups or by themselves. Can this be explained by expertise, i.e. as a shift from subject position-based power to power based upon expertise? If this was the case then the decision maker would be the one with the most expertise in the area. However, this does not seem to hold, as decisions are often a result of negotiation and thus above all shared and social.

This is a new industry, so when you start to talk about industries with 50-year-old management - I have been in such an industry, in which x knows everything about everything - you simply do not have managers [like that] in this industry. This also brings certain kinds of problems, there is no denying that (III; 15:61).

The client also makes decisions. For example, the client largely decides on timetables. Often it is also the client who monitors progress and the quality of projects and ultimately decides whether they are up to standard.

You have to take the responsibility for doing the things that have been agreed and doing them when agreed, so that you do not complicate other people's work. If the client is not satisfied, you are out of work pretty fast (III; 4:36).

However, *the way of deciding* is not formal. Groups negotiating decisions do not do so formally. Decision making is *unstructured and informal*. Lack of bureaucracy also has implications for decision making. Therefore, decision making is not only unstructured, but also goes largely *undocumented* (more on bureaucracy in section 4.3). Therefore, in place of bureaucracy, there is informal discussion and undocumented negotiation.

Here bureaucracy is minimalist... it is good; things go forward faster (III; 7:39).

Here we do not really have bureaucracy: organisation is flat and flexible. Pointless paper work is at a minimum, which is fantastic as I used to work in the public sector (III; 9:38).

This is such a flat organisation. You do not have situations where someone would say: this is not it. If you are doing it, it is OK. It does not entail running from one boss to the other, but everyone has their own things that they are doing. At least that is the apparent atmosphere (II; 6:35).

I [enjoy working in this organisation], because it is not distressing, bureaucratic or terribly hierarchical. It is flat.... things do not go via two hands (III; 6:6).

Correspondingly, decision making is not a linear procedure that is formal, planned, documented, systematic and monitored. Instead *decision making is a process*. By this I do not merely mean that, instead of being linear, the model of decision making is circular (Nappelbaum, 1997, pp. 256-277). In addition to being circular decision making is *constantly in process*. In other words, it seems to be on-going and dynamic, and thus hard to describe in terms of any model, whether linear, circular or spiral. Furthermore, decision making is very much *context-dependent* and *situation-centred*. Situation-centred on many occasions translates in practice as client-centred and project-centred, which in turn are mutually implicated. In fact, the situation-dependency is greatly emphasised. Therefore, in addition to awareness of the context, sensitivity to a particular situation in the context is required. I term this '*situational sensitivity*'. In addition to social sensitivity, situation sensitivity is also essential.

Decision making is an on-going process which is innately social. Therefore, instead of talking of ‘decision making’, we ought to be talking of *deciding*. *Deciding is essentially relational, contextual and situational*. These characteristics emerge clearly from both the HRM and worker interview rounds. In the HRM round the situational is given even more weight, whereas the workers emphasise lack of delegation and underline self-management. At the same time, negotiation seems to be the way of deciding and self-management the way of working. Thus, again, we have rather peculiar relationships between *the personal and the social*, and between *the individual and the collective*. Also, the organisational phenomenon of deciding is relational and is beyond relationships *per se*. It is something that exists “in-between” the collective and the individual. Furthermore, it is something which is both personal and social. In both cases, it requires both but cannot be reduced to either. In the following section, I shall examine the validity of conventional decision making theories in the context of these findings.

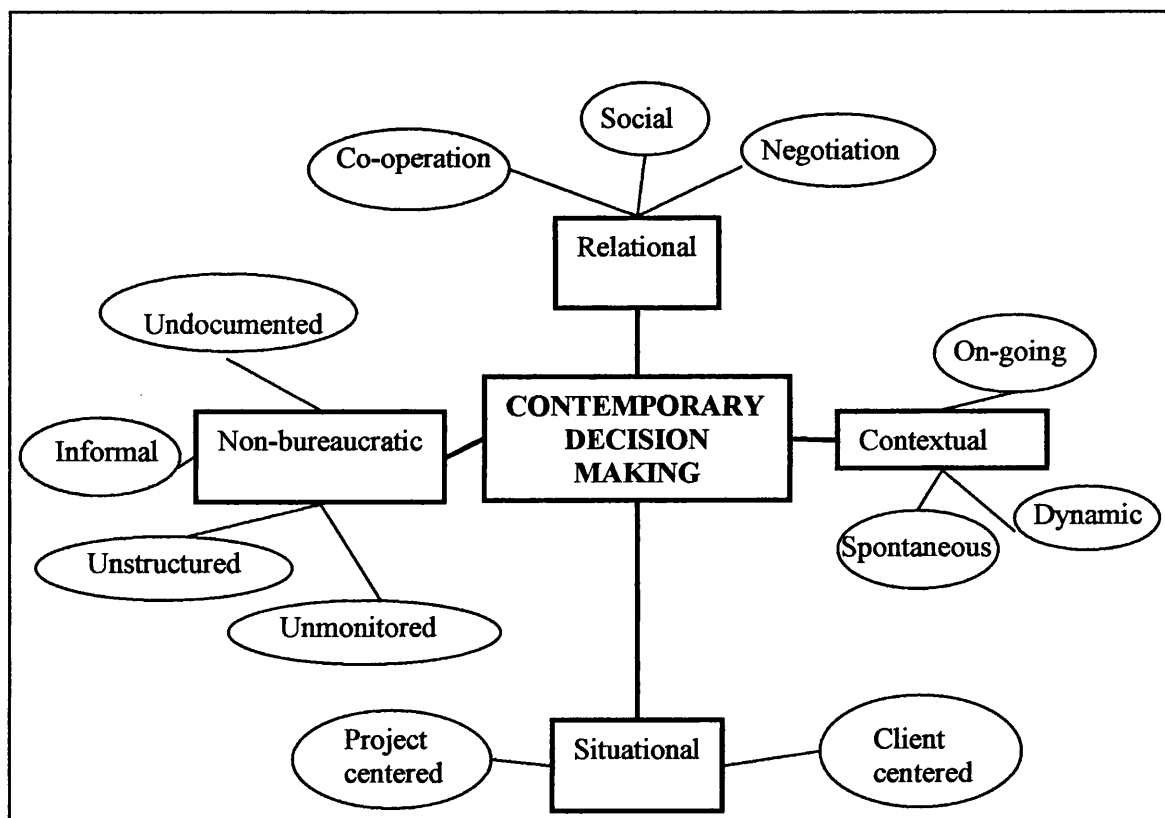


Figure 12: Thematic Network of Contemporary Decision Making

Conventional Decision Making Theories and Contemporary Deciding

In the realm of organisational theory, most of the prescriptive theories and linear models on decision making are *based upon rational choice theory* (Zey, 1994, p. 108; see also, Humphreys, 1998, pp. 1-23; Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997; Nappelbaum, 1997, 256-277). Therefore, the conventional decision making literature is explored by illustrating some of the underpinnings of rational choice theory inherent in it. Furthermore, it is argued that many of these underlying assumptions of this theory at the root of decision sciences are flawed in contemporary organisational settings. There are numerous problems with rational choice theory, as has been thoroughly argued by Zey (1994). I will explore *three of the most striking points of dissimilarity between the conventional theory and contemporary reality as pinpointed by the empirical evidence*.

First of all, conventional decision making theories, along with rational choice theory, assume *an individual as the unit of analysis* (Simon, 1953, 1957, 1987; Zey, 1992, 1994). In consequence they explain a group or collective as merely an aggregate of individuals. This view contributes to an inability to recognise the intrinsically social make-up of an individual. It also fails to capture the 'others' and their consequent impact on an individual and on organisational decision making. Moreover, it fails to account for the fact that many organisational processes are by definition inter-subjective processes. In consequence, models based on this individualistic assumption are incapable of explaining social relationships and processes or their prerequisites, such as trust, solidarity or even altruism. This is a problem, if one takes the view that organisations by definition consist of social processes and are based upon interaction, communications and reciprocity. The results show that, even though self-management and personal autonomy are highlighted in contemporary organisations, the nature of organising and deciding is above all social. Decisions are the results of negotiation(s) in groups and organising in itself also occurs through relational processes. In fact, contemporary organisations consist of social, political, creative and altogether relational processes put into the context of action (Hosking and Morley, 1991; Humphreys et al., 1996; Humphreys, 1998, pp. 1-23). Furthermore, these are intrinsically inter-subjective and thus cannot be reduced to an individual or collective *per se*. They occur between individuals, and are constantly produced and transformed by the individual, the

collective and the context. For these reasons, it does not make sense to examine organisations merely as aggregates of individuals.

Secondly, it is suggested that decision making theories based upon rational choice theory *fail to recognise power and political processes* which are enmeshed in decision making. Power, in rational choice theory, is seen from the functionalist-behaviouristic view. According to the functionalist-behaviouristic view, power is a thing or a property, which can be possessed by an entity, process or agent (Kearins, 1996, p. 9). *It is a possession* that can be employed by individual as well as collective actors; hence, *power of individuals and power of organisations* (Daudi, 1986, p. 1; Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203 cited in Kearins 1996, p. 9). It has been argued already that this is also the way in which power is generally viewed in much of the traditional organisational literature. It is also the way in which much of the conventional decision making literature views power. It is argued that power circulates, and is exercised rather than possessed (Foucault, 1980, pp. 78-109). Further, *it cannot be owned, it is multidirectional and omnipresent. It is innately present in all human interaction.*

“Power is not an institution and not a structure. Neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation” (Foucault, 1981, p. 93).

These research results from contemporary organisations illustrate that there is a lack of hierarchy, bureaucracy and associated external control. They also point out that there is a radical change in the subject position(s) of managers. They signify that the methods of control have changed from exterior to interior. Correspondingly, decision making has also changed. Contemporary decision making is fundamentally *social, relational, contextual and situational as opposed to bureaucratic, linear and rational*. In practice, this means that decision making is a matter of constant negotiation in groups, whilst being sensitive to situations and aware of the context and of context-dependence. The research results do not make much sense if one tries to examine them, for example, from a functionalist-behaviouristic stance, unless one is satisfied with the conclusion that power is largely absent in contemporary organisations. However, such an explanation does not seem convincing if one takes the view that power is innately present in all human interaction (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 332-366; Foucault, 1980, 1997, 2000). Therefore, rather than announcing the disappearance of power and control *per se*, it has been argued that the methods of control and the locus of control have changed.

Furthermore, it is suggested that these novel control mechanisms *can be understood* through specific modern forms of power, namely “disciplinary power” (Foucault, 1977) and in particular “pastoral power” (Foucault, 2000, pp. 331-336). Also, the understanding of power relating to contemporary decision making should be revised in a corresponding manner. This entails taking into account relational processes and the contextuality of decision making. It is argued that rational choice theory and its descendants in the realm of decision making are inadequate to explain these core phenomena which are part and parcel of contemporary decision making.

Thirdly, the assumption that organisational actors have complete information is flawed. Herbert Simon has already argued famously that, due to the fact that organisational members have limited information-processing capabilities, organisations can never be 100% rational (Simon, 1953, 1957, 1987). His argument challenged the assumption of rational choice theory about the optimising behaviour of individuals. Simon suggested that, as a consequence of an individual’s inability to gain/handle complete information, both individuals and consequently organisations have to settle for ‘bounded rationality’ decisions which are based not on complete information but on limited information search and information, as well as simple rules of thumb. Simon postulates that in an organisational context “...these limits of a human’s rationality are institutionalized in the structures and modes of functioning of our organisations. Hence, his theory of decision making leads us to understand organisations as kinds of institutionalized brains that fragment, routinize and bound the decision making process to make it manageable” (Morgan, 1997, p. 79).

However, the empirical evidence does not support such postulates. On the contrary, there is hardly anything documented, let alone routinised, in contemporary organisations. This is also the case with decision making. The context changes so rapidly that *there is hardly any information to draw from in making decisions*. Also, there are no models or theories to draw from; instead, *intuition* and *past experience* are recognised as impacting on decision making. Furthermore, contemporary decision making is essentially social and relational and thus should be not explained in terms of individuals and structures, but in terms of human interaction. Thus, the shortcoming of the theories of Simon and his colleagues’ is that they, like rational choice theorists, perceive an individual to be the unit of analysis. Thus, it is an *individual’s limitations*

with regard to complete information and information search that are perceived as paralleling those of an organisation. This in turn implies that a collective, such as an organisation, is yet again, merely an aggregate of individuals. The empirical evidence clearly points out that decision making consists of social processes and in practice culminates in negotiation. Furthermore, it is contextual and situational. It is intrinsically political. Finally, it entails openness, trust, communication and collective action (de Zeeuw, 1992).

All in all it seems that conventional decision making theories and models are based on a *linear logic of choice* which is underlined by assumptions of rational organisation and rational subject, and underpinned by a belief in rationality in general (Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997; Zey, 1994). Decision making is perceived from this perspective as independent of prior decisions, context and the personal attributes and motives of decision makers. It also fails to account for any relational processes, inter-subjective phenomena and situational factors. It perceives problems as structured *a priori* and concentrates on modelling and representing these (Humphreys, 1998, pp. 1-23). Also the aim is choice, to the relative neglect of the *process of deciding* (Vari, Vecsenyi and Paprika, 1984, 1987). Overall, the three presuppositions based upon rational choice theory that underpin many decision making theories do not hold true in the context of contemporary organisations.

Conventional Management and the Contemporary Way of Managing

Conventionally, decision making is associated with a person or a group of individuals who have the power to make a decision. Furthermore, those individuals having the power to make decisions are in managerial positions. The popular discourse holds that “management makes decisions, management seeks support for these decisions, and management transforms the organisation” (Merkle, 1980 cited in Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997, p. 46). Another popular set of discourses states that decision making consists of planning, choice and implementation (Vari, Vecsenyi and Paprika, 1987, pp. 25-36). Altogether, the procedure of decision making is linear, rational and, all in all, controllable (Zey, 1994). In combining the aforementioned two sets of discourses we get, by and large, the conventional view on decision making, which is that *decision making is a linear and rational procedure conducted by managers in order to sustain or change an organisation*. In taking this stance, control over decision

making becomes one of the main sources of power in organisations (Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997). In practice, this view coincides with bureaucratic organisation, its tendencies and associated power (Clegg, 1990, pp. 33-41). However, the research results clearly indicate that decision making structures are largely lacking in contemporary organisations. There is a lack of bureaucracy and its associated tendencies. Therefore hierarchy, for example, has lost not only its hegemony, but also largely its purpose. Correspondingly, the inherent value of titles has decreased. In an associated manner, aiming for higher positions, i.e. careerisation, seems to be absent. Thus, *the structures that have conventionally supported and enabled management are mostly absent in contemporary organisations.*

Conventionally, managers have also had specific subject positions and associated titles. These have been clearly illustrated in organisational charts. Hierarchy and titles have also made it possible to distinguish between different managerial levels. Furthermore, management has had its own discourses, fads and science, which have reproduced the conventional idea of management (Kieser, 1997; O'Connor, 1999; Young, 1990). Finally, managers have naturally had someone to manage, i.e. subordinates. However, the empirical evidence from contemporary organisations indicates that there is a *lack of clear managerial subject positions*. There is a lack of discourses and fads associated with management. There is a lack of systematic management techniques as well as of control and surveillance systems. What is more there is a lack of subordinates, as people are self-managed professionals who often occupy different subject positions and roles in project groups running simultaneously. Thus, in addition to the lack of conventional support structures of management, there is also a lack of conventional managers.

Management has also been explicitly related to surveillance and accountability to owners. More implicitly, it has been linked to future-orientation (mission, visions), profit-orientation (targets, budget) and planning (strategies and tactics). However, in contemporary organisations, surveillance systems are absent and in general monitoring is minimal. The little monitoring that is carried out is principally carried out by workers themselves. With regard to accountability to the owner, the companies under study are financed either by venture capital or by the owners. It is often the case that some of the owners are workers in the company. Thus, *the classic division between owner, manager and worker is less clear*. The owners can also be workers, but not necessarily managers.

Then again, managers might not be owners, whereas their subordinates might be. There are also owners who do not manage or work in the company. Finally, there are also often many different types of owners, in terms of the aforementioned subject positions in the organisation.

What, then, is expected of the contemporary manager? In contemporary companies, the *ideal manager* is described as someone whose prime function is *to support and give feedback*. Some wish the manager to work more closely and give support in everyday practices, whereas others like the manager to be more absent from everyday routines and just to give reward when targets are met and advice when asked. One common feature, in addition to the need for support and feedback, is the desire for very little hierarchy and formality between boss and subordinate. *Essentially, it is felt that the relationship ought to be based on transparency, openness and honesty and not on bureaucracy, hierarchy and superiority*. In fact it is more a colleague, in the form of a manager, that is hoped for. Furthermore, *experience* is deemed to be important, and trust to be essential. Equal, open and honest communication is the practical way of gaining *trust* and a good working relationship. Finally, the ideal manager understands his/her subordinates both socially and professionally.

It would be ideal for her/him to be physically present in the same place... I do not experience that there should be some particular hierarchy, some boss-subordinate system. S/he would be more like a colleague, ideal in that sense (III; 6:58).
First of all, someone whom you can trust. A person who can give feedback, both good and bad and to whom you can go openly and ask advice. A person who does not put him/herself above the others (III; 4:63).

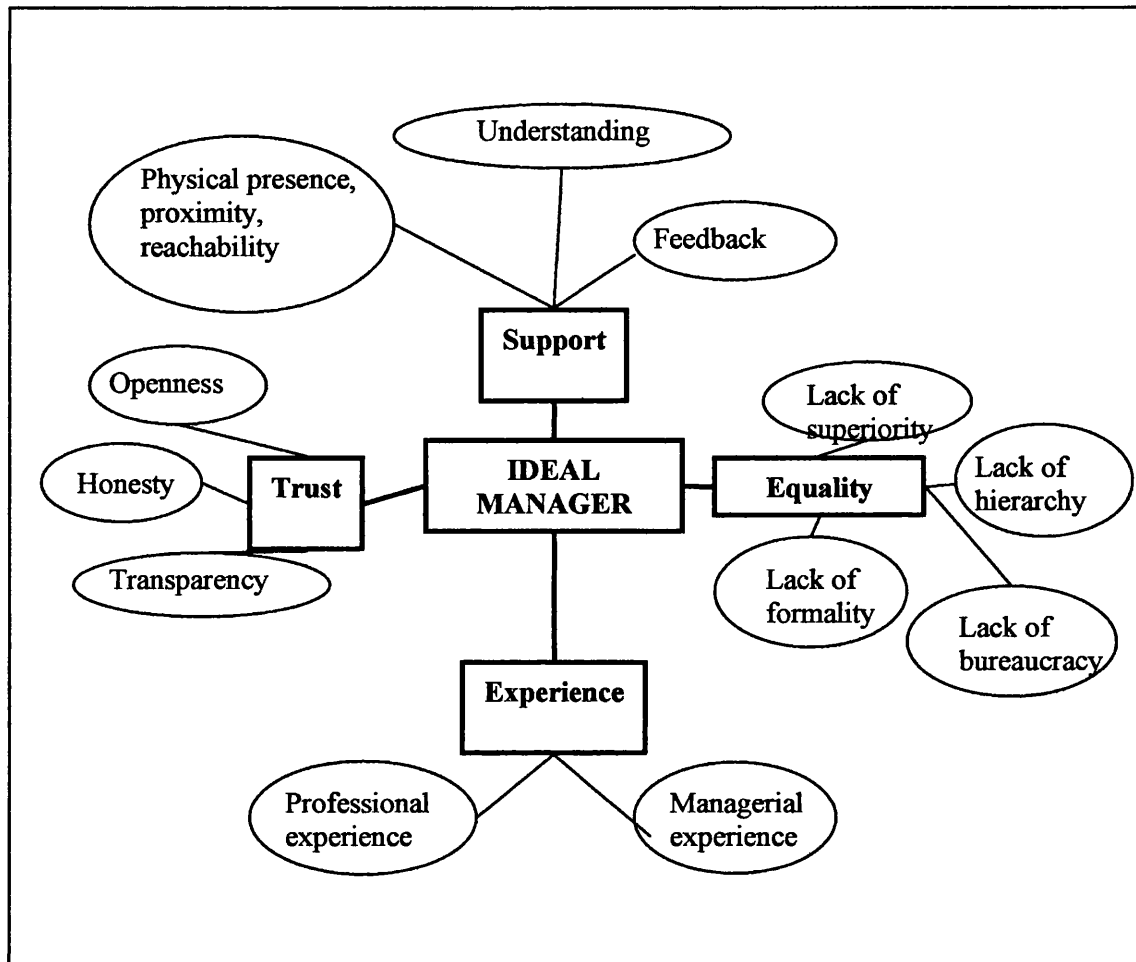


Figure 13: Thematic Network of Ideal Manager

In summary, the tentative understanding of an organisation, whereby an organisation is seen to require planning and management, is not present in contemporary organisations. Both bureaucracy, with its associated planning and hierarchy, and management, are largely absent in contemporary organisations. Furthermore, the division between managers who plan and decide and workers who execute is disappearing. In contemporary organisations pretty much all the organisational members get to decide and plan as well as to execute. The fact that workers are largely self-managed is also reflected in decision making. However, much of the work is centred on projects and in consequence carried out in co-operation with other members of the project group. In an associated manner, decisions regarding an individual's way of working and own job content are largely made by individuals themselves. On the other hand, decisions relating to projects on a more general level are negotiated in groups. Furthermore, to the extent that management is present in today's organisations, it is evident in its contemporary form. In this form the manager is more like a colleague who *ideally* gives

support and feedback, but is on an equal level. Contemporary 'managing' relationships are *relationships of trust*, in which honest and open communication is at the core.

Summary

The research question was: "how are organisational control, subjectivity, agency and power operationally linked in the context of the contemporary work organisation?" Essentially, it was put forward that the locus of control has changed from external to internal. In consequence, the agent of control has changed from the manager to the worker's self. For these reasons, control cannot be understood merely as external control. In examining control conventionally, functional-behaviouristic or radical-structuralist views on power have often been drawn upon. However, one faces difficulty in attempting to explicate internal control in contemporary organisations from such stances. In essence, it is proposed that *increased self-management, which also presupposes agency, has enabled the change from external to internal control*. This in turn is embedded in a different presupposition of the worker - the worker is now a subject, not an object. Subjects manage themselves and this can be facilitated through lateral control in the form of mutual checking. However, the fundamental difference is that contemporary working *subjects* can no longer be externally controlled, directed and managed, hence, the change in control methods.

The view of a worker also impacts on the view of an organisation and its way of organising and *vice versa*. The view of an organisation as a socio-technical system has embedded in it a view that a worker is an object that can be manipulated and through this an organisation can be changed and engineered (Checkland, 1999, pp. 9-11; Morgan, 1997, pp. 13-18; Hosking and Morley, 1991, p. 215). This socio-technical view is found on an entitative understanding, whereby the organisation and the workers are split into two distinguishable and separate spheres (Humphreys et al., 1996, p. 1-3; Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-42). Basically the implication is that in socio-technical systems the worker is often objectified as an object for him/herself and a vehicle to be altered, modified and changed to meet organisational ends. It is argued that HRM is a socio-technical system; that its sole purpose is the management of human resources, that is, to control, manipulate, and manage workers. This view presupposes the worker as an object whose character and competences a specified set of techniques is aimed at measuring, classifying, assessing and developing (see also, Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). In a context where the worker is no longer an object but rather a subject,

these sorts of practices are no longer meaningful. Working subjects manage themselves largely through self-control. In conditions where the agent of control is the self of the worker, who actively manages his/her own self and subjectivity, the purpose of HRM is undermined. There is no need for HRM to be practiced externally by external persons, as its function is fulfilled internally by the worker him/herself. It is argued that the way of controlling has changed, in that in the pioneering organisations of the information age we no longer find socio-technical systems, but systems based upon self-conduct and human activity consisting of lateral relations and reciprocal social processes. However, these *human activity* systems with associated mutual decision making and negotiation are not philosophical societies in which discussion takes place for its own sake, but firmly committed to the practical problem of solving, innovating and carrying out projects. Hence, organising takes place against a background of action.

The new forms of internal control that operate in contemporary organisations cannot be explained without bringing into play a new understanding of power. It is suggested here that the new ways of controlling and organising require an altogether different understanding of power. Thus, in the light of empirical evidence, it is suggested that there is a change from “disciplinary power” which objectifies the worker to “pastoral power” which works through the mechanism of subjectification, by making the worker a subject for him/herself (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 2000). In this way, contemporary organisational control operates through the subjectivity of the subject. It also necessitates the elaboration of a sense of self (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, p. 8). However, this form of power is not merely repressive and negative; it is also enabling and productive (Foucault, 1980, pp. 92-108). Furthermore, it presupposes freedom (O’Leary, 2002, p. 159; Patton, 1998, pp. 69-73). Finally, in order to be able to actively work upon the self, the subject requires agency. The subjects use this agency to self-manage and to laterally organise. Paradoxically, it seems that subjects need agency in order to be able to control themselves. The changing understanding of a working subject and organisation are also postulated as linked to the contemporary attitude to work. Some characteristics of contemporary work and career are therefore explored next. This is followed by an examination of the contemporary worker and contemporary organisational control respectively, in terms of subjectivity and agency.

4.5 Work Mentality and Control

Research Question 4	Specified Research Questions
How do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?	4a. Examination of contemporary <i>experience of work</i> in terms of basic approach to work 4b. Examination of <i>understanding</i> of work in terms of career

Research question 4 explores the *contemporary* meaning of work. On the one hand the purpose is to distinguish the basic attitude to paid work. On the other hand, the aim is to examine the relevance of the concept of a career in understanding contemporary work. The hypothesis is that the experience of work (as expressed through talk) has changed somewhat in terms of both attitude and career. The contemporary attitude to paid work is examined first. This is done by illustrating the core findings from the contemporary organisations researched and then comparing these to Marx's view (1884, 1967). After explicating the contemporary attitude to work, the focus shifts to exploring the present-day experience of work in terms of career. In examining the concept of a career the conventional and contemporary literatures on this subject are explored and their consistency with the findings explicated.

Contemporary Experience of Work in terms of Attitude to Work

The contemporary attitude to work has four main dimensions: enjoyment, motivation, commitment and innovation (see figure below). These are characterised by a number of themes, which also cut across them. Furthermore, many of these have sub-themes which further explicate them. These four dimensions, with associated themes and sub-themes, are examined one by one below. Together they constitute the cornerstones of the contemporary approach to work.

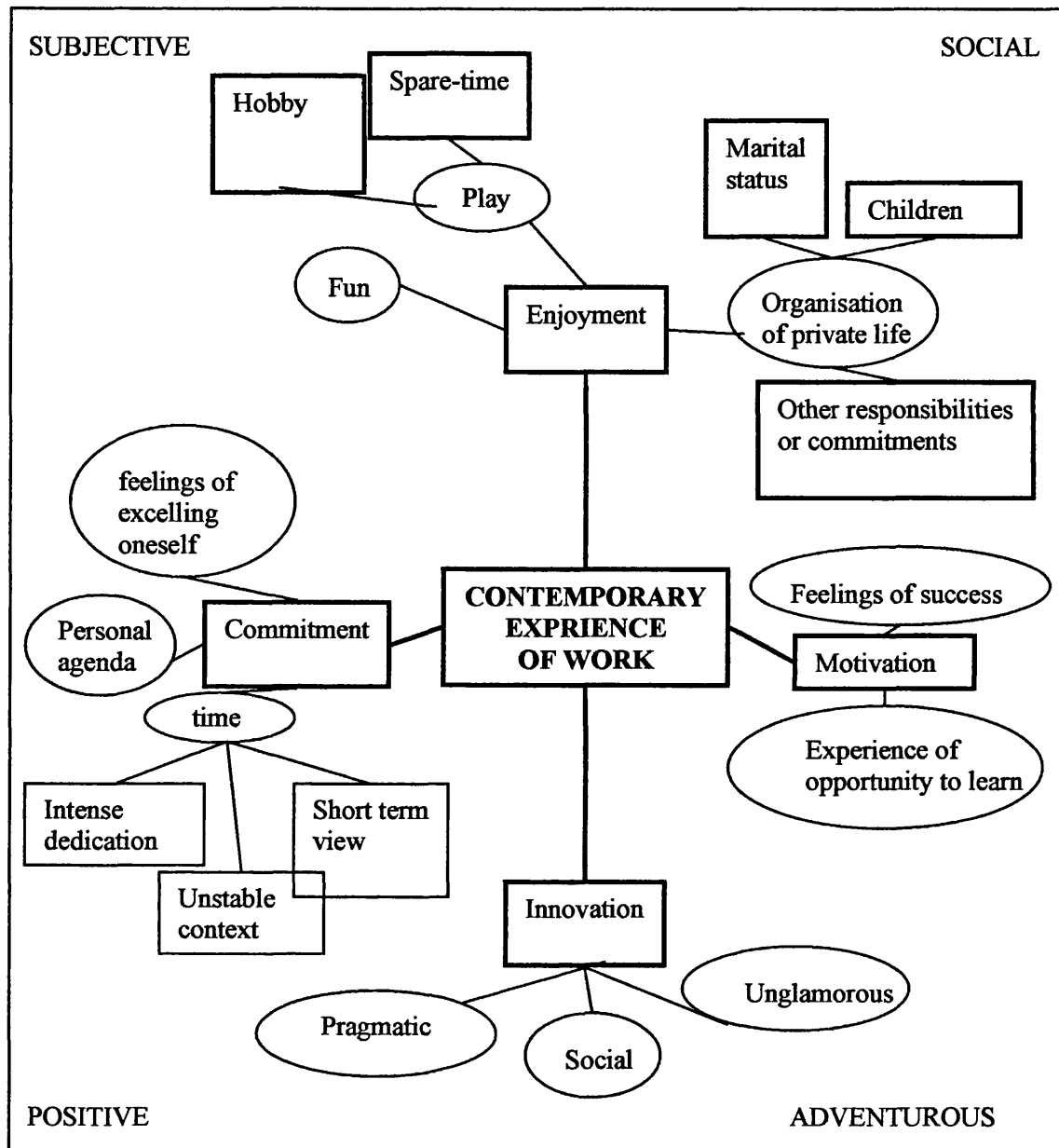


Figure 14: Thematic Network of Contemporary Experience of Work

Enjoyment

Work is predominantly enjoyable. People enjoy both their way of working and the content of their work. What precisely is this way of working that they enjoy? The *way of working* is above all autonomous. It is also described as systematic, responsible, comprehensive, diverse, fast, intense, precise, flexible, cyclical, changing and challenging. *Job content* is predominantly described as demanding, diversified, challenging and developing. Notably, all these characteristics are seen as *positive*. In addition, workers take pleasure in working in the organisation where they currently work. In fact, the majority of the interviewees describe their current workplace as the most enjoyable they have ever had. More precisely, it is mainly the atmosphere and the

people that contribute to the pleasant experience. Thus, pleasure is not principally derived, for example, from working for that particular company with its specific corporate brand, products and image. These features are also viewed as somewhat important, but not as factors adding to enjoyment.

The work atmosphere is friendly, because the people are congenial. There is a certain kind of sociability. People have common interests and hobbies after working hours.... Playing games is an interest that many share; we talk and play also during the lunch breaks (III; 6:17).

Work and play are interconnected. The coders in particular often have a *hobby* relating to their work, or indeed it is their childhood/teenage hobby of IT that has become their work. *Work and play* are also connected in another sense, as most of the companies have games that the workers can play during and after working hours. However, this is not to say there are no boundaries between *work and spare time*, as suggested by Fournier (1998, p. 59). On the contrary, people are mostly able to distinguish between their work and leisure time. What is more, they consciously attempt to do this. There are situations where flexibility is required also in this respect, and an odd weekend needs to be spent in the office. However, these are exceptions; otherwise there are cognisant boundaries between different areas of life. With regard to spending time with colleagues after work, people are split into two groups: there are those who spend time on average fortnightly with their colleagues outside office hours and, on the other hand, those who never do this. However, this is not reflected in the organisational reality, in that there are somehow two groupings of people, i.e. 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. This grouping has not occurred because there are *many small groups* within one organisation that spend time together after work. Typically, the members of the same project team or professional group spend time together.

Nowadays distinguishing work and spare time is easy. Work is left at work when it is time to go home. I do not work at home, in spite of the fact that it is possible. I am at work as necessary. If there is a hurry; I am at work to the extent that the system is flexible. If I have to put in a lot of extra hours, I do shorter days in the following week... it is easier that work is just "work" and in the evening you go home (III; 6:14).

The organisation of working life arises out of the organisation of home life.⁴⁹ To put it bluntly, individuals working in the industry feel themselves rather free to utilise the flexible working hours and to go out with colleagues after work, if they are not married with children. Naturally, there are exceptions to this observation, but it largely seems to be the case that the organisation of working life comes as a consequence of having some other aspects of life organised, most typically home life. This is rather peculiar and poses some doubts about the postulates of the all-encroaching character of contemporary work, which knows no boundary between working life and other aspects of life (Fournier, 1998, pp. 58-59; Rose, 1999, pp. 244-258). It seems to be the case that other aspects of life impact on the way in which working life is organised. Following this line of argument, *it is the lack of organisation of other areas of life which gives work priority in the structuring of one's everyday life*. Indeed, at times it is not just the lack of organisation of home life, but the absence of a home life *per se*, which makes working life all the more predominant.

It is going to calm down. Everyone calms down when they become older and when organisation comes to home life as well. You just have to start thinking what time you are going to work today when you know that you need to pick up the kids from kindergarten at five. In that way you inevitably get some rhythm created by society. They can still live like that when they are alone. "Researcher: so that it is only through the organisation of the other parts of life that the organisation of working life occurs?" Yes, I believe it goes that way around, at least in this group (II; 3:68).

Motivation

People are motivated. They generally like the content of their work, their colleagues and in particular the constant challenges. The *opportunity to learn* is the most important motivator. This opportunity to learn is seen as everything from a new product, project or task to an altogether new job description. The importance is in the *experience* that one is learning and constantly having opportunities to learn more. However, this learning and development is not just self-development and definitely not development in terms of career. Rather it is the *feeling* that one is moving, learning and developing which is of the essence. There is a sort of *restlessness* in the air. Therefore, constant

⁴⁹ The majority of the interviewees are in common-law marriages or going steady, but *without children*. In addition there are a few singles and a few who are married with children. The people are between the ages of 20 and 40, on average approximately 27. However, this is not to say that people working in this industry are exceptional when it comes to having children. In actual fact, it is difficult to say anything about their preferences as statistics show that in their country the average age for having children is 28, making them below the average age for having children in Finland.

change and challenges are required in order to be able to function and to take pleasure in working. The horror picture is that of the bureaucratic unchanging routine task with no originality and little freedom. Boredom and stagnation are unbearable. This is consistent with constant contextual change, requirement for flexibility and request for challenges, as these all necessitate learning.

The most interesting thing is that every day you learn new things. All the time something... all the time there is something to learn (III; 7:48). The most motivating thing is self-development. That way you do not stand still... the content of work is also relevant, you cannot do it unless you are interested (III; 7:51).

A feeling of the successful accomplishment of challenging tasks is the second most important motivator. Interestingly, it is not success *per se* that is deemed important, but *a feeling of success*. Thus, it is *not the opinion of others as much as the experience of the self* that success is judged upon. On the other hand, feedback is also considered motivating. In particular, feedback from colleagues, owners and clients is regarded as worthy of note. Altogether, it is the *experience* of being able to learn, as opposed to learning, and the *feeling* of success, rather than success *per se*, that are the most motivating aspects of work. Thus, feelings and experience function as motivating forces, rather than position, career or money-related matters. Thus, it is *subjective experiences* that matter more than objective material and status-related factors.⁵⁰

The fact that you can see the results of your work motivates... there are many things that motivate, also the challenging nature of work motivates... you prove to yourself that even though this was a difficult thing you could do it... the motivation would disappear very fast if you did not have challenges and diverse work. I get bored extremely easily (III; 4:53).

In addition, the ability to experience that one is able to contribute to a project or product from beginning to end is experienced as motivating, as is the ability *to create something new from scratch*. These two sources of motivation indicate craft-type work. Thus: are we witnessing an emergence of a contemporary form of craftsmanship? Can we anticipate the emergence of a contemporary form of craftsmanship in the Information Age? These questions are touched upon in discussing alienation and emancipation (section 5.4), but for now I shall turn to explicating commitment in its contemporary form.

⁵⁰ It is assumed that these subjective experiences have a resonance in the actual reality of work, as subjective experiences tend to change rather fast if they have no resonance with reality.

Commitment

People are more committed to themselves than to work or to an organisation *per se*. People are more committed to having particular feelings and experiences of their work and way of working than to the actual work tasks *per se*. These feelings are mainly those associated with *excelling oneself*. They are also related to success and to constant learning. Diverse projects and multi-faceted variation in job descriptions are therefore often sought after. This is to say that, despite the fact that people generally like their work very much, they are more committed to having challenging and diversified tasks than to having the same job description for a longer period of time.⁵¹ The purpose here is not to imply that people do not like their work; on the contrary they largely enjoy their work, as previously described. It is just that people seem to be more committed to themselves than to the tasks they perform or the organisation in which they perform them.

I hope for feelings of success from work, and that I can prove to myself that I am able to do things and can do them (III; 1:47).

That I can develop myself. And that work will be diverse and challenging. That you can progress in your work and get more responsibility. Even if the title remains the same for the rest of your life, that you see yourself that you get more responsibility: the title is just a word on paper (III; 4:58).

However, this is not to suggest that contemporary workers cannot get beyond themselves and their own subjectivity, but that subjective experiences and feelings are important to them. There are also other themes that they view as equally important, namely enjoyment and sociality. They also value organisational atmosphere. *Enjoyment is above all a result of social togetherness*, not of individual endeavours, self-actualisation or self-realisation.

As to the reasons for this lack of commitment, perhaps these lie in the constantly changing context. After all, what is the point of being committed to particular tasks and projects if they are about to change within a short period of time in any case? It seems that, because of the instability and unpredictable nature of the industry, *commitment needs to be understood in a different manner*. It needs to be understood in terms of a short-term perspective, rather than the conventional long-term perspective. Examining

⁵¹ The only exceptions to this are the coders, who often see themselves as doing coding-related work for a long period of time. However, the coding languages themselves develop and need to be learned. Also, the projects that the coders work on change frequently.

commitment within this short-term frame of reference makes it possible to take in both the *intense dedication to work* and the lack of long-term perspective. This also makes it possible to see that reliance on subjective experiences does not necessarily entail a strengthening of individualistic discourse. Rather, a focus on subjective experiences can be seen as the result of having no external structures to rely on. This proposition is also supported by the emphasis on social togetherness and communal enjoyment at work, which emerge as strong themes. All in all, then, in an unstable context where official and formal structures are absent, individuals have nothing but their subjective experiences, feelings and each other – in egalitarian and lateral professional relationships - to rely on.

Thus, the degree of commitment is closely linked to time. Short-term commitment to the organisation is high, while long-term commitment is non-existent. The future is left open; therefore long-term planning and commitment are out of question. In fact, asking about long-term commitment seems outdated and in itself unsuitable for the context and companies. People are active and intensively involved in carrying out their current projects. They experience their workplace as important and often take part in its further enhancement. It is rather a matter of common sense to assume that people seldom put in intense effort if they are about to depart. However, when asked about what the future holds in three years time, many workers see themselves in other companies, even other industries or countries. They want to *experience* different things and perceive that they will have been sufficiently exposed to this industry /company by then and that it will be time for new challenges. The industry is in a flux and the companies are also changing. Therefore, asking workers to commit themselves in the long-term to the organisation is seen as rather pointless. Thus, it is not just workers who are unfamiliar with long-term commitment; the HR personnel also seem to lack a long-term perspective. Instead, *flexibility* is required in order to become accustomed to constantly changing projects, tasks, job descriptions and the industry as a whole.

All in all, it is as if they were more *committed to particular personal values than to any organisations, colleagues, projects or job content*. This casts some doubt on the postulates concerning all-pervasive worker subjectivity, whereby work is seen to colonise the individual's subjectivity in the name of organisational improvement and increasing productivity (Deetz, 1992). In fact, the results indicate quite the contrary, i.e. that individuals prioritise collecting different experiences during their working life over

any organisation, work or task as such. The difference lies in how widespread these particular personal values are and how they have been acquired. Thus, do they form the premises of a particular type of worker subjectivity which, through an illusion of freedom, is aimed at subduing the contemporary individual? To be even more brutal, perhaps this new worker subjectivity is making the contemporary worker subdue him/herself through practices that seemingly enable self-management and freedom, but merely result in an even more productive and docile worker? This is discussed in section 4.8, where worker subjectivity is deliberated upon. For now, let me explicate the final cornerstone of the contemporary approach to the worker, namely innovation.

Innovation

Innovation is deemed important. It is implicated in the desire constantly to learn and to excel oneself. Novel ideas are often brought forth in social situations in general, and in group sessions in particular. However, it is not just through internal groups within the organisation, but often through discussions with parties external to the organisation, most typically clients, that innovation takes place. It seems to require people who do not share the everyday reality of the organisation.

External stimulus; There is no innovation within four walls just among ourselves. But you have to... for example, some go for training and hear comments of external people (III; 1:50).

My best ideas have come about in meetings with clients. In innovating. (III; 3:68). Actually, often I get good ideas when I am outside or I get impulses from outside. On the other hand, discussing with people who are your mirrors helps. Maybe it is like this, I get impulses from outside and then discuss with my professional mirrors about them, and these are people who do not necessarily work in the same organisation (III; 5:48).

Innovation and innovating is unglamorous. Innovation and innovating is not seen as something extraordinary, but rather a simple, *habitual approach* is taken to it. It is more an everyday reality than a rare exception. In a nutshell, it is something *normal*.

I feel that I would not have a place to work here if I could not be in my own way an innovator and think things through further. This is after all still such a small organisation. If you think that here everyone has a slightly different area of expertise or many, then you understand that everyone has to be an innovator in his own area (III; 4:73). They are very much everyday things, things that have come about by accident. You cannot say. It might not have felt like such a good idea in the beginning, but then afterwards, when you think about it, it may seem like a pretty good idea. There don't need to be any "aha!" experiences, but ideas that you come across in everyday work (III; 4:74).

Innovation and innovating are first and foremost pragmatic. It is in everyday working life in general and through *trial and error* in particular that new ideas emerge. In other words, workers think/try out how something could be done better, or differently, or in a more efficient manner. They ponder why something is done in a particular way and not in another way. They start thinking/trying out what might be a better way. Innovation is associated with coming up with something *useful* and *sensible*. Thus, it is not rocket science ideas that are sought after but rather simple and economic improvements and ideas. Perhaps this is a consequence of the hype that swept through the industry two years ago, causing several bankruptcies and the general black-listing of the industry (more on the industry in section 2.5.2). In this context, it makes sense that the approach to innovating is down to earth and above all pragmatic.

Innovation is important but there needs to be some sense in it. That you do not just build some extravagant device and there is no use for it... Innovativeness needs to have some benefit if you think of work related matters... that you do not just do things for the sheer enjoyment of development and doing, but because it has a [pragmatic] impact (III; 8:69).

Summary of the Contemporary Attitude to Paid Work

A serious attitude to work is absent. People are not taking their work too seriously, despite being professional and committed to excelling themselves. The seriousness is simply missing and, as a consequence, there is no labouring with furrowed brows. This is not to say that people are just having a laugh and not working hard. On the contrary, people work very hard and over and over again they put in extra hours. All in all, the industry is very dynamic and working in it is demanding. It is just that the *mentality* has changed in that, despite working hard, workers *take* their work more lightly. Thus, in this respect *there is a change in attitude rather than in practice*.

This begs the question of whether or not there is a change in practice in terms of productivity and efficiency. Perhaps this is a more productive system and a more efficient way of working than the conventional one. Perhaps this is precisely the way to get the most out of workers with minimum use of resources for hiring expensive managers, administrators or HRM specialists. There are also hardly any resources needed for developing and sustaining external control structures and techniques. It is impossible to say whether this way of working and organising is more productive or

efficient, as there are no comparative statistics to draw from. Perhaps it all just comes down to the history and the context, in that in this historical era this way of organising and working, given the constant change, is pretty much the emergent way.

How, then, is the change in mindset to be explained? The fact is that a great deal of work is still done, and in very unstable settings, but the mind-set with regard to work is less serious. In the light of the empirical evidence, one can only wonder why this is the case. Perhaps it is precisely this unsteadiness of the context that has impacted on the mind-set, in that in order to be able to cope with this unsteadiness you cannot but take work in a lighter manner - the less you mentally depend on something so unstable the better. The lack of a serious attitude is not in conflict with the findings emphasising the importance of enjoyment, as working with furrowed brows is probably not very enjoyable. Then again, perhaps the aphorism "work hard, play hard" encapsulates the mentality of the sector and explains the increased desire for enjoyment. However, it is surprising, given the industry's downhill trend and constant cut-backs in staff that *fear* does not emerge as a motivating factor, or indeed affect the worker's take on work by making it more serious. Also the lack of seriousness in part enables innovation, as it gives more scope for trial and error.

There is no negative attitude to paid work. Despite the instability and constant change, people do not talk about their work negatively in any sense. They also have little which is negative to say about the organisation and industry in which they work. These results emerge time after time, from both spontaneous questioning and indirect probing. Instead, work is consistently referred to in a positive manner, as something which *most of the time is positive and yields pleasure*. However, people do not talk of their work with some sort of euphoria, it is rather that there is no down to earth approach. Nonetheless, the attitude is explicitly positive as opposed to negative.

Finally, to get back to research question 4: "*how do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?*", overall, it seems that intrinsic values are outweighing instrumental values. In fact, instrumental values are almost completely absent. Money, position and career are simply not talked about in relation to work, the experience of work or the meaning of work. Instead, *subjective experiences and internal feelings are prioritised over material rewards and*

stratification. Motivational factors are found in experiences of excelling oneself and opportunities to learn. Commitment is predominantly to one's own experiences and ambitions, rather than to work or to the organisation *per se*. Innovation is also deemed to be mutually implicated with excelling oneself, learning and making one's work even more interesting. However, it is *enjoyment which is a defining characteristic of the contemporary attitude to work*. Enjoyment is the one theme that emerges most strongly in relation to contemporary work. Interestingly, it is in itself a feeling or experience. Notably, in the accounts of the interviewees it is also more intrinsic than instrumental. This is despite all the external means of increasing enjoyment, such as corporate events and increased benefits. Overall, *feeling and experience are moved to centre stage*. Altogether *the contemporary attitude to paid work is positive, intrinsic and subjective*. It is characterised by enjoyment and by an attempt to excel oneself and to constantly learn more. This takes place in the context of co-operative action rather than of individual competition. However, this is not to say that workers could not also use co-operation as a façade for some competitive behaviour that no one openly admits to in the interviewee situations.

Conventional Conceptualisations of Paid Work and the Contemporary Attitude to Work

Let me briefly contrast this contemporary attitude to paid work with earlier conceptualisations of work in order to pinpoint the difference. In the early stages of industrial capitalism paid work was considered negatively as something which affords one one's livelihood, but no pleasure. Marx's accounts (1884, 1967) are illustrative of this harsh conceptualisation of paid work under capitalism, *caused by the drive by owners to obtain surplus value from the productive work of workers* (Ritzer, 1996, p. 26; for a summary of Marx's works, see Ritzer, 1996, pp. 21-28 and Giddens, 1971, pp. 1-64)

“In its blind, unbridled passion, its werewolf hunger for surplus labour, capital is not content to overstep the moral restrictions upon the length of the working day. It oversteps the purely physical limitations as well. *It usurps the time needed for the growth, the development and the healthy maintenance of the body ...it causes the premature exhaustion and death of labour power*” (Marx, 1976, p. 269, emphasis added)

However, according to Rose, towards the mid 1900's the conceptualisation of paid work under capitalism altered in conjunction with the increasing predominance of

discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement (Rose, 1999, pp. 15-40; O'Connor, 1999). These discourses had a part to play in changing the understanding of work (ibid.). In consequence, *work came to be valued not merely as a means of subsistence, but for itself*. In other words, work came to have an *intrinsic meaning* in itself (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 37-40; Wilenius, 1981, pp. 22-35). Consequently, the *experience of work* became the focus and, further, work came to be understood as *a source of self-expression and a vehicle for self-fulfilment* (Rose, 1999, pp. 103, 105; Fournier, 1998, p. 60). All in all, it seems that the meaning of work has radically altered in the course of the past two centuries.

In my view, despite their relative differences, these two views in fact have a common denominator. This is that they both perceive *paid work negatively*. In Marx's view paid work under capitalism was inherently depriving, repressive and alienating because the profit of the capitalist was based on the exploitation of workers in the quest for *surplus value* and to increase surplus value (Ritzer, 1996, p. 26; Marx, 1967). On the other hand, those drawing on Foucault's 'disciplinary power' (1977) focus their attention on criticising and denaturalising the process through which the subjectivity of the worker has been aligned to work and thus the experience of work changed (Rose, 1999, pp. 103-119). Further, this process is seen as a *subjugation process* through which the worker's subjective experiences are shaped, manipulated and even completely altered. From this stance, work is seen as fulfilling, as opposed to alienating. However, it is fulfilling only to the extent that it adds to the worker's productivity, whilst driving for increased productivity and profitability. Thus, the Foucauldian studies upholding this view do not re-examine or question the conceptualisation of work that rests on the premises of such deliberations. Hence, they do not question the deep-seated premise of viewing paid work and work-related phenomena under capitalism as something which is innately negative.

However, the findings noticeably show that in contemporary organisations the negative connotations that used to underpin paid work are gone. What is more, it is not merely that the negative twist has vanished, but that it has been replaced by *a constructive approach* to work. This in practice translates as work being spoken about in a positive vein. How are we to interpret such a fundamental change in the basic approach to work? Is it to be interpreted in a manner which entails seeing workers as fully manipulated?

Thus, is this 'an end of the worker' and a contemporary illustration of a category of person whose subjectivity has been subdued completely? What else but immense manipulation could explain this shift in the basic approach to work? After all, instead of resisting work, contemporary workers are keen to work and even take pleasure in doing so. Does this not illustrate precisely that contemporary workers indeed lack agency, in that they are unable to *resist* their working realities and practice? Or could there be another explanation? Who says that contemporary work is necessarily to be taken as something innately negative, depriving or colonising? In fact, the findings clearly indicate that the workers are not marionettes, but that they do question, do attempt to alter, and do alter, working practices and realities. Furthermore, they enjoy their work precisely because they get to do all these things, as well as to be self-managed. They also experience that they can have some influence on wider organisational matters. In addition, there is a lack of competition and instead lateral co-operation. This is found to further contribute to the positive understanding of work. Workers are intrinsically motivated by experiences of excelling themselves. Also, opportunities for constant learning are more important than career and status. Finally, it is not merely indirectly and via interpretation that we arrive at this positive attitude - *a positive attitude is emphasised time after time directly and spontaneously*. It is also illustrated in practice through the extremely low turnover of personnel and the rarity of sick leave. In a context of constant cutbacks of staff and further cut-back negotiations, this is striking.

I think that the majority of the people enjoy themselves here; after all very few have left the company... I believe that the majority of people experience their work as a positive thing. Of course everyone goes through periods when nothing is found interesting, but that it just normal (III; 4:55).

I just noticed how taken for granted one keeps some things, like for example the fact that work does not cause any problems... work is absolutely a positive thing... I think it is for the majority of people, because work is diverse, you need to use your own initiative and your own brains, and of course because you do not have the boss sitting around there (III; 11:68).

Workers have a positive approach to work because *they experience that they are actually able to use their productive agency in contemporary work organisations*. In practice this translates into their everyday organisational life and reality in very *tangible* ways. It is illustrated, by and large, in all organisational and work practices, from lunch-break practices to ownership structures. Thus, it is not company rhetoric or the explanation of ideals, but the concrete ways in which people work and organise that

seem to form the premise for, and pave a way for, this positive understanding of work. Hence, workers experience their work, working and organising in a constructive manner because in their everyday organisational life *they are able, for example, to:*

- Negotiate their job descriptions and the tasks performed, i.e. largely impact upon and even decide on their own job content
- Decide upon the practicalities related to their work, such as for example what time they start and finish their work and when they take their holidays
- Decide upon the way/s in which they work
- Instead of manager(s) ‘bossing them around’, they actually get to negotiate and make decisions together, as well as in project groups and by themselves
- Have professional colleagues with whom they mostly enjoy working and interacting and from whom they are able to learn⁵²
- They also have a chance to spend spare time with their colleagues, as well as to partake in company events and e.g. sports teams.
- They have some say in some organisation-wide practices, and can take initiatives for new organisational practices
- They are not forced into one role or subject position, but in fact have many of these concurrently, thus avoiding boredom and the narrowing down of the working self.
- They get to compile different tasks, projects and even altogether new jobs
- Some workers, often the coders, get to combine their hobby and their work and get well paid for it
- They are largely managers of themselves, thus *overcoming the manager-managed split*
- At times they are also given the possibility of becoming owners of the organisation they work for, thus *overcoming the owner-worker split*.

What are we to conclude from this list? Contemporary workers seem to be largely self-managed, with a high level of personal autonomy and associated responsibility. Accordingly, they are largely the ones who make the decisions about their own work and way of working. All in all, the list culminates in the finding that *contemporary workers have control over their own work*. They are still *allocated to project groups as resources, but not managed as resources*. Furthermore, this occurs in an industrial context of instability and unpredictability and in an organisational context of mutual trust, sociality, co-operation and enjoyment. All in all, it seems that *the experience of work has changed rather dramatically*. Let us next examine contemporary work from another angle. Thus, let us explore *the understanding of contemporary work in terms of the concept of career*.

⁵² This is not to suggest that there are no clashes of chemistry.

4.6 Career and Control

Research Question 4	Specified Research Question
How do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?	4b. Examination of the understanding of work in terms of career

In the following the contemporary experience of work is explored in terms of career. First the research results emerging in relation to career are explicated. The concept of a career is examined by looking at the *value placed upon work*, and thus whether work is experienced as having primarily instrumental value or intrinsic value. Secondly, the accounts of *work motivation* are re-examined in order to see if career comes out as a motivating factor. This is followed by an examination of the prevalence of *goal-orientation* in general in contemporary organisations. Finally, *future-orientation* and the forms it takes in present-day organisations are examined. To conclude, the findings are contrasted with the conventional and contemporary literatures on career.

Work has primarily intrinsic value. Fundamentally, intrinsic value in the context of contemporary workers translates as those workers prioritising subjective experiences over external rewards. In practice this means that feelings of excelling one's self or of enjoyment outweigh career prospects and fancy titles. Contemporary workers also place a great deal of value on job content *per se*. That is to say that what they do in their everyday working life is what matters greatly to them. The work itself needs to be interesting. Promises of a bright future are not valued, it is the interesting project opportunities and challenging tasks *at hand* which are appreciated. It is the tangible today that matters rather than the intangible tomorrow, no matter how glorious that tomorrow might be. This is not to say that people somehow act as if there was no tomorrow. They believe in tomorrow, they just do not have too many unwarranted hopes with regard to it. Perhaps this is due to the difficult economic downturn that the industry has faced in the recent past and is still trying to come to terms with. Also, they probably do not have time to think in the long term, let alone to daydream, due to the constant hustle and bustle.

Also, work aspirations are intrinsic as opposed to external and instrumental. In other words, when people are asked what they primarily *hope for* from work, the matters

referred to are, time after time, *intrinsic*. Quite surprisingly, no one expresses a hope for a rise in salary or more company shares, or indeed a nicer-sounding title, a fancier office or more company benefits. Instead, learning and proficiency development and interesting and challenging work are the two most desired things. This is probably because people are, without exception, satisfied with their salaries. There might be an odd comment about the possibility of earning better abroad, but still *everyone is satisfied with their current salary*. Conceivably, having the financial side in order allows people to look for more intrinsic value in their work. Likewise, the majority of the people are on *permanent employment contracts*, thus they do not have to hope for permanent contracts as they *already* have these. That said, the type of contract does not really matter in an industry in which companies go bankrupt on a weekly basis.

Hmmm, the most important thing is that I feel I get something else than just a salary out of work. I want to be able to learn new things where I work, not just new everyday tasks but also meaningful wholes, and thereby develop my proficiency further. Also, the social meaning of work is important to me (III; 5:25).

Perhaps it is, again, this unpredictability and instability that make a person prefer intrinsic to external and instrumental value and meaning. After all, intrinsic meanings tend to be more immediate than instrumental meanings, which are usually prolonged into the future. The future, then, is too uncertain to rely upon. Also, intrinsic meaning has a great deal to do with a person's subjective experience, whereas instrumental meaning depends on other people in order to materialise. Getting a salary rise is hardly subjective.

The future is obscure. Future-orientation is lacking in terms of time and space. People talk of the future and, for example, justify their professional development by reference to it. It is often used as one of the rationales for working hard, performing well and getting experience. However, this future itself remains arbitrary and rarely materialises into any tangible vision. That is to say that people, for example, say that they develop themselves work-wise for the sake of the future but the same people cannot say where they see themselves professionally in three years' time. Furthermore, they cannot say how long they estimate they will remain with the same company, or even if the industry is going to interest them after some time. The future is ambiguous. It seems to provide a good justification for the activities of today but no tangible vision for tomorrow.

Finally, people are *indecisive with regard to their future*. This is partly because they like to keep their options open and partly because they are unsure of what they want in the future. They seem to avoid being tied down and unnecessary planning.

My nature is such that I do not plan much: I do not have any real career plans. It might well be that next autumn I am in the Caribbean... It is more the completeness of life, I am not so work or career orientated that I would do anything for them. It is more that I enjoy what I do on a daily basis and therefore I further develop myself in it, and then in three years time I might end up being somewhere, rather than work three years like crazy doing anything and then get to a nice position with a nice salary. I do not understand people like that, but everyone has their own motivators. In their case it is that they get to hold good by getting a certain position or salary. For me it is what I do on an everyday basis that counts much more (III; 8:66).

I consider myself as someone who does something creative relating to my field. Well, it is not impossible at all that I will change field completely for the *third* time. I might as well. I have jumped into the dark already twice and both times have been so successful that I am not afraid to change my profession again. Then again it would not be impossible to remain in this sort of IT work (III; 9:66).

The instrumental value of work is missing in itself. It is not just that the intrinsic value is highlighted openly, but also that the instrumental value of work is absent (even when it is directly asked and probed for). To start with, there is no talk of salary or salary rises. When asked, people are without exception satisfied with their salary. Also, career planning is by and large missing. Career planning as a practice is also largely missing from HRM practices. It is also largely lacking in workers' accounts of the experience of work, in that they do not experience work in terms of an idea of career. Furthermore, references to titles and status are largely absent, apart from an occasional joke made about fancy titles. Also, people perceiving themselves as superior, regardless of their position, are laughed at. This might actually be seen as a normalising judgement (Foucault, 1977), in that *sociality and equality are emphasised to the relative neglect of individuality and self-centredness*.

A 'career' *per se* is not desired by the majority. Peculiarly, despite future-orientation being a prominent rationale for learning and developing, *people do not think in terms of a career*. People refuse to talk in terms of a career; the majority just do not talk of it, but some explicitly deny it. Could this be a way to try to be unique and different from other workers and industries? Perhaps in some cases. However, as stated, the majority of the interviewees simply do not refer to career. It is *insignificant* to them. A career is not desired, thought of, aimed at or actively resisted. Interestingly, some even feel guilty

and ashamed of not wanting a career. They experience themselves as different, even deviant, in this regard. This in turn proves the pervasiveness of the traditional idea of the career and the strength of normalising judgement about the career as a predominate model of working life.

I think of the future predominantly. I am young and I want to get to a certain state. I am not career-minded. I want to get a little bit higher but not to any managerial or superior positions. I do not necessarily want a career. I am happy with what I am doing now. Of course with time I want more responsibility, but I have not set myself any targets that I need to be this and this. *Maybe it is wrong not to*, but career just is not what I view as important (III; 14: 68).

Predictability is lacking. People seem to like to keep their options open, and a pre-defined career does not allow that. Despite work being hard, it is not taken too seriously and thus the general attitude is probably more relaxed than in modern bureaucracies. Planning *per se* is not part of the picture in general, so why would a career - which is essentially planned movement in time and office space - be either? Also, flexibility is of the essence and constant change demanded. These are quite opposite characteristics from planning and stability, and it is precisely planning and stability that are required for a career to have any real meaning. Finally, the constantly changing context does not support a conventional career.

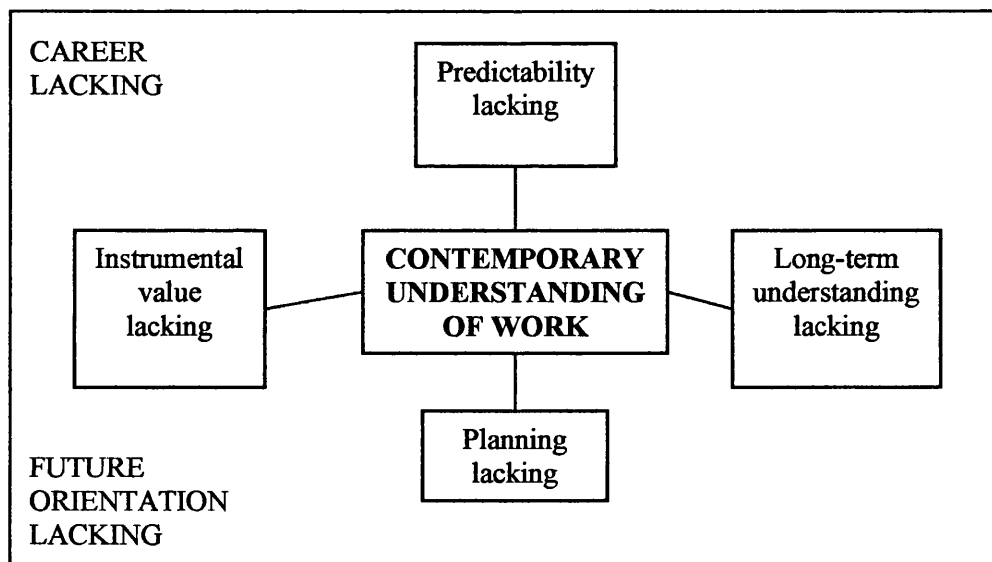


Figure 15: Contemporary Understanding of Work

The question is: what motivates people and makes them work efficiently and productively in the absence of a career? This brings us to examine the *meaning of work*.

Work matters quite a bit if you think that you use the majority of the most productive time of your day for it. Therefore it needs to make sense. And it needs to make sense in other than just monetary terms. The other people in the industry that I have talked with have exactly the same thing, they require work itself to be a satisfying experience and produce experiences of success. As a consequence you can be proud of what you have done and you can be satisfied with it (III; 6:25).

Work is experienced as meaningful in itself. What is more, people acknowledge the effects of work on the self and on the quality of life as a whole. They are very conscious of these effects and in consequence *require* interesting and challenging work. This is also consistent with the finding that people are looking for opportunities to learn and to excel themselves in the realm of work. That said, *people do not see work as a sole reason for living or make it the meaning of their life*. There might be exceptions to this rule but the majority, at least, do not. It is more like they have come to experience the deep-seated effect that anything one does for eight hours a day, five days a week, has on one's identity. Thus, one can spot enthusiasm brought out by interesting projects, but there is no general euphoria about one's work in general. Also, workers do think about work-related matters sometimes at home and work some weekends every now and then. However, the majority of the time work and spare time are in two distinct spheres.

The content of work means a lot to me. Hmm, how could I assess it? Without this content I would not have come to work for this industry. This is where you must find meaning and you need to do it on a personal level (III; 15:49).

Work is really important. *It is not the whole of life, but half of it*. It gives a sense of self-esteem: it does not give you only money but also value. It is constant learning and development ... and whatever the industry requires on a daily basis (III; 11:23).

Work does not end at five o'clock when you leave for home until the next morning. You meet people who are related to your work when you are out and on trips... In any case, *work is part of you and you are part of work* (III; 8:14).

The basic attitude to work is positive. It is not that people do not understand work in terms of a career because they are lost or in despair and therefore do not think of work in terms of anything. They do think of work in terms of various things. Most strongly, they think of it in terms of excelling one's self or as a medium through which one has an *opportunity* to constantly learn and enjoy. However, having a prominent career is not one of the premises of the contemporary attitude to work.

The Career in Literature and in Reality

The conventional and contemporary conceptualisations of career were discussed in the theory chapter (in section 1.3.3.2). Essentially, it was proposed that the traditional career is in decline and, all in all, the predominance of the career *per se* is in decline (Gray and Flores, 2000; Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999; Fournier, 1998; Collin and Young, 2000). Furthermore, the conventional conceptualisation is challenged by the Foucauldian interpretation put forward by Fournier (1998). In the following I shall examine Fournier's postulates in light of the research findings from contemporary organisations.

Fournier's account convincingly argues for the *increased importance of self-management* (pp. 68-69). Indeed, self-management is found to be of fundamental importance in understanding contemporary organising and organisations. Fournier also highlights the importance of *flexibility* and one's *own initiative*, which are both found to be emphasised in contemporary organisations (pp. 53-58). This is particularly the case with flexibility, which is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary work in general and of the way of working in particular. So for the most part the propositions put forward in her account/s still hold in the context of contemporary organisations. However, there are two significant differences when contrasting some other fundamental characteristics of Fournier's 'new career discourse' with the research findings. These are the understandings of subjectivity and of work.

The empirical data does not support the suggestion that *all* the social sides of subjectivity have been subdued by work and thus that contemporary working subjects understand themselves primarily as workers. Fournier explicitly posits that an individual's subjectivity has been *a priori constituted* either as consumer subjectivity and/or as entrepreneurial subjectivity (Fournier, 1998, p. 58). No doubt the role of work has probably increased in importance. However, the results indicate that workers no longer talk of themselves primarily as workers, instead *contemporary workers talk of themselves and of others as people, as persons and as professionals*. Thus, in this respect, the results seem to concur more with Fiske's view than with that of Fournier. Fiske suggests, along with Harley, that subjectivity has several [social] dimensions (Fiske, 1987, pp. 50-55) for example, age-group, family, class, gender and ethnicity (Fiske, quoting Harley, 1983, pp. 69-70). To these I would also add education,

profession/work, religion, political allegiance. This is illustrated, for example, in the fact that workers are aware of the effects of work on the self and on other areas of life. Surely, if subjectivity equalled worker subjectivity, workers would not be aware of these effects and consciously changing them to better suit the self, even to the relative neglect of needs and commitment to the workplace. Indeed, if worker subjectivity was pervasive, they would be wondering about the implications of these other sides of subjectivity for worker subjectivity, and not *vice versa*.

Secondly, the working subject seems innately serious, that is to say that it is hard to image the working subjects described by Fournier as laughing or enjoying, or indeed experiencing pleasure of any sort. The research results of this particular study clearly point out that workers do not take their work so seriously. Also, they largely enjoy their work and way of working, as well as the organisation in which they work. Furthermore, workers are not recognised by the majority of Foucauldian CMS authors to have agency (in studies drawing on “disciplinary power”). Due to this lack of agency of working subjects, they are described as passive and restrained. In fact they are rather like marionettes. They are objectified beings internalising without question the prominent organisational discourses and changing themselves accordingly under the *gaze* of superiors, colleagues and the disciplining self. Combined with the argument on all-embracing worker subjectivity, this view of workers is pessimistic and negative, without a shadow of hope to empower them. The findings of the present study indicate that the workers are not passive. *The workers here are active*. They are not subdued. They are empowered (by themselves, by their work and even by their colleagues). These workers are not bored or restrained, but get to do creative work and to innovate. One can only wonder how creative work could even be examined in such a stark framework, i.e. if subjects are subdued to such an all-encroaching extent, how is creative work even possible? Finally, the workers have agency on different levels and they can actualise it in various ways (more on agency in section 4.7).

Working Life after the Decline of the Career: Entrepreneurship and Self-management

In addition to Fournier, many other authors are convincingly arguing for the decline of the career and the growth in entrepreneurship. According to Flores and Gray, *entrepreneurship is the next model of working life*, which is becoming, and indeed ought to become, a pre-eminent model of working life *after* the decline of the career

(2000, pp. 28-33). Thus, let us at first examine entrepreneurship and its postulated relationship to 'career', as put forward by Flores and Gray (2000). Entrepreneurship is then explicated from a Foucauldian view. The Foucauldian reading of entrepreneurship is followed by an exposition of self-management. Finally, at the end of the chapter I shall explicate my view of the predominate model of working life in contemporary organisations.

Flores and Gray embed their conceptualisation of entrepreneurship primarily in terms of *social commitment*.

“Meaning of life [for an entrepreneur] involves much more than the expression of personal capacities. It encompasses the renewing of the life of the community” (2000, p. 28).

Subsequently, *cultivation of commitment* becomes essential; self-realisation is replaced by 'sensitivity to disharmonies' [in the community] that the entrepreneur aims to resolve (ibid. p. 29). The main difference from the concept of the career is that entrepreneurs add '*innovative change*' and are *closely attached to their communities*, (whose value conflicts and disharmonies they attempt to resolve) (ibid. p. 32). Thus, many of the characteristics of the career are also present in this entrepreneurial model of working life proposed by Flores and Gray. These characteristics are those of commitment, responsibility and loyalty. The novel additions are support for others and communal sense. What is more, through these entrepreneurial activities with their associated long-term commitments, Flores and Grey take the view *that entrepreneurs also become 'authors of a continuous life story'*, as did workers under the paradigm of career (ibid. p. 32). So, this entrepreneurial model is more communal, but still has echoes of continuity and commitment. Hence, it does not challenge the understanding of time and space. Nor does it challenge the meaning of context and its implications for the contemporary way of working. This is in sharp contrast to the empirical evidence which time after time points towards *the great impact of context on the way of working as well as on working subjects*. Contemporary entrepreneurship, in the industry under study, is *decreasingly about commitment and social responsibility founded on an underlying belief in continuity* and, instead, increasingly about self-management, enjoyment and excelling oneself. Furthermore, this takes place in more and more *subjective, fragmentary and discontinuous settings*. The findings strongly support the presence of communal sense and solidarity. However, they are not seen in the framework of or in relation to loyalty and commitment. Instead, communal sense and

solidarity are closely associated with open and honest communication and trust culminating in relational processes and reciprocal negotiation.⁵³

Flores's and Grey's view of entrepreneurship also conflicts with the view taken by Fournier (1998), whereby entrepreneurship is seen as an inherent part of the 'new career' and, moreover, as one of the main characteristics of the 'new career' which distinguishes it from its bureaucratic predecessors (Fournier 1998, p. 58). This raises the question: is entrepreneurship the next model of working life emerging with the decline of the career? Or is it merely another kind of career? The latter would suggest that the career as a pre-eminent model of working life is not in decline. The findings show that there is little discussion of career or understanding of work in terms of career. There is not much talk of entrepreneurship and even less talk of commitment. Therefore, in terms of these results it is difficult to see entrepreneurship and career as related. Does entrepreneurship imply self-management? According to Flores, self-management is operationalised through a discourse of entrepreneurship (1998). The empirical findings simply point out that there is a strong emphasis on self-management and little emphasis on entrepreneurship. There is no reference to the meaning that Flores and Gray give to entrepreneurship. Therefore, self-management, not entrepreneurship, is the theme explored in more depth, as it is one of the defining characteristics of the contemporary way of working.

Foucault, Entrepreneurship and Self-management

How can self-management be explained from a Foucauldian stance? From a Foucauldian stance self-management can be seen, on the one hand, as *a result of deploying panoptic techniques so as to 'create self-disciplined behaviours amongst those subjected to surveillance'* (Grey, 1994, p. 1; see also Deetz, 1992; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998). On the other hand, self-management can also be seen *as the operation of 'governmentality'* (Foucault, 1997, 1998a; Rose, 1989). Taking this latter view leads one to examine *the ways in which the individual has become an entrepreneur of the self*, through the construction of individual(ity) and subjectivity as an autonomous self-governing entity.

⁵³ This further reflects the fact that the understanding of an organisation as a system is gone. Organisation is perceived as consisting of social and relational processes centred on working and organising. Thus, *contemporary organisation is understood as synonymous with organising*.

“Individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives through the choices they make among the forms of life open to them” (Rose, 1989, p. 226, quoted in Grey, 1994, p. 2).

However, my principal interest is not in analysing entrepreneurship or self-management through ‘discipline’ and associated ‘panoptic techniques’ or as the operation of ‘governmentality’. It is merely in asking whether the entrepreneurial or self-managed worker is in fact fabricated in yet another set of discourses culminating in the construction of a particular type of contemporary worker subjectivity. Are there escapes from this? Is there room to struggle and resist the all-pervasive worker subjectivity? In essence, is there agency? Finally, what has replaced the career? Indeed, what is the contemporary equivalent of a career? Has anything replaced the career? Perhaps not yet, and perhaps *there is thus an institutional space in which subjects can try out new subjectivities*. Does this also mean that there is room – even increased room – for agency?

Summary

Research question 4 was: “how do contemporary working subjects experience their work and view others as working subjects?” This was limited to examining the contemporary *experience of work* in terms of the contemporary attitude to work and the *understanding of work* in terms of career. Overall, the findings indicate that contemporary workers’ basic attitude to work is positive; work is experienced as constructive, as something which is on many occasions even enjoyable. Work is perceived as yielding pleasure. This is in spite of the fact that the industry has been going strongly downhill and many of the companies are laying off large numbers of their staff. Also, work is talked of as having intrinsic value rather than instrumental value. All in all, the attitude towards work and the value placed upon work is in sharp contrast to its conventional counterparts. Conventional conceptualisations of work under capitalism hold it to be negative, with innately depriving and subduing qualities (Marx, 1884; Knights and Willmott, 1999). Furthermore, in the context of bureaucracies, work was often viewed as serious, dull and rational, done by ‘specialists without spirit’ (Clegg, 1990, p. 33).

Also, the understanding of work in terms of a traditional linear career is lacking. In addition, some aspects of the 'new career' discourse (Fournier, 1998) are also missing, namely, one-dimensional, all-encroaching subjectivity and the conventional understanding of work as negative and restrictive. Work is experienced as meaningful in itself. What is more, people acknowledge the effects of work on the self and on the quality of life as a whole. They also consciously avoid taking work home and making work the sole meaning of their lives. *Contemporary workers explore their limits*; they take pleasure in excelling themselves and seize opportunities for constant learning. In fact these are seen as the main motivators of work, rather than money, career and status. That said, workers are satisfied with their salaries and often do not even aspire to a career. Work-related aspirations also relate to experiences of excelling oneself and feelings that one is learning. All in all, *subjective experiences and feelings time after time outweigh external and instrumental values, meanings and motivators*. In essence, the way in which people *understand* and *experience* their work has changed. In consequence, the predominant model of working life, namely the career, is becoming obsolete. Accordingly, there is also a lack of those structures which support a career, namely bureaucracy with its associated tendencies to hierarchy and stratification. *In place of the career, the predominant model of working life in contemporary organisations is self-management*. The question is: is self-management yet another discourse aimed at subduing workers or is it indeed the pragmatic manifestation of agency?

4.7 The Agent of Control

Research Question 5	Specified Research Question
Do workers have individual agency in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age?	In what ways do workers exercise their individual agency in contemporary organisations?

Research question 5 explores agency and the different ways in which workers exercise their *individual agency* in contemporary organisations. It is hypothesised that *workers in the industry* have agency. It is the manifestations of this agency that are under scrutiny. In particular, the focus is to point out the practical ways in which this agency is illustrated in everyday organisational life. This is done by identifying some of the ways in which agency materialises and distinguishing the different analytical levels on which this occurs. Throughout, the opposite i.e. the lack of agency is also examined. Finally, individuality is examined via concepts of freedom and responsibility.

The Manifestations of Agency

Workers have agency in terms of job content. They can direct and specify their job description. They can decide the order of the tasks they perform. They can take on other tasks independently. They can set targets. They can have a say in the projects that they are involved in. They can also impact on the role they take in a project. They self-manage the carrying out of their daily work. All in all, they *experience* the fact that they can impact on their work to a great extent. They also experience the ability to make suitable decisions on the content of their work. Finally, they describe their work as changing, exploratory and developing, which is consistent with these findings. Therefore, the type of work that they do often *requires* agency and self-management. Also, the rapidly changing context requires fast reactions from the workers. There is no time for bureaucracy and multi-layered decision making on how to respond to these changes. The expert knowledge required in order to know what responses are possible is limited in each case to a certain number of people in the organisation. Therefore, having some central management board to decide on the matter is rather pointless, as they would in fact have less know-how regarding how to decide upon the matter.

I can impact on my work 100 % (III; 3:56).

Here we have quite a lot of opportunity [to impact on our work]... if you are not enjoying yourself in one job, and want to try something new, that opportunity is given to you (III; 4:60).

I can impact on my job a lot. I can impact on the tasks, the working times and all that. And again, if there are any suggestions or hopes with regard to the organisational practices, they are always heard. The aim is for being and living to be as hoped - within the limits of what is possible (III; 6:55).

Thus agency is closely linked to self-management. It seems that in the context of contemporary organisations *agency in practice translates as self-management*. Self-management in turn is closely related to decision making. This is logical, in that management is essentially about decision making (Merkle, 1980 cited in Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997, p. 46). Hence, it is no surprise that self-management is also to a large extent about decision making.

I experience my work as very autonomous. This is because I get to make decisions by myself and I am given a lot of opportunities. It is also due to my job description not being clearly defined. Therefore, the construction of work is very self-directed (III; 8:36).

Similarly, workers have agency in terms of the way of working. They have considerable influence on the way in which they work. On the one hand, this means very practical everyday things that organise and construct the working day, such as getting to choose your working hours on a daily basis (i.e. flexible working hours). They also lack a dress-code or for that matter virtually any codes of conducts. They can take holidays virtually when they wish. On the other hand, this way of working means you get to select the order of the tasks you do, and when and in what order you do them. You also get to choose your daily work rhythm within the limits of a hectic industry. No one is looking over your shoulder and often there is no one to report tasks to. It is up to the individual worker and the project groups. Finally, this is consistent with the way in which workers describe their way of working, e.g. autonomous, free, responsible and requiring initiative.

I can decide very independently, working hours are flexible and I can decide pretty much what I do and when I do it. Of course you need to take into account that clients have certain requirements and that projects have certain requirements, but no one comes to say to me that you need to do this and this, in this order, it is more that doing the work is self-initiated and directed (III; 4:42).

I experience my work to be very autonomous. As said I need to take care of certain matters and I can define myself when and how I schedule these matters (III: 13:35).

Workers *use* a limited amount of agency to impact on organisation-wide matters. In some cases the possibility of impacting on the whole organisation is limited. This is in part because of organisational limitations, which materialise in the fact that some workers do not experience themselves as able to influence the origination of organisation-wide practices. They do recognise that they can take initiatives and feel that they are heard, but to have the practices implemented is another thing. However, those workers who are unable to influence organisational practice as much as they would like are in minority; for the most part the limited possibility of influencing the organisation as a whole is due to workers' *lack of interest*. In fact many directly state that they are not interested in enhancing organisation-wide practices. Most have not even even tried to do so, but say that naturally they could contribute initiatives. In essence, lack of attempts to enhance organisational practices is not due to frustration but to lack of interest and lack of time. It is their proficiency, personal learning and particular projects at hand that they are interested in developing further, rather than organisational practices. In fact, organisational practices, which materialise as an increase in bureaucracy, are experienced by the majority as negative.⁵⁴ Hence, why would they contribute to creating more procedures when they oppose the existence of bureaucracy in the first place? The case for lack of interest, as opposed to frustration, is also supported by the fact that workers take somewhat more part in organising and influencing those organisational practices that matter to them, such as activities related to enjoyment. Company parties are organised by committees voluntarily made up of workers. Also, the various extra sporting activities that the company (fully or partly) pays for are initiated by workers (more on this in section 4.1).

At the moment I am taking part in the developing of the research and development process. There are opportunities if you want to have influence. I feel that most of the time it is up to you. If you have a good explanation for why the matter should be handled like this and you present your idea, it is rarely opposed (III; 4:61).

I have not had any need to, but I think putting a few ideas forward would be successful, providing they are OK ideas (III; 14:54).

The extent to which I can impact on organisation-wide practices is pretty limited. I have tried a bit, but people are not willing to take on processes and bureaucracy (III; 2:61).

⁵⁴ There is a minority who would hope for more bureaucracy for the sake of clarity (more on this in section 4.3).

People are by and large satisfied with their work and organisation; therefore they do not experience a burning need to change procedures. Also, nearly all matters are *negotiable*. Thus, workers participate in influencing organisational practices, projects and other matters via the constant negotiation they take part in. This is more *indirect* and also considered as the normal way of organising and handling matters. Thus, it is not distinguished as a particular way of exerting influence, as it is just the normal everyday practice. Thus, by taking part in these everyday negotiations workers do in fact probably influence organisational practices a little more than they are aware of. *The influence on others is indirect, constant and occurs via negotiation and lateral co-operation*. Direct influence is not talked about. This supports the findings on negotiation, co-operation and group work among workers. Thus workers have individual agency and they can and do impact on others in the everyday work in project teams and professional groups. Likewise others impact on them. However, one individual having influence *over* another is not common in any sense. As discussed earlier, the manager-managed split is largely obsolete (see section 4.4). Even superior and subordinate do not have this type of relationship of influence, but negotiate and discuss on a more *egalitarian basis*. Accordingly, the boss does not delegate. The boss does not interfere. Altogether, conventional management and the conventional manager are absent. Therefore, superiors (designated as such by their titles or roles in projects) do not often even attempt to influence workers' work. Again, negotiation and open and honest communication are highlighted.

I have got used to doing this job pretty independently, in some matters I am my own boss. It is peculiar that in some matters I am responsible for someone and in some matters I am responsible only to myself (III; 4:62).

Workers were directly asked whether they could see themselves as entrepreneurs (see appendix 3, section XI, question 7). The majority of the workers can see themselves as entrepreneurs. However, the field would not necessarily be the one that they are currently working in. Also, some could also see this happening in teams, whereby the responsibility would be shared.

Yes, I could easily see myself as an entrepreneur. There has been some talk about it. At one point there were new firms mushrooming. At that point it was in my mind, and still it is in my mind in the sense of: why not? It always stops at the point when you realise that in addition to your own expertise you need many other qualities to start up a company. Therefore, you need to get together a good bunch of people (III; 15:71).

Workers can see alternatives to their current work. Thus, it is not merely that the great majority of the workers can see themselves as entrepreneurs; they can see alternatives in a more general sense. This is consistent with the lack of long-term commitment to the organisation. It is perhaps partly due to an attempt to avoid boredom. Alternatives and open options seem to be an escape route from the feared picture of dull, routine work. Workers both see alternatives and *need to see alternatives* in order to avoid feelings of being trapped or being at a professional standstill. All in all, people like to keep their options open and avoid excessive *predictability*. Constant learning is also linked to alternatives, in that being at the cutting edge in one's field makes it possible to take part in interesting projects and also opens doors to other companies and other work - quite simply, *proficiency* opens up alternatives. *Networks* are also important in this respect as through them you get to hear of interesting alternatives.

In a year and a half anything can happen. Who knows what will happen during the next year? In this industry the most important thing is to develop yourself and keep in touch with contacts regardless of where you are. You cannot depend too much on the company - That is if you are logical and think rationally (III; 5:61).

Thus, it seems that proficiency, on the one hand, and networks, on the other, are prerequisites for alternatives.

In summary, workers in the industry have agency in that they:

1. can impact on their work content
2. can largely impact on the way in which they carry out their work
3. can impact on their everyday working lives
4. often have several different working roles
5. can impact on their colleagues, even on their bosses
6. also have a possibility of impacting on existing organisation-wide practices
7. can initiate and enhance new suggestions for organisation-wide practices
8. make most of the decisions themselves with regard to their everyday working realities and projects at hand
9. take responsibility for their actions and in general
10. seldom have conventional bosses; subsequently, as opposed to management deciding and delegating, decisions are negotiated and workers have a large part to play in this process

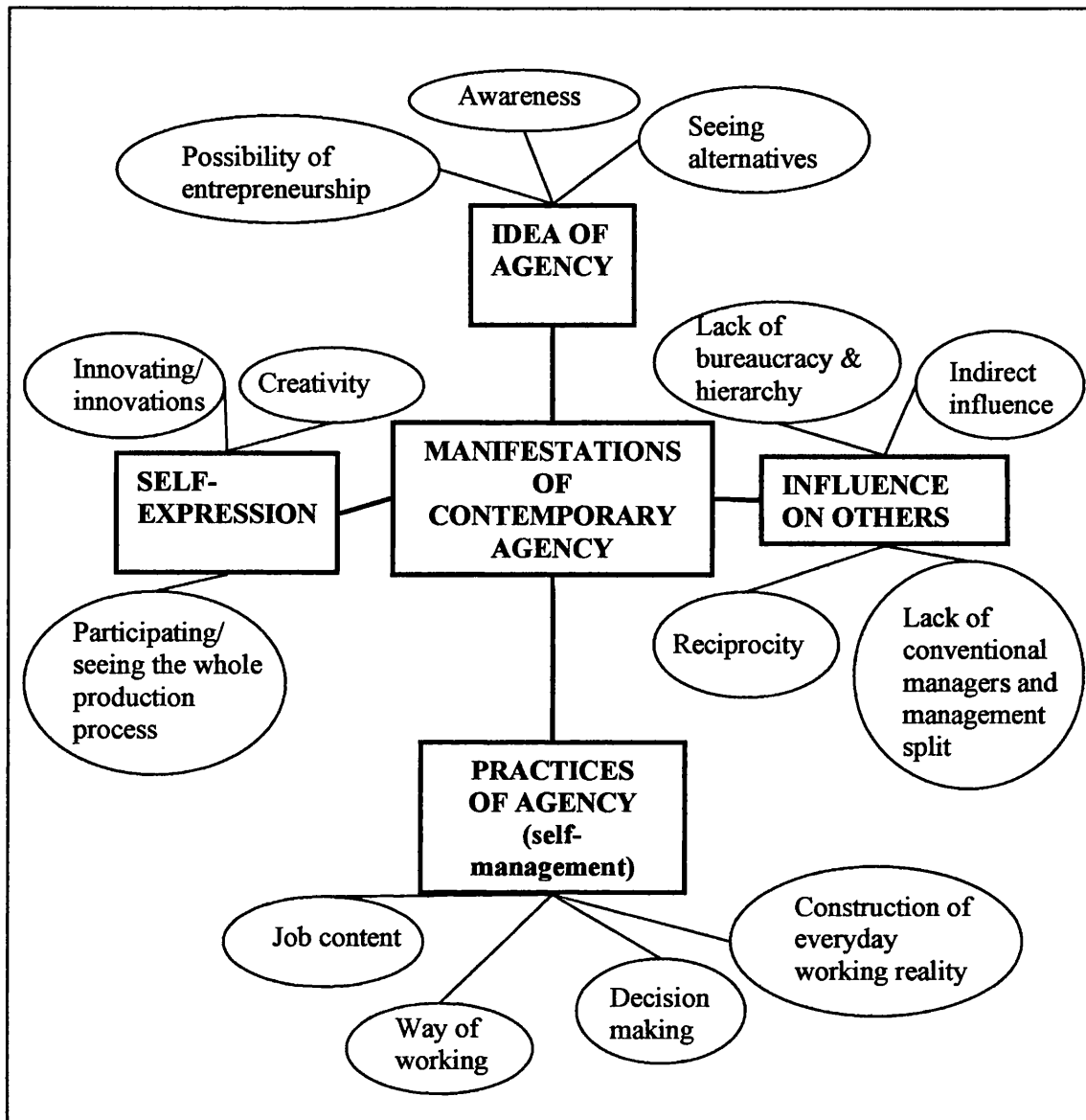


Figure 16: Thematic Network of Manifestations of Agency

In consequence, it seems that agency occurs on four levels in contemporary organisations. First of all, it occurs on the level of an idea of agency. Workers have the ability to consciously question their work and working pattern. They are also aware of themselves and conscious of the implications of work for one's self and for the quality of life as a whole. They are also conscious of their own impact on and contribution to the organisation, colleagues and clients. In short, they are self-conscious as well as socially sensitive. They are able to see alternatives to their chosen profession, to their current organisation and even to working life as a whole. This is illustrated by the fact that they talk explicitly about different field/s in which to work, different companies, different professions altogether, or indeed different realities in which work *per se* does not play such a large role. Finally, they are aware of the major impact of contextual

factors on their working lives and even on themselves. This is illustrated, for example, in by constant references to lack of time, change and haste as peculiar qualities of work in the industry that impact on the way of working.

Secondly, *agency is manifested on an everyday, operative level*. This refers to workers being able to affect and decide upon their own everyday working realities to the relative neglect of the owner, the managers and, in short, anyone else in the realm of the work organisation. That is to say that workers are self-managed and also see their colleagues as self-managed. Thirdly, *agency materialises on the level of influence as an ability to influence others and to influence common practice*. Workers can impact on their colleagues, even on their bosses. *The influence is above all reciprocal* and occurs through co-operation, negotiation and group work - thus, through communicating and acting laterally. Workers are also heard in matters relating to organisation-wide practices; they can bring up ideas and participate in discussing organisation-wide matters. *This occurs via social processes rather than bureaucracy*. In essence, influence is exercised through informal, reciprocal social processes. Common practices are not standardised. The everyday structuring of organisational life is unplanned, informal and unstructured. Therefore, common practice does not consist of bureaucratic methods or meetings to which one could suggest alterations, but rather of negotiation, project-based group work and co-operation, along with self-management. In other words, this common practice corresponds to the contemporary ways of organising (discussed in section 4.1). These contemporary ways of organising are something that a person can impact upon and act through, but one cannot change their existence *per se*.

Communal sense is perceived as important. It is perceived as a result of “good characters” openly and honestly co-operating and negotiating. It is seen as a group effort that by and large everyone takes part in reproducing and upholding *via their actions and ways of being*. However, a person does not need to take part, for example, in organisational events. Furthermore, it is not compulsory to participate in social life in the organisation by taking lunch and coffee breaks with others. If one wishes to eat by oneself or have coffee, for example, while working, that is fine (at least in principle). So, communal sense is not forced upon the workers. Additionally, people do not need to actively participate in negotiating, voicing their opinions and so forth, if they prefer a quieter style. So, taking an active part in social processes is not compulsory. One might

suggest that perhaps communal sense and taking part in social processes are not forced, but in practice you are punished if you do not take part. However, the results do not indicate in any sense that a worker would somehow be punished if s/he did not take part.

Fourthly, *agency is revealed on the level of practices that enable self-expression and pleasure* (e.g. artistry). Workers talk of themselves and others as innovative. Innovativeness is one aspect of work. However, it is not just innovation which might imply agency of some form, but normal everyday work itself is viewed primarily as enjoyable and as yielding pleasure. Everyday practices are not bureaucratic, i.e. structured, planned, formal - nor are they serious. On the contrary, humour, laughter, fun and enjoyment are also part of normal, everyday work. The majority of the workers enjoy their everyday work most of the time. It is not just the work ambience that they like, but also the way of working and the work content. Thus, does a particular feeling or set of feelings entail agency? No, but having a laugh, taking work lightly and in a constructive manner are radically different from the characteristics of previous worker subjectivities and therefore could be seen as escapes from these (Rose, 1999; Fournier, 1998; Weber, 1947 in Clegg, 1990).

The way of working is self-managed. Therefore workers are able to conduct the organisation of their working life in a creative manner *per se* if they so wish. They can actually live in a rather bohemian manner if they want, beginning with their working hours and dress codes. Also, the content of work is experienced time after time as challenging, interesting and constantly developing. Thus, it is experienced as yielding pleasure because it gives one the opportunity to excel oneself and to learn new things. Freedom and responsibility, on the one hand, and autonomy, on the other hand, are highlighted all the way through. Workers largely have the opportunity to decide upon both the way in which they work and the content of their work. Furthermore, they can express themselves and follow their individual needs, for example in organising their everyday working life. They can use creativity. However, they are not obliged to use their creativity, or to be innovative or bohemian. They can be said to have agency in that they can express the self, excel themselves, be creative and so forth, if they so wish, but they are not forced to do so. Finally, the prevalence of agency is consistent with the

finding on the lack of external structures in general and the fact that HRM-based control mechanisms, in particular, are largely absent.

Finally, a common frame of reference for the interpretation of working life (such as career) is missing in contemporary organisations. There are no dominant discourses, fads or rhetoric from which workers would be encouraged to draw their way of working and attitude to work. *Altogether, it seems that workers in fact have agency in contemporary organisations.* Further, it is not just potential agency, but actual agency that manifests itself in the everyday operation of organisations and workers? What has made this possible? In part it is probably the change from a socio-technical system of organisation to a human activity-based way of organising. In part it is probably the change in the understanding of work from something negative to something constructive. In part it is perhaps the absence of a notion of a career which has provided the institutional and conceptual space for new emerging subjectivities. In part it is probably also the change in era that enables people to break free from the previously alleged conceptual constraints and to struggle against the traceable forms of subjectivity. It makes possible manifestations of the self that also include agency, but does not make these obligatory.

We have discussed agency in terms of its manifestation in contemporary organisations. However, how is agency defined in theoretical terms? Furthermore, what is the relationship between agency and individuality? As we are talking of individual agency, I shall start by examining the individual (see also section 1.3.2.4). The modern conception of the individual is essentially linked to freedom and responsibility (Knights and Willmott, 1999). Therefore, individual agency is also examined through responsibility and freedom. As we are talking of actual *agency rather than potential agency*, the way in which responsibility and freedom materialise in the everyday practices of work organisation becomes of the essence.

The modernist view of the individual presumes a close association with the concepts of freedom and responsibility because, for our self-consciousness, the source of creative self and social development is attributed to [reflexive] freedom (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 53-58, 84; Ronkainen, 1999). However, Knights and Willmott propose that this attribution of individual freedom (and associated responsibility) to human nature,

though it seems to be a pre-scientific and metaphysical assumption, is better understood as a social construction (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 163-166).

“[individual is] a ‘social fact’ created by modern civilization as a condition of citizenship. In this context, the freedom of the individual is not just a condition and consequence of self-consciousness; it is also, and most significantly, a key articulation as well as a source of legitimisation of historically specific, liberal-democratic capitalist regimes” (Knights and Wilmot, 1999, p. 163).

Thus, in the realm of work, the attribution of autonomy and ‘freedom’ to labourers increases their productivity as it attaches them through a sense of responsibility to their duties. Knights and Willmott go even further by suggesting that “each individual is represented as an independent, autonomous agent – a sense of identity that each employee is impelled to develop as they compete to provide the quality of skill and reliability demanded by the market” (ibid, p. 81). In consequence, the emphasis on the ‘free self-determination’ of each labourer is strongly encouraged by markets, in which each labourer is required to develop ways of outwitting or undercutting competitors.

Individual freedom has come to be understood as a normal feature of human existence. What is more, it has come to be understood as a basic human right, whereby the only people who are deprived of this basic right of human existence are those such as the mentally ill and prisoners (Burns, 1992; Goffman, 1968). This supports the modernist view that normal human beings are free. Furthermore, the understanding of human beings as free, autonomous agents also has some profound effects which are explicable through the concept of *responsibility* (Knights and Willmott, 1999, pp. 163-166). Responsibility is understood to have a twofold meaning; on one hand, we have responsibility for our own identity and behaviour and, on the other hand, we also have responsibility for others. All in all, this individual freedom entails a substantial burden that many authors, such as Sartre, Camus and Fromm, have famously written about. According to Knights and Willmott it is experienced in effect as insecurity, anxiety and guilt (p. 164).

How are these postulates to be interpreted? Should we interpret contemporary workers’ autonomy and freedom as a mere means of increasing their productivity? In a similar manner, should we see responsibility as simply a means of attaching workers to their duties? Thus, in explicating contemporary work should we draw on Marx and opt for the views of Knights and Willmott? Instead of agreeing with either of these views, I

draw on Foucault's later work to construe my view. In Foucault's later works, freedom is a defining characteristic of power, as *human subjects are able to amend power relations not just to react to them* (Foucault, 2000; Dreyfus, 1999; O'Leary, 2002). As a consequence, the subjectivity of the human subject has become a "more active constituent of power relations" (Moss, 1998, p. 5). Furthermore, Foucault's works on ethics point out that the *subject can exercise freedom in working on the self*. Furthermore, this working on the self entails specific technologies of the self, which vary according to the culture and historical point in time (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-249). These 'technologies of the self':

"...permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immorality" (Foucault, 1997, p. 225).

Further, Foucault's writings on the practice of freedom put forward the need for human subjects to be "able to reflect and to 'work on' their own capacities, so as to have the potential to reject unwanted forms of identity" (Moss, 1998, p. 5; Foucault, 1997, pp. 281-302). In relation to this study, the following question arises: to what extent do the different discourses on work, and the 'worker subjectivities' put forward, leave room for the practice of freedom, thus allowing workers to 'work on their own capacities' in a manner which is not defined *a priori*? In other words, *can workers be perceived to have agency to work on the self in contemporary organisations?*

We are talking of actual agency and not merely potential agency. Agency implies action (Patton, 1998, pp. 69-76; Giddens, 1991, pp. 210-214). Therefore, agency is examined as the materialisation of action. Furthermore, in the context of contemporary organisations this action has been interpreted as organisational action; however it is not only visible external action but also action in terms of *acting on the self* (Foucault, 1997, pp. 281-302). In the contemporary organisational context this often translates as excelling oneself and as constant learning. It is the experience towards which workers aim that also acts as the motivator for acting on the self. Thus, subjective experiences guide work on the self. This again supports the finding that contemporary workers have agency (and do not have their subjectivity and subjective experiences completely subdued). *Agency is not static or fixed*. Agency is not apolitical or ahistorical. Agency is rooted in and dependent on the historical and contextual reality. It is not outside

power/knowledge systems and discursive practices. Having said that, this does not mean that I would subscribe to the view that agency is mechanically subdued or somehow automatically reified, for example due to the current mode of production. Following Foucault, this mode of production also offers institutional spaces that enable an escape from previously alleged conceptual constraints (Foucault, 1988b, p. 9, 11). Agency essentially implies freedom and alternatives. Thus there is not much agency to talk of if there is no freedom to act or options to act upon (O'Leary, 2002, pp. 154-165). In breaking 'free' from a previous era the institutional, conceptual and discursive structures are changing, therefore there is probably more possibility of questioning the previously alleged conceptual constraints and more space for freedom to materialise. As Foucault posits, "All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions and show which space of freedom we can still enjoy and how many changes can still be made" (1988b, 9, 11).

Summary

In summary, then, agency is manifested in freedom and responsibility that enable and become visible in action. In contemporary organisations agency is closely linked with creativity. It materialises in the practice of self-management. One can deliberate upon whether self-management and creativity are even possible without agency. The research question was: "do workers have individual agency in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age". The workers were found to have individual agency. The agency of the contemporary worker is put into effect on four (analytical) levels, namely the level of an idea of agency; the everyday operative level of deciding on one's work and way of working; the level of influence, as an ability to influence others and common practice and, finally, the level of individual practice that enables self-expression and pleasure. Thus, the proposition that the worker in these contemporary organisations has agency seems to be accurate. However, having agency does not mean that workers can change things as they please and take matters into their own hands. Even though this occurs at times, there are also many matters that workers can only have very little impact upon. One of these is the fact that much work requires lateral co-operation and team effort. There are also contextual factors relating to the industry and the economy that greatly impact on workers and their way of working,

such as constant change, instability and unpredictability. These are more difficult to change and require a different level of collective action.⁵⁵

It is interesting to think about the implications of agency for organisational control. How do agency, subjectivity and control relate to each other in the realm of contemporary work organisations? Can agency, for example, be seen as a core characteristic of contemporary worker subjectivity? Or indeed, is agency located outside worker subjectivity in the sense that it manifests in practice in the escape from traceable forms of subjectivity? Perhaps this is just a transitional phase, due to breaking 'free' from a previous era, which has made agency possible in the momentary absence of all-encroaching worker subjectivity? How exactly is agency linked to subjectivity? Is it just its tangible/corporeal manifestation, whereby subjectivity is primarily the locus of subjective experiences of a person and agency consists of the actions of that very person? Does having agency entail a person's also having unrestrained parts of subjectivity? Finally, does agency entail emancipation?

⁵⁵ However, collective agency and associated action has not been empirically examined and its explication is beyond the scope of this study.

4.8 Subjectivity and Control: Worker Subjectivity

Research Question 6	Specific Research Question
Is there a particular contemporary worker subjectivity that could be seen to encapsulate the contemporary worker's relationship to one's self as a worker and to one's work?	6. Do the people working in the industry form a particular type of category of persons?

Research question 6 explores the reality of a distinctive contemporary worker subjectivity. More specifically, it scrutinises whether there is a particular contemporary worker subjectivity that can be seen to encapsulate a contemporary worker's relationship to one's self as a worker, as well as to one's work. This contemporary worker subjectivity is first examined in terms of distinctiveness. This is done on three levels, industry level, company level and sub-group level. In practice this distinctiveness is examined by looking at whether the workers view themselves as distinct and distinguishable from workers in other industries, companies or sub-groups. This is followed by an explication of worker subjectivity in terms of its core characteristics. After this the relationship between the worker subjectivity and its context is examined. Finally, the making of this contemporary worker subjectivity is discussed. Also, the extent to which this contemporary worker subjectivity can be said to be yet another fabrication aimed at subduing workers is discussed.

Workers take the view that this *industry* differs from other industries. What is more, the distinctiveness is understood primarily in terms of the characteristics and abilities of the workers. The industry is viewed as different because the workers are younger, more hard-working and more dynamic. In essence, *the industry's distinctiveness is viewed as a direct consequence of the people who work in the industry*. Thus, the industry is not distinctive because of the companies, different ownership structures, economy or any other structural reason. It is distinct because of particular characteristics of the workers. They literally make *all* the difference. To be more precise, it is *the individual characters* that have particular characteristics in common that form the premises for a particular type of category of persons.

I do not know what equation would be the right one... but yes, all the people in the industry share certain characteristics (III; 1:16).

People are much nicer and more human than the common stereotype suggests. *There are other things to life than being a nerd* (III; 2:18).

People are young... this is a pretty hectic industry, you need to be able to keep up with the time... You need to be ready to learn and absorb new things and bear the fast rhythm of life... I feel there are people of many different kinds (III; 4:16).

Thus, workers are different particular because of characteristics and abilities. They are described primarily as young, hardworking, and extremely fast learners. This makes one wonder: why is there such a concentration of these types of workers precisely in this industry? Are people with certain characteristics preferred and thus selected in the recruitment phase? After all, recruitment is the single most common HRM technique used in all of the companies. Perhaps it is not that the workers have certain qualities upon recruitment, but that the context and the work itself shapes and alters the workers in a particular manner. Thus, as a consequence of working in the industry particular qualities and abilities are strengthened to the relative neglect of other qualities and abilities. Also, the brisk pace of the sector has probably had an impact on shaping the way in which workers work and on prioritising certain qualities rather than others, i.e. qualities such as *flexibility* and *dynamism* in preference to rigidity and indifference.

Youthful, full of ideas, very hardworking. On the other hand you could say that they are ambitious, active, hmm, they are well educated or ... have a lot of previous experience. You can say that this industry can be clearly differentiated, for example, from other communications industries (III; 8.15).

The people working in the industry form their own group. The divergences of this group are again explained by particular worker characteristics. It is also explained by different ways of working that distinguish industry from other industries. However, the overarching group does not strip away individual character. The differences among people are highlighted time after time, despite all the shared characteristics which form the group. To say that the industry is made up of a homogeneous group of individuals is a crude fallacy. There are common characteristics that are shared by the majority of workers in the industry; however, *these characteristics do not constitute any individual per se* and that is made very clear.

Yes, in a certain way, they do form their own group, particularly in Finland, there are such small circuits... everyone is interested in what the others are doing, everyone talks with the others about what client cases one has had and how it is going in general. The word-of-mouth culture is strong here, but otherwise I have to say that there are a lot of different kinds of people in different types of duties (III; 3:22).

The most common characteristic required in the industry is the *ability to adapt*. This translates as being able to adapt to new projects, clients, job descriptions and constantly changing industry circumstances. Taking this further, it is not only adaptation that is needed, but *prompt adaptation*. *Dedication to work*, a *youthful outlook* and even childlike *enthusiasm are* common. Finally, people are perceived as ahead of their times, as *forerunners* in general.

The way of working in the industry is viewed as peculiar. This peculiarity is closely associated with a *particular feeling, rhythm and need for innovation*. The rhythm is fast and impacts greatly on the way of working, making it very dynamic and unpredictable. Flexibility is a must. Also, due to this constant change, innovation and continuous development are required. One cannot come to a standstill. Finally, people in general are satisfied with and rather enthusiastic about their work. This also impacts on the way of working in that people, for example, work hard and in a very responsible manner, and in general take on a lot of responsibility. The peculiarity is also reflected in everyday practicalities, such as working hours. Working hours often extend late into the evening; on the other hand, working hours are also very flexible; in some companies some people prefer to work from 10 pm to 6am and are allowed to do this. Finally this peculiarity is also linked to tangible material differences from many other industries. These include, for example, better benefits and the opportunity to be an owner/partner.

It is difficult to say [what makes the particular type of character of this industry]... You have to think about the whole IT sector, maybe it starts from the way in which we work, you need to accomplish quickly. Be it mobile business, or whatever you want to call it, but there is the hectic rhythm in doing the work and in developing new things... there are demands on you all the time, you need an ability to change and on the other hand it can be very stressful in that you have been working on something for 6 months and it never materialises into anything (III; 4:27).

Yes, you can say that [the people of this industry form their own group], however, it is not just the mobile, it is the IT sector in a broader sense. People are more open-minded and ready to do a lot of work. The hours are not necessarily always counted. Many personas can fit into the group. Sometimes people are also allowed to be different (III; 7:28).

Also peculiar to the way of working in this industry is the *lack of preconceived models and processes* for this way of working. It is not just a lack of bureaucracy, there is a wider lack of standardised ways to carry things out. Further, there is also a lack of formal ways to carry things out. This brings its own challenges, for example, in terms of organisational communications. It also impacts on the day-to-day running of the organisation, in that people need to take the initiative to find things out, constantly to communicate in order to inform each other and to take on a lot of responsibility, as there are no structural positions to hide behind or structural arrangements to blame. In place of formal structures there is *trust among people* that they are each responsible and will carry out their duties – that is the way the company works and moves forward.

Maybe it is precisely that people do their work and they are trusted that they do so. The atmosphere is free. Things go on in a more human manner, if this was not the case, I would change the company I work in (III; 7:20).

Sub-groups

The workers in the industry are divided and categorised in several different ways. Many of the categorisations overlap. There is, for example, a distinction between technical and non-technical people. There is also a division between IT people and business people.

It is difficult to say, here we have so many different types of people, and you need to think more in terms of job descriptions if you want some generalisations. I would say that people are not afraid of challenges, they are looking for new things, they want to move forward and develop. This is not so much for people who are looking for security and other things like that (III; 3:17).

However, the most common categorisation is definitely by main professional groupings. This makes sense, in that proficiency is highly rated and people working in the industry in general are professionals. The workers in this industry typically distinguish *four main professional subgroups* among themselves. Sometimes the owners are also categorised as their own group. There is also often one administrative person; however that does not constitute a group. The main sub-groups emerging are the following (many of them are further divided into supplementary sub-groups):

1. sales/marketing people
2. technical people (includes further sub-groups)
3. graphic artists and musicians
4. customer care (sometimes combined with marketing and sales)
(the owners) (administrative personnel)

These groups differ in terms of their proficiency, core characteristics and the ways in which they work. The most clearly distinguished group is the technical people, in particular the coders. Technical people often have a more personal and dedicated orientation to their work, in that they often have or have had hobbies relating to their work and work is linked with their passion. Probably for that reason, they are also often described, along with the owners, as the most hardworking and enthusiastic. They are also referred to as the quiet ones. The sales and marketing people are described as having the most professional orientation to their work. They are also good at communicating and bringing out their ideas. Salespeople, along with musicians, are the only ones not physically present in the company, as they are often out meeting clients and potential clients. The graphic artists and musicians are generally the group most associated with creativity. They are also the ones who often do their work from beginning to end. The main owners are also, at times, viewed separately as their own group. They are described as extremely hardworking, as the ones who work 24 hours a day. They are also the ones who keep up to date with the whole industry. There are also common themes that cut across the sub-groups. These are *proficiency* and *hard work*. Nonetheless, despite all the common characteristics, people are reduced neither to these two themes nor to their sub-group characteristics. The outlook emphasised is that people are people and not merely an aggregate of characteristics related to one's proficiency, or to the professional sub-group.

The workers in a company are seen as heterogeneous. Workers are not seen above all as individuals but as *characters* (more on this in section 4.1). Thus, *the personhood of the worker is highlighted, not the individuality*.⁵⁶ The sub-groups are also recognised at company level. There are common unifying factors that cut across sub-groups on the level of *attitude and experience*. These are, for example, a *positive attitude* towards one's work and colleagues and a strong experience of *social togetherness* in the workplace.

⁵⁶ Individuality being understood more as what tells you apart from others, whereas personhood is more what you are, irrespective of whether shared with others or not.

Can I say nice? [that people working in this company are nice], it is really good to come to work. There are no social pressures or fears. (III; 11:26).

The general thing about the workplace atmosphere is that it is an atmosphere based on friendships; that you have to such an extent like-minded people. There is a certain sociality in this. People engage in the same hobbies together... playing games and sports are some of the hobbies that many share. We also talk and play during the coffee breaks (III; 6:17).

People here are nice, and they are easy to work with...[as to what makes it pleasant]... people know their jobs ... there is not much putting down of the other person's proficiency... People are professionals and they respect proficiency (III; 9:20).

There are also other acknowledged similarities that cut across most of the sub-groups. These are *youth*, *lack of children* and a *high level of education*. Thus, the workers' youth and youthful outlook are again emphasised. What does this youth really mean? When examining age, from the background variables, the age span is from 20+ to 40+, the majority of the workers being 26-29. However, the age varies by sub-group. The people in sales are generally more experienced and older, whereas the coders are often the youngest. Probably due to their youth the people working in this industry seldom have children. They are also often not married, but are cohabiting, dating or single. Finally, by and large everyone has a university degree or a degree from a polytechnic. Therefore, the general educational level is high. There are also people with additional professional qualifications and higher academic degrees.

Company Level

The workers in the company have an enjoyable, enthusiastic and ambitious take on their work. People are generally very *dedicated* to their work; they work long hours and take a lot of responsibility. Interestingly, it seems that people are dedicated but not committed. They are dedicated to their work and to personal and shared professional ambitions, but not to the organisation *per se*. A constructive attitude is important, as is the enthusiasm to build new things together. Co-operation and working together to the same end are emphasised. Also, general enjoyment by all is highlighted and practical steps are taken towards achieving this, such as avoiding repetitious tasks, having communal events etc.

We work sincerely/seriously, but we have never forgotten humour. No one is trying to get away with their duties. The responsibility is always shared (III; 11:17).

We are *mutually dependent* and conscious of that. The people working in this company take their work very seriously and devotedly. The workload for many is pretty berserk and I do worry how on earth they are going to take all the holidays accumulated through their overtime work. People are very dedicated to their work (III; 9:21).

Responsibility and *working hard* are seen as the most striking differences in the way people in the company work, in comparison to the usual way of working. A difference is also seen in terms of creativity, innovativeness, positive outlook and enthusiasm. Finally, a difference is also seen in terms of co-operation and togetherness. Why is this? Perhaps the nature of the work is such that it requires sociality and communal sense? Perhaps it necessitates co-operation and togetherness to such an extent that we can talk of a special self-defined community, as Himanen suggests in talking about hackers and their associated culture (cited in Castells, 2001, pp. 41-52). The present results show that workers are primarily self-managed. Indeed, the workers are mostly aware of their mutual dependence and value the work-place ambience and open communication. However, they strive primarily to excel themselves and to gain particular subjective experiences. No doubt some of these are experiences relating to sharing and belonging. However, primarily they are to do with stretching the limits of the self and constantly learning new things. Also, personal autonomy and freedom and responsibility are highlighted. Indeed, personal autonomy is a prerequisite for taking on responsibility and for working in a self-managed manner.

Can We Talk of a Distinct Contemporary Worker Subjectivity?

To start with, is there sufficient distinctiveness, on the one hand, and commonality, on the other, to talk of worker subjectivity *per se*? If yes, does this worker subjectivity occur on the level of particular companies or indeed does it cut across the whole industry? Perhaps each sub-group has a distinct worker subjectivity? What do the results indicate? Indeed, there are many shared characteristics on the sub-group level, on the company level as well as on the industry level. However, the most common themes that emerge cut across all these three analytical levels. These are the themes of *dedication, flexibility, proficiency and youthful outlook*. Dedication entails hard work and ambition. Flexibility consists of the ability to adapt and to be dynamic. Proficiency

includes professional pride, respect and aspirations. Youthful outlook brings enthusiasm, play, enjoyment and energy. Finally, all of these are underpinned by a *positive approach to work* and an emphasis on *social togetherness* (see figure below).

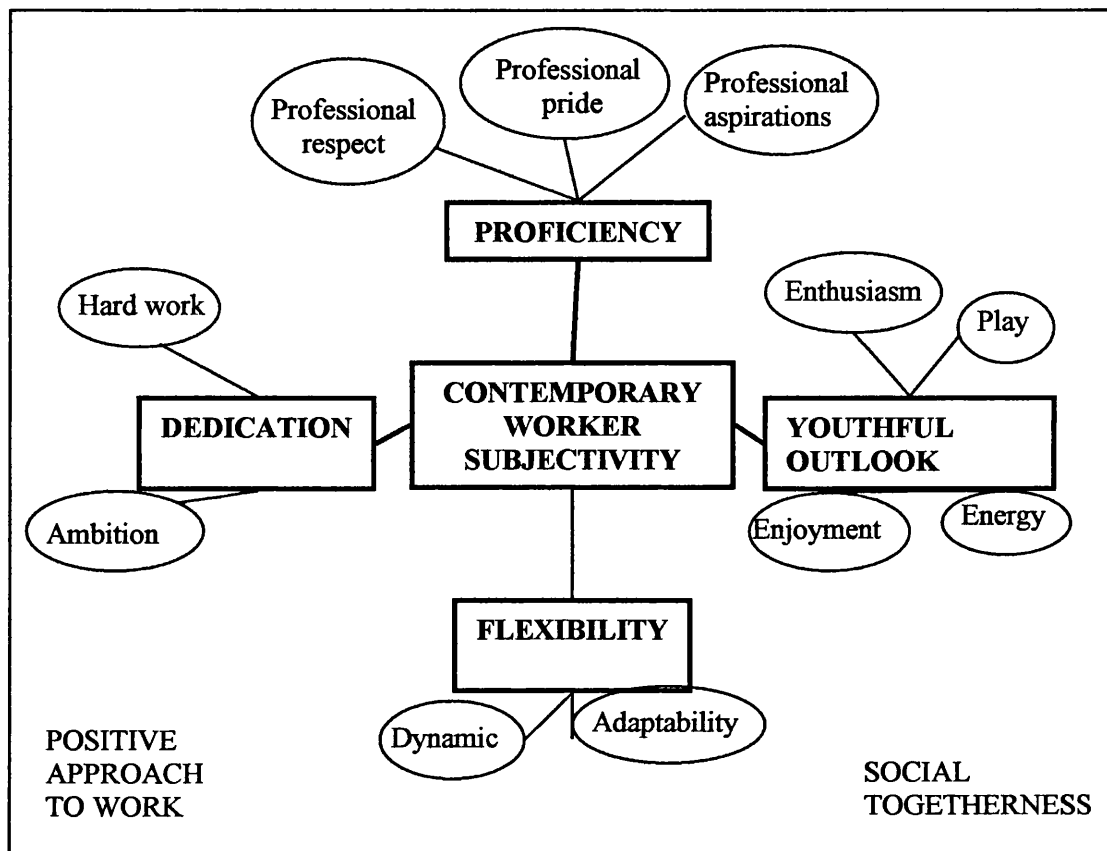


Figure 17: Thematic Network of Contemporary Worker Subjectivity

Is distinguishing a few core themes shared by the people working in the industry enough to justify the talk of a new worker subjectivity? Probably not; however, it is not just that there are certain shared characteristics prevalent in the industry, but that there is also *an awareness of this distinctiveness and peculiarity*. People view the industry that they work in as distinct and in a similar manner also the company that they work in is different from more conventional companies. It would have been interesting to interview workers and managers from other sectors and to see how they view this particular industry and its distinctiveness - indeed, whether they view it as different and distinct at all. Maybe it is just a shared illusion of those working in the industry. The existence of a contemporary worker subjectivity is further supported by the fact that the same sub-groups are distinguished on both industry and company levels. However, instead of the sub-groups being made up only of differing characteristics, there are also common characteristics that cut across all of them and form the premise for a shared worker subjectivity. These characteristics coincide with those identified as the most

common both in the industry and on the company level (see figure above). There are also similarities in the way people work; People are largely self-managed, but co-operative. As to what makes this worker subjectivity peculiar, it is probably the rare combination of those core characteristics of *dedication, flexibility, proficiency and youthful outlook*; in particular, as they are underpinned by a *positive approach to work* and emphasis on *social togetherness*. I just wonder where in the conventional business world you could find proficiency combined with youthful outlook which translates as creativity, innovativeness and enthusiasm, particularly as found on the premises of social togetherness and a positive outlook on work.

So far we have talked of worker subjectivity, but is there also *a particular understanding of a person* generated in contemporary organisations? Thus, how are people understood in contemporary organisations? It is highlighted repeatedly and explicitly that a person is more than just the sum total of some work related characteristics. People are not categorised by subduing individual character, but in a manner which also acknowledges personal differences. The differences between individual characters are noted, but just left at that. There is unambiguous acknowledgment that, despite some similarities, the industries and companies consists of many different sorts of people. Interestingly, this personal character which is distinguished is considered only to the extent that it fits into the organisation and does not ruin the team or organisational atmosphere. Being your own person is emphasised, in that you do not lean on others or try to boss them around, i.e. that you give others their space to work and to self-manage. Furthermore, *independence* is a prerequisite for taking on responsibility and for working in a self-managed manner. There is an explicit recognition that, despite work being important, there is more to life than work. Also, it is emphasised that there is more to a personality than the core characteristic of worker subjectivity. However, let me get back to discussing worker subjectivity and leave research on contemporary personhood to researchers in the realm of psychology.

How is this worker subjectivity produced and reproduced by contemporary organisational practice? In examining contemporary organising in general and organisational control in particular, themes associated with *agency*, on the one hand, and expressions of *sociality*, on the other hand, prevail. Then again, in examining the contemporary way of working themes linked to *self-management* and associated

responsibility and *autonomy* criss-cross at all levels, along with *co-operation*. The themes of *positivism* and *activeness* are those which emerge in relation to contemporary work. Organisational practices reproduce the autonomous, responsible and altogether self-managed worker. However, rather than being selfish, the worker is co-operative and flexible. The worker is motivated above all by the *experience* of excelling one's self and by *feelings* of constant learning. The worker is *active* and has agency that s/he can use on several different levels and in several different ways. The worker's basic attitude to work is positive; work can be fun and enjoyable and yield pleasure despite its challenging, stressful and intense nature. Workers experience their work as having intrinsic meaning. The worker is also in a constant hurry and lives in the moment in unstable and unpredictable circumstances. In place of industry stability and predictability there is trust in one's proficiency and in one's colleagues. In practice, workers are *active doers* who also happen to be largely self-managed.

So, what is new? What makes it contemporary? There have been various kinds of worker subjectivities based on somewhat different characteristics for a long time, as briefly explicated in sections 1.3.1.3 and 1.3.1.5 (see also Rose, 1999, pp. 102-119). What is all the fuss about this particular worker subjectivity? The issue is that this worker subjectivity is different in comparison to preceding worker subjectivities. First of all, it is different from previous worker subjectivities in terms of its core characteristics, in that it is no longer based on self-realisation, commitment and career (Fournier, 1998). It is based upon dedication, flexibility, proficiency and youthful outlook. Also, it is argued that there are three fundamental changes in the premises of worker subjectivity. Firstly, the operation of organisational control has changed, as has the understanding of power, in its premises. Secondly, the understanding of the working subject has changed from passive to active, from object to subject. Thirdly, the understanding of the basic nature of work has changed from negative to positive. Results indicate time after time that all three fundamental changes are not merely changes in attitudes and views but are materialised in everyday organising, managing and working. Finally, there is verification of agency, which takes place in the changing landscape of power, subject and work.

The constitution of previous worker subjectivities has been discursive, in the sense that there have been clear dominant discourses that have underpinned worker subjectivity.

These discourses have also underpinned the view of a person put forward (O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246; Rose, 1999, pp. 81-119). In Taylorism, the subject was objectified as an obedient and efficient worker who did what s/he was told without question and was instrumentally motivated by money, i.e. output grew relative to salary (Taylor, 1911). S/he had no values or other priorities in relation to work or social relationships at the workplace. Thus, the worker subjectivity construed was individualised, compliant, and highly productive (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 2-4). The worker subjectivity construed in the discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement was rather different (O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246). The working subject was now construed in terms of flexibility, innovation and competitiveness (ibid.; Rose, 1999). Also, group-work prevailed and therefore, for example, social roles within the group situation came to be studied (Guillén, 1994, p. 58; Rose, 1999, pp. 40-52). The worker subjectivity read in this manner, encouraged workers to relate and to experience their work through subjective experiences of self-actualisation and self-realisation (O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-246; Rose, 1999, pp. 103-119). Therefore they could now use 'technologies of the self' to *constitute themselves* as a particular type of subject, namely 'self-actualising workers' (Rose, 1999, pp. 103-104; Fournier, 1998, pp. 58-60).

What is the discursive constitution of contemporary worker subjectivity? Self-management is the discourse that underlines contemporary worker subjectivity. However, the peculiar thing is that self-management is not a rhetoric or a fad, but the principle according to which organising and working *actually* takes place. For example, in reading about the discourses associated with Human Relations Movements, one gets the *impression* that the theories put forward a view of the worker as self-realising and self-actualising, but that this did not really materialise in everyday organisational practices, at least to the same extent. Thus the change from Taylorism was primarily attitudinal and mental, not a tangible one manifesting itself in people's everyday work and the practices of the organisation, at least to the extent that the rhetoric would have us believe (O'Connor, 1999; Kieser 1997; Guillén, 1994; Rose, 1999). Of course there were tangible changes as well, such as more group work, the entrance of a new set of psychological specialists into the real work organisation, some new laws (Guillén, 1994; O'Connor, 1999). However, the core constituent of *contemporary* worker subjectivity, namely self-management, is mainly tangible; it is the working and organising principle in everyday organisational practices. Furthermore, self-

management largely lacks supporting facts, jargon, science and rhetoric. It is mainly *the founding operating principle* of the contemporary organisation. There is a discrepancy between theory and practice, in that theories are largely lacking and in place of them there is a changed practice of organising. However, there is no discrepancy between the understanding and experience of workers and their working reality; contemporary workers' experience is one of self management.

So far we have talked of worker subjectivity in terms of its distinctiveness, in terms of its core characteristics and in terms of its difference from previous worker subjectivities. What about the contextual factors? As described earlier by drawing on Castells, we have been witnessing a change in era to an Information Age (section 1.1.1; Castells, 1996, pp. 500-509; Castells, 2001, pp. 1-8). Can the difference in worker subjectivity be attributed to this change? Thus, is it the novel industrial context along with the network logic that is saturating contemporary worker subjectivity? According to the results, worker subjectivity is not underpinned directly by network logic à la Castells; it is underpinned by sociality, reciprocity and communal sense. All of these form a good premise for networks; however, they are not permeated by network logic, at least for the time being. On the contrary, in this context network logic is build upon these premises.

The research question was: "Is there is a particular contemporary worker subjectivity that could be seen to encapsulate the contemporary worker's relationship to one's self as a worker and to one's work?" The answer is that yes, it is possible to talk of a contemporary worker subjectivity which is shared by those working in the industry under study. This is supported in three ways by the empirical evidence. To start with, workers view the industry and the company as distinct from other industries, on the basis of their previous work experience and observations. This in itself does not prove anything; after all this could be just an illusion caused by increased individuation (Hellsten, 2000). However, there are other indications of contemporary worker subjectivity; most evidently its tangible manifestations. Contemporary worker subjectivity is made up of dedication, flexibility, proficiency and youthful outlook. These core characteristics distinguish it from the preceding worker subjectivities. Another difference from previous worker subjectivities is that these characteristics are, at least for now, primarily manifested *in practice* as opposed to circulating in

organisations in the form of fads. The workers are largely self-managed, with associated autonomy and responsibility. They also have agency. The contemporary worker's relationship to work is encapsulated in self-management; the worker takes a great deal of responsibility, but also enjoys a great deal of personal autonomy. All this is illustrated in the day-to-day working, managing and organising of the workplace. Thus, contemporary worker subjectivity is underpinned by self-management and associated agency.

However, the workers' relationship(s) to themselves as workers is more complex to understand. There are common themes shared by workers which explicate some aspects of this relationship, as previously described. However, the workers are no doubt much more than the subtotal of these characteristics, elements and underpinnings. Therefore, it can be said that people working in the industry form a particular category of persons that share a particular type of worker subjectivity. Nonetheless, worker subjectivity is only one dimension of their subjectivity. Even this dimension has more to it than merely the common peculiarities and characteristics pinpointed. Workers do not reduce a person to this set of characteristics; personal differences are acknowledged and respected, and work and working are not made the all-encroaching content of one's subjectivity. Quite the contrary, even worker subjectivity entails play, enjoyment and freedoms. This is also consistent with the finding on agency – after all, how could agency be explicated in the presence of all-encompassing worker subjectivity?

5. Power, Subjectivity and Organising in the Information Age

The first part of the results and discussion examined the research questions one by one. The core findings were that in contemporary organisations a different presupposition of a worker prevails, whereby the worker is seen as active and able as opposed to passive and restrained. Also, the workers' view of work is positive rather than negative. The locus of control was found to be internal rather than external. Overall, it was suggested that in order to grasp contemporary working, organising and managing, a relational view of power is needed. However, in order to understand the operation of contemporary organisational control, the operation of relational power along with the concepts of worker and organisation needs further exploration. Therefore, the results are next discussed in a more detailed manner in terms of the presuppositions of power, worker and organising.

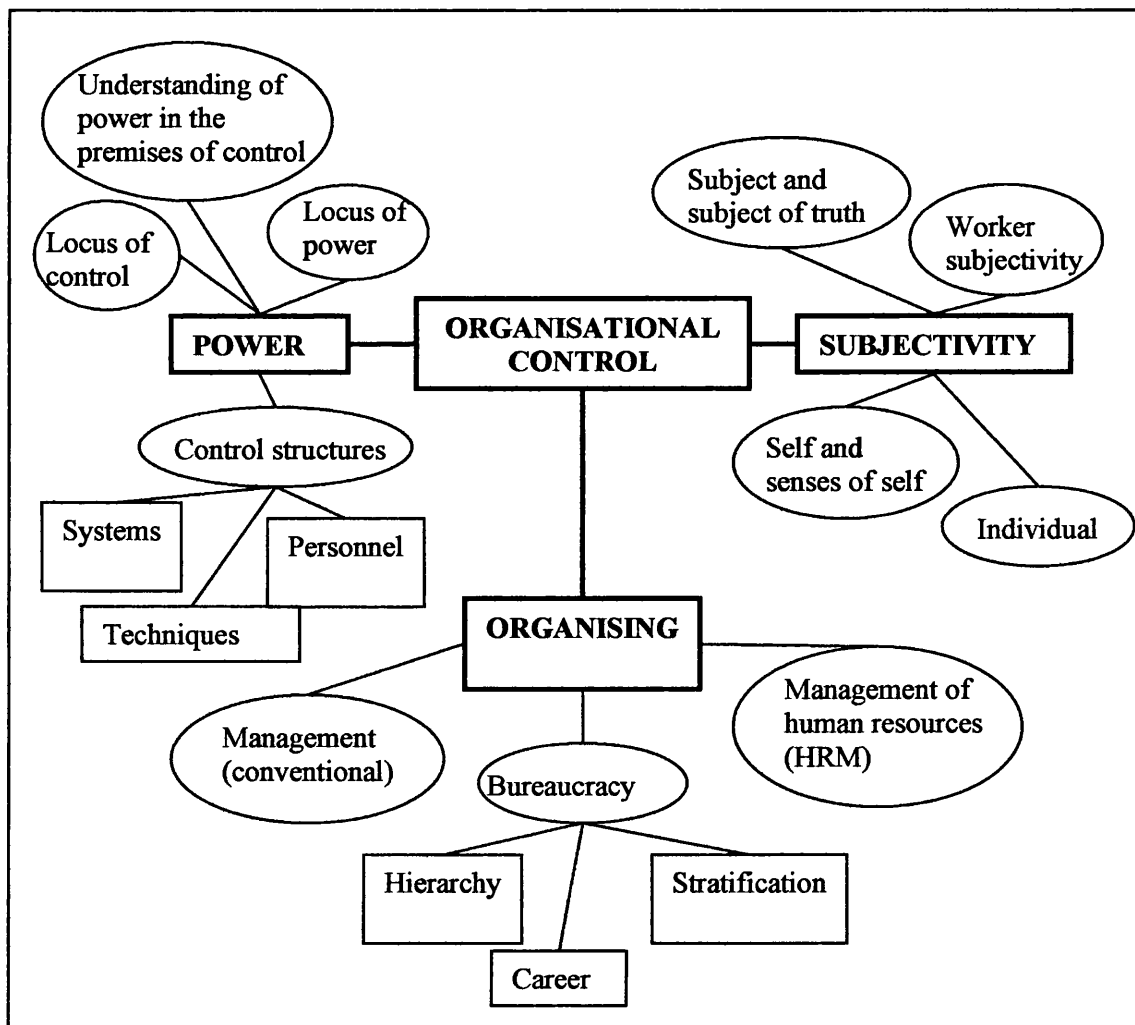


Figure 18: The Researched Dimensions of Organisational Control

5.1 Power and Organisational Control in the Information Age

Let us start by examining power and organisational control as they are played out in the pioneer organisations of the information age. First, the results are explored by drawing on a conventional view of power, i.e. seeing power as a possession. This is followed by examining the findings from a viewpoint of relational power.⁵⁷

5.1.1 Understanding Power and Control in Contemporary Organisations

However, before discussing relational power in more detail, let me explicate the power structures of contemporary organisations from a conventional stance. In essence, the conventional stance culminates in examining *who* has the power and how it is *used*. (Morgan, 1997; Kearins, 1996) The owners *have* power. In this industry, however, owners come in many forms. They can be venture capitalists, entrepreneurs or workers; often all three forms of ownership are mixed in one company. In any case, the owners principally make financial decisions and are responsible for these. Thus, in a classical sense, they are the ones who *possess* the power internally in the organisation (Kearins, 1996, p. 9; see also Daudi, 1986, p. 1-2). How does this power materialise? The members of the board are primarily the ones in charge of resource allocation and networking with interest groups. However, direct communication, in the form of negotiation, with workers and between board members who are also members of the organisation takes place constantly. Also, some of the workers are active in and feed in information from the industry. In addition to the financiers and the CEO, the directors of different functions also sit on the board. They report on matters at hand, such as the overall situation with projects and clients. The directors also participate in project groups like everyone else. Further, they are not often even the project architects. Looking at the organisation externally, the directors can seem to possess more power in the organisation, as they are the ones negotiating with the biggest clients, for example. It is actually explicitly acknowledged that externally conventional subject positions and managerial roles are at times expected.

⁵⁷ The results from all the research questions have been examined together for the purposes of this further discussion of power, subjectivity and organising, to which this part II of the Results and Discussion is dedicated to.

In any case, there *are* owners, CEO's and directors, so what exactly is new? *There is no conventional middle management*, but there are some managers. Nevertheless, managers do not possess that much power, as they do not really have "power over" anyone since they cannot control the experts. Also, the managerial positions of project managers and architects often change according to the projects at hand. Externally, in addition to the *venture capitalist*, the *clients* have a lot of power. Correspondingly, the discourse on clients is strong; the power of clients as deciders of timetables and as quality controllers is particularly emphasised. Thus, *clients have taken over some functions of conventional management* such as timetable construction, deciding of deadlines and monitoring the quality of work. These functions are now often shared between professional workers and clients, making middle managers obsolete.

In general, *conventional "power over" is also undermined by the turbulent context and professionalism of the workers*. Admittedly, there are still boards and decisions made in these, however the workers and the context have an impact even on those decisions and their implementation?. This is due to the expertise of the workers, on the one hand, and the instability of the context, on the other. This instability translates as lack of long-term planning and thus makes decisions short-term. These short-term decisions both emerge and materialise in everyday organisational reality, as they are laterally negotiated and carried out on a day-to-day basis in an organisation. *The constant contextual change also translates as a lack of planning and structuring*. Thus operation is spontaneous and dynamic. This sort of operational mode does not allow rigid structures, but is underpinned by *flat* and *flexible* organisation. It also requires professionals who can *act independently* to the same ends. Therefore, power cannot be understood as "power over", i.e. as domination and control over others and over structures and processes. Power needs to be understood in a manner that can incorporate subjectivity as well as lateral relational processes. These relational processes include social, political and cognitive processes as well as practices of co-operation, team work and negotiation (Hosking and Morley, 1991). These relational processes are at the core of contemporary organising, working and managing (ibid. pp. 153-210). Therefore a view of power that can incorporate them into its analysis is called for. This view of power can also incorporate the constructive and productive elements of organising, working and managing into its analysis. This view of power is necessary in order to explicate, for example, *reciprocity* in social processes and to understand the *creative transformation*

of organisational reality. This view also enables subjective elements to be incorporated into the analysis, in terms of senses of the self and techniques for acting on the self. This power is essentially relational, pastoral power (Foucault, 2000, pp. 331-336).

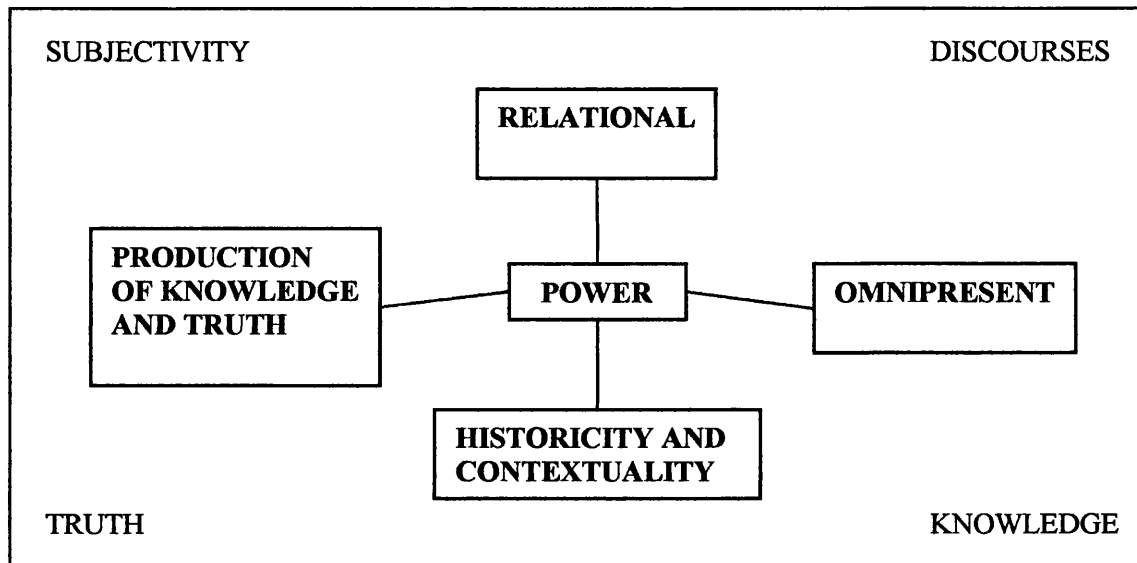


Figure 19: Power

5.1.2 Organisational Control and Relational Power

In the past, management has been substantiated by the conventional understanding of power, i.e. '*power over*', which has been associated with bureaucratic organisations in particular (Humphreys and Nappelbaum, 1997, pp. 45-54). However, in contemporary organisations where there is a lack of both hierarchy and conventional management, the power relations operation are not of this type. Instead, a relational understanding of power is called for. This can account for relational processes and subjectivity, along with historicity and contextuality.

“Power is not an institution and not a structure. Neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with; it is a name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation” (Foucault, 1981, p. 93).

Thus, power in Foucault’s view: “is exercised rather than possessed” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26). It is “immanent in all human relations” (Kearins, 1996, p. 9). “Individuals are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power” (Foucault, 1980b, p. 98, in *ibid.*). How does this relational understanding of power differ from previous conceptualisations of power and organisational control? Conventional theories of organisational control have largely been based on a Marxian

view of power (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, p. 2: 1-22). In this view, power, control and domination are often equated in the sense that all of them are seen in innately negative terms (ibid.).

Is power under capitalism, particularly when associated with work, by definition negative? Thus, can we only talk of power in negative terms - in terms of domination, restriction and control? No doubt it is true that work under capitalism has several questionable consequences, to say the least, as has been vividly argued by numerous authors.⁵⁸ However, one might ask: if all human beings, as a consequence of taking part in the capitalist mode of production, are degraded from the higher plane of existence and, further, experience the inhumanity of work, why do they 'voluntarily' participate in and reproduce this system? Likewise, how do they come to accept it? Most importantly, if it has an increasingly negatively effect on other areas of life, why do workers bear it and even give increasing importance to work as a source of meaning in life? This, in the author's view, casts some doubts on the purely negative conception of power. As Foucault points out:

“If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think that one could be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things; it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (1980, p. 119).

In order to explain the operation of power and control in contemporary organisations, a Foucauldian view is called for. This enables one to examine the more *invisible* structures of power, as well as leaving scope for a new type of understanding of subjectivity - one that allows the elaboration of the sense of self. The nature of the power that Foucault presupposes is not oppressive, based on domination, inequality and exploitation, but also *enabling* and *productive* (1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). As Foucault posits: “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in

⁵⁸ Work has fragmenting consequences (Knights and Willmott, 1999); it has alienating and depriving consequences (Marx, 1884, 1967; Marcuse, 1991); it has personal consequences (Sennett, 1998); it has impoverishing consequences (Weber, 1976); it has subduing consequences (Rose, 1999) and so forth.

negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors' it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact *power produces*: it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained from him belong to his production" (1977, p. 194, emphasis added).

With regard to a Foucauldian view and capitalism, Jermier, Knights and Nord suggest that a Foucauldian perspective makes it easier to understand the prevalent power/knowledge regimes and techniques that in turn enable one to recognise the current system, capitalism, as a historically specific mode of production (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, pp. 3-4; Knights and Willmott, 1999). Consequently, Foucauldian analysis captures *how* individuals, through their occupational and work-related knowledge, are tied to the current systems of social control, whilst acknowledging that the association between work and self-respect is also historically and culturally specific - something in which people are *taught* to believe. In other words, work is not naturally intrinsic to self-esteem, but people have been, through discursive and disciplinary practices, *made to believe* (and make themselves believe) that this is the case (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 40).

"It is both the stability and instability of the capitalist method of production which undermine the likelihood of class-based resistance (...) Perceptions that it is better to tolerate the 'devil you know' may readily weaken the strategies of resistance especially when, partly *because of divisive and individualising effects of capitalism, identities are precarious and vulnerable...* The continuity of the form of relations of production have a tendency (when supported by legitimating ideologies) *to make capitalism to appear as normal and inevitable as the laws of nature*. And the longer the capitalistic process of production remains in operation, the more difficult it is for the participants to see it as *a socially constructed reality*. In short, *its social construction and development by agents is hidden and forgotten*" (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, pp. 3-4, emphasis added).

However, despite workers being tied to the current system of social control, there are also escapes and spaces of freedom from encroaching domination. As the findings indicate, there is agency and an associated lack of external control. Overall, the interest lies precisely in explaining and *exploring: how do people struggle in one of the forerunner industries of the leading information society in the world?* Furthermore, I am asking: what happens to the understanding of organisational control if we re-conceptualise the negative conceptualisations of power, which lie in its premises? To be

more precise, what are the implications for understanding organisational control if – instead of viewing power as negative – we view power as productive and enabling? Finally, the *emancipatory aim* is to give tactical hints on how contemporary workers might be able to struggle against previously alleged worker subjectivities as well as against conventional ways of organisational control.⁵⁹

Has there indeed been a change in the form of power and control? The findings clearly indicate that there is a lack of control of Human Resources in a conventional sense. There is a wider lack of external control mechanisms such as documentation and surveillance. There is also a lack of conventional management and supporting structures in nearly all forms. This is most obviously illustrated as an absence of hierarchy and bureaucracy. Management-centrism and the associated way of centralised decision-making are mostly obsolete. Not only conventional managers but also administrators and leaders are for the most part lacking in these pioneer organisations of the information age. In fact, there is a general *lack of any central organisational authority with which to comply*. With regard to external authorities, it is mainly clients and venture capitalists who influence the otherwise self-managed workers. All in all, control structures, in terms of the conventional organisational and management split, are history in this context. The more subtle means of control, such as the upholding of a particular type of work mentality and the continuation of a traditional linear career, are also missing. Finally, there is also agency which materialises in many forms and at several (analytical) levels.

Furthermore, a novel working subjectivity is also emerging. However, this worker subjectivity is not institutionalised, all-pervasive and rigid. Instead it is rather flexible, with some core characteristics. What is more, it also allows for agency. In sum, there are numerous fundamental changes. In fact, there are so many deep-seated changes that I would question whether it is even meaningful to talk any longer of control in the context of *these* contemporary workplaces. *The structures of domination are simply absent in the organisations under study*. The entitative frame of reference, along with seeing an organisation or any part of it as a socio-technical system that can be engineered to meet the organisational needs and requirements of productivity, is

⁵⁹ For emancipatory politics, see Giddens, 1991, pp. 210-214.

obsolete. Instead, there are new ways of working, organising and managing. There are also novel ways of being a worker, seeing one's work and conducting one's work. These, in turn, are underpinned by lateral relations, professionalism, positivity and activeness. Altogether these make a contemporary organisation *a human activity system rather than a socio-technical one* (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15; Hosking and Morley, 1991, p. 215). In summary, there is agency with associated alternatives. There are escapes from conventional management; organisational structures; work mentality; and understanding of work in terms of career. Overall, there are escapes from preconceived constraints defining one's being as a worker. There are possibilities of saying "No" - of resisting and refusing - certain ways of being governed and of governing oneself, such as surveillance and documentation. In place of domination there are spaces of freedom. For that reason, *it is no longer meaningful or accurate to talk of organisational control rather than relations of power*. Furthermore, these power relations are essentially relational and involve an incorporation of subjectivity (Foucault, 1997, 2000).

Throughout the study, I have asked time after time if this operation of power via subjectivity in general, and worker subjectivity in particular, is merely another *mode of domination* in yet another disguise? In order to be able to answer this question, the distinction between power and control needs to be explored. Thus, how can one distinguish between power and control? *Control is basically understood as domination. Domination is essentially restraining; it limits the spaces of freedom and tries to close these up*. Furthermore, it does this externally – from outside the individual's self - and also typically in pre-structured ways. Power, on the other hand, entails spaces of freedom. It is productive and constructive. It entails a possibility of escape from control structures, i.e. structures of domination. What does this mean in practice? It means that *there is a possibility of saying "No" and acting accordingly*. Indeed, it means that one is not *forced* to speak, act or be any particular way. Instead, one has *alternatives, subjective choices* - subjective choices that also *materialise* in reality. In essence, a *relational view of power entails lateral relations and agency in terms of awareness, action and alternatives*. Finally, these are not fixed but occur in the context of continuous (creative) transformation (Humphreys, 1998, pp. 1-23).

Furthermore, according to Foucault “there cannot be relations of power unless the subjects are free” (1984e, p. 123 cited in O’Leary, 2002, p. 158.). Therefore, domination and power are two separate things, the former closing down spaces of freedom and the latter having freedom as its prerequisite. What are these spaces of freedom then? How do they materialise? “Power can only exist in a situation in which subjective choice is possible” (O’Leary, 2002, p. 158). Hence, freedom directly relates not only to alternatives but also to agency. Therefore, organisational control has also been examined by looking at the spaces of freedom left for workers in contemporary workplaces, particularly in terms of alternatives and agency. Domination, on the other hand, is a “pervasion of power... it is a violent closure of social and political relations” (ibid.) Power or power relations are always characterised by a more or less open play of ‘strategic games between liberties’, while states of domination are characterised by a shrinking space for freedom of action (ibid. p. 159). Fundamentally, freedom is a possibility of refusing unwanted forms of self-relation, as well as of resisting unwanted ways of being governed. It entails subjective choices, tangible alternatives and an ability to act accordingly. Hence, *freedom is a capacity to challenge the effects of both, power and domination*. As O’Leary puts it: “*Freedom is not a state for which we strive, it is a condition of our striving*; and as such it can also function as a yardstick for that striving” (2002, p. 158, emphasis added). The aim has been to explore and explain the particular modes of subjectivity and practices of the self that could be seen to contribute to opening up the space of freedom in the context of contemporary workplaces.

However, *freedom is a context-specific possibility* (ibid., p. 163). Therefore, the possibilities of transformative action and potential for continual transformation are examined in a particular context. They are examined in the surfacing of a new era (Castells, 1996). They are examined in the locality in which this novel episteme is antecedent. Furthermore, the pioneer industry of the information age is also interesting because of its *marginality*. It is currently *outside dominant institutional frameworks*, for example, in terms of trade union policies (Aula and Oksanen, 2000). In the light of past experience one would assume that if the workers were unhappy or felt repressed they would have unionised in some way – particularly given the instability and unpredictability of the industry. For these reasons, it is postulated that this particular context and marginal industry might offer workers the possibility of imagining and building new forms of relationship to others and to the self.

How then do these spaces of freedom materialise in the pioneer organisations of the information age? The results indicate that the workers have agency. Consequently, they also have alternatives both on the level of ideas and on the level of practices. In fact, this workers' agency is manifested in many tangible ways in the everyday life of contemporary organisations (as established in section 4.7). However, one might question whether the workers also have agency in relation to self-management, the cornerstone of contemporary worker subjectivity. Indeed, the workers are required to be self-managed to a certain extent, but this is not some dominant intuitional structure or norm with which they need to *comply* 100 percent. The meaning and practice of self-management also varies to some extent. The workers have agency and the associated possibility of saying "No"; they can for example say "No" to some core constituents of self-management such as creativity and initiative. Thus, agency is not completely forced upon the workers. Agency, by definition, entails possibilities and different subjective choices with regard to how it materialises. In the reality of everyday working it materialises in multiple ways, as explicated in the chapter on agency. People have a possibility of saying "No". In almost every instance they are heard, and in some cases this act of listening materialises, for example, as new office practices, products or projects. There are also factors that can be impacted upon to a lesser extent. These are the context-related factors, such as continuous change. These cannot be much transformed, except in terms of attitude. However, most matters can be *tangibly* altered. You might be able to even change your status from worker to owner. Thus, there are subjective choices, along with liberties, possibilities and alternatives, which materialise in the everyday organisational reality of working, organising and managing. Hence we are talking of actual, rather than potential, agency.

Are there spaces of freedom in the context of self-management? Thus, is there a viable alternative(s) to self-management? As stated, self-management is the predominant discourse in contemporary organisations; it is a practical way of organising and managing work. Its content varies somewhat, as does the extent to which it occurs. This means that not all workers manage themselves equally in practice, nor do they perceive or experience self-management in precisely the same manner. The way in which they take responsibilities, conduct their working day, tasks and projects is up to them. The fact that it is indeed largely up to the individual worker cannot be changed much.

However, the content of the work and the structuring of the everyday can be largely modified. One can ponder whether this is more liberating than external management with its associated control structures. The view taken is that *it is, because it allows more freedom in terms of acting on the self and on ones everyday reality*. Self-management allows liberties in the everyday construction of organisational life. It also allows, and to some extent even necessitates, agency. Self-management leaves spaces for freedom and allows escape from conventional structures and preconceived subjectivities. It allows creativity and transformation. It is also situation-sensitive, contextually dependent and historically specific. This means that spaces of freedom are not stable and fixed, but changing.

I have so far talked mainly of power, but what does this all mean in term of organisational control? How, precisely, has organisational control changed? In essence it is argued that control has changed in that *contemporary control operates directly through subjectivity and not indirectly through a system. There is no objectifying system but a subjectifying self, which is the core of contemporary control*. Thus, there is a change in the techniques of power from examination, normalising judgement and hierarchical observation to techniques of confession and self-examination. It is argued that it is not just the techniques of control that have changed, but that the power functioning in the premises of these techniques has also changed. There is a change from “disciplinary power” to “pastoral power” (Foucault, 2000, pp. 331-336). These two modern forms of power operate differently and this difference is closely associated with premises based on a different presupposition of a working subject. Thus, the understanding of the working subject is different. The operation of “disciplinary power” assumes a worker as a passive being, whereas the operation of “pastoral power” necessitates that the worker is active. Thus, along with the operation of power, the working subject has changed. Essentially, it is argued that the worker is no longer an object but has become a subject for him/herself. Subsequently, the locus of control has changed from external to residing internally. Therefore, the agent of control has also changed from external to internal - the agent of control has become the worker’s self. Therefore, the main way in which power operates is directly through the subjectivity of the worker, with the worker actively working upon the self (rather than indirectly through external techniques, systems and personnel imposing and forcing). Thus, in the pioneer organisations of the information age, the worker is treated, and treats

him/herself, as a subject rather than an object. The argument is that this is a novel premise for organising control. This is illustrated by the fact that contemporary workers have agency and, in practice, are self-managed. Finally, this is also reflected in organising as a whole in that there is no organisation as a socio-technical system, but self-managed agents in lateral relationships negotiating, co-operating and working together

5.2 Worker Subjectivity and Organisational Control in the Information Age

This section examines subjectivity and organisational control as they are played out in the pioneer organisations of the information age. First the disposition and structure of subjectivity is explored. Then contemporary worker subjectivity, agency and the agent of control are examined. Throughout, the focus lies, on the one hand, in examining worker subjectivity in the light of the findings from the contemporary organisations and, on the other hand, in exploring and deliberating upon the link between subjectivity, the self and organisational control.

5.2.1 The Disposition and Structure of Subjectivity

The results indicate that worker subjectivity is social. However, there is an interesting tension between the social and the individual throughout the study. This is also reflected in the understanding of subjectivity. To start with, the individual is emphasised not in him/herself but through the importance placed upon *character*. Character denotes a “good person” who fits into the organisation and the team, who is a professional and, essentially, a team worker. Furthermore, it appears that *more weight is given to the whole character than to any of a person’s specific characteristics, skills or abilities*. Character, however, is not a synonym for the individual in a conventional, autonomous sense (Townley, 1998). Character has intrinsically social attributes. These social attributes that are *innate* in a character include, for example, an ability to work with others, to negotiate and to co-operate. Thus, conventional individual and social attributes are mutually implicated, in that a “good character” is *inherently social*. This does not mean that a good character equals an outspoken extrovert. It means that the person is able to work, negotiate and co-operate with others and is *socially sensitive to situations and people*. This person is also able to communicate openly and honestly with others and to share information with them. Thus, the person is able to truly co-operate and work to the same ends as others. The social is also directly referred to, as social togetherness, organisational atmosphere and communal sense. This is made evident in the everyday way of operating and organising through negotiation and co-operation. Also, there are phenomena that are understood as essentially social rather than individual, such as enjoyment. There is also a social sensitivity which is repeatedly

referred to directly and indirectly. How can we understand this tension between the individual and the social in terms of subjectivity and worker subjectivity respectively? This question brings us to examine the structure of subjectivity.

What is the structure of subjectivity? Are there parts which are more individual and parts which are more social? Subjectivity can be divided into different levels, such as *intra-subjectivity*, *inter-subjectivity* and *extra-subjectivity* (see for example Wiley, 1988, in Ritzer, 1996, pp. 364-366). Subjectivity will be briefly discussed from a Foucauldian view using this taxonomy. The author proposes that from the Foucauldian viewpoint the *intra-subjective level* can be understood in the context of Foucault's later writings, in which the subject is considered as active and ethical, since the subject is able to work on the self and even to exercise freedom (Foucault, 1998a, pp. 281-302). Thus, in consequence, the subject can be said to have some personal agency, which in turn enables the subject to work on the self as well as to attempt to resist imposed subjectivities. This *personal struggle* against imposed subjectivities could exemplify *intra-subjectivity*. On the other hand, the subjects are in relationships with one another and these relationships are also relationships of power (Foucault, 1980, 2000). These social relationships and interactions in which the subject is engaged could be distinguished at an *inter-subjective level*. Finally, the subjects live in a particular society and culture at a historically specific time with particular discursive practices. These discursive practices, in the author's view, could be incorporated into the *extra-subjective level*. Nonetheless, this taxonomy could be said to be rather artificial, as all these aforementioned levels are intrinsically intertwined with one another as well as with power. For example, the 'technologies of the self' (intra-subjective) are 'prototypes' that the subject culture and society put forth (extra-subjective). The awareness and usage of these technologies is also impacted upon by the social relations and groups in which the person is enmeshed (inter-subjective).

However, rather than using this taxonomy to try and resolve the tension between the social and the individual, I align my view with that of Fiske (1987). Fiske posits that ultimately, "our subjectivity is not inherent in our individuality, our [biological] difference from other people, rather it is a *product* of various social agencies to which we are subject, and *thus is what we share with others*" (Fiske, 1987, p. 49). I would add to this Foucault's postulates that there is no escape from power/knowledge systems or

from one's context and history. Thus, *in essence subjectivity is social and also needs to be understood as a specific historical product rooted within particular circumstances and power relations* (more on section 1.3.2.2).

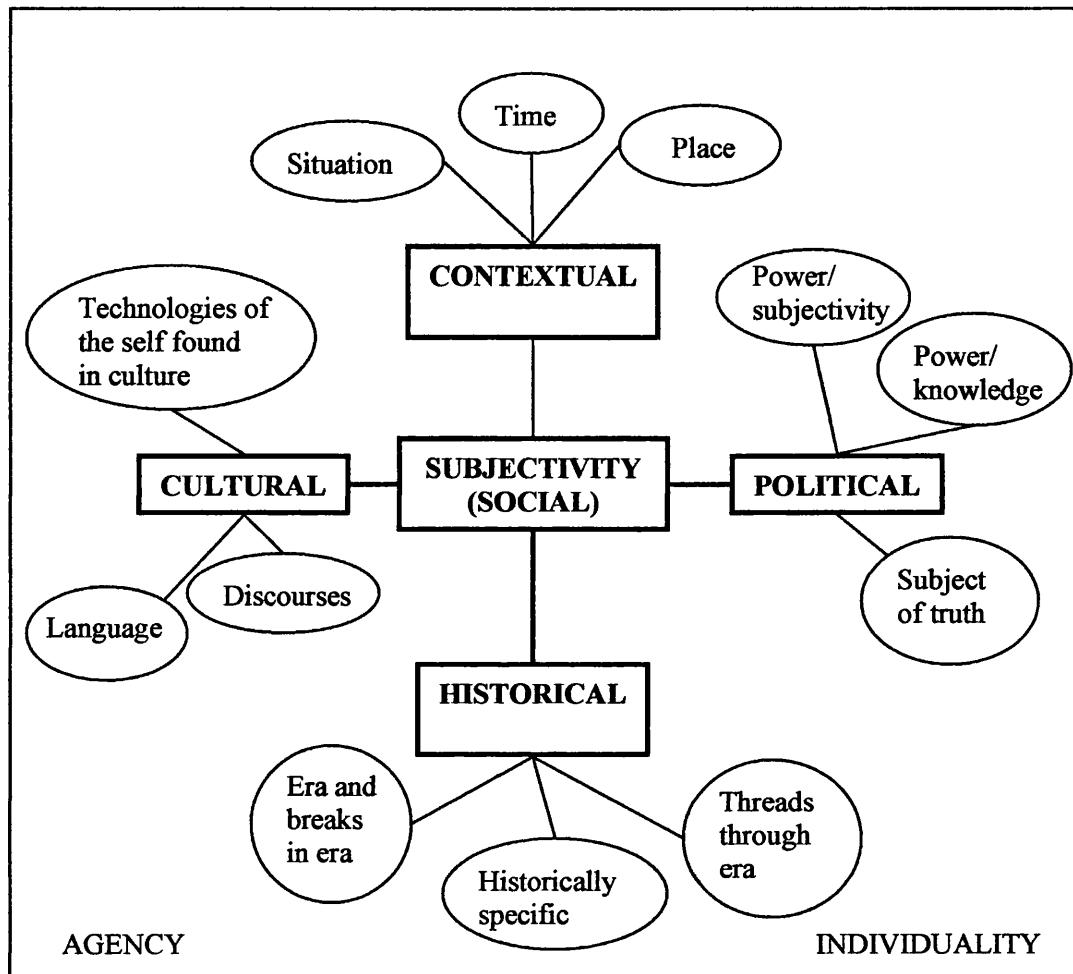


Figure 20: Subjectivity

What, then, is contemporary worker subjectivity in control of? Which of the previously discussed levels of subjectivity does it permeate? In the light of the results it is suggested that contemporary worker subjectivity permeates all levels, in that it is essentially social and communal, but also entails a sense of self and emphasis on subjective experiences. So, one can talk of *social subjectivity*. However, is not this emphasis on social character essentially manipulative and evaluative, a normative power play at its best? After all, the highlighting of social, rather than individual or structural attributes could merely illustrate that there is a shift from rational control to normative control (Barley and Kunda, 1992). It could be taken to indicate that contemporary workers' subjectivity is construed in terms of social and communal attributes rather than individual and structural ones; this would not even be occurring for the first time - after all we have already had Industrial Betterment, discourses

associated with the Human Relations Movement and a focus on Organisational Culture (Barley and Kunda, 1992, Guillén, 1994; Humphreys et al., 1996). How is this worker subjectivity different? The difference is that *the workers have agency; they have spaces of freedom and the possibility of constructing novel types of worker subjectivity and working reality*. What is more, they have actually already done this; the current way of organising work and viewing the self as a worker are already distinct. The workers are creative and innovative and have transformed the way of organising and working largely to their own liking, contra to predominant modes of organising and given ways of being a worker. The struggle itself is not fixed; it is constantly in process and transforming itself. Furthermore, *the struggle is materialised in everyday working, organising and managing in the pioneer organisations of the information age*. However, concluding that subjectivity is innately social does not mean that the tension between the individual and the social is solved - it remains. On one hand, the implication is that, with a change in premise from autonomous individual to essentially social subjectivity, the focus shifts to examining the *relational constitution of this subjectivity*. On the other hand, this very tension between the individual and the social is in itself an interesting area to explore further, and not only for researchers. It is also an interesting fragment for workers to explore in order to find spaces of freedom, novel experiences and new ways of relating to the self as a worker.

5.2.2. Subjectivity, Self and Control

It has previously been argued that “pastoral power” is operating in these pioneer organisations of the information age (in section 5.1). This form of power *operates directly through subjectivity*. Consequently the *contemporary worker is no longer an object but a subject, with a subjectivity upon which s/he can act*. Furthermore, s/he can do this actively and consciously and with specific techniques of confession and self-examination (Townley, 1998, pp. 191-211). Thus, contemporary workers have become agents of control. Contemporary workers are also self-managed. Self-management translates as self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-directedness, initiative and self-empowerment. All of these characteristics constituting self-management require *a sense of self*. Talking about them through personal experience also necessitates an *awareness of this sense of self*. Indeed, the workers are aware of their experiences and ways of operating. They also place high importance on their subjective experiences and feelings *per se*. What is more, *they constantly challenge and test the boundaries of the self*. This

is illustrated by the constant efforts to excel one's self and learn more. Thus, *work and working is understood in terms of self(ves), senses of self and experiences of the self*. It is not only positive experiences and their impact on the sense of self that are grasped. The negative implications of work for the self are also understood; working extra hours, living an excessively one-dimensional life and being in a constant hurry are all viewed negatively in terms of their impact on the self. Therefore, conscious efforts are made to change these. The self is consciously protected and thus, in this sense, *cared for*.

Exploring, excelling and sensing the self in turn require agency. Agency translates as the ability to challenge, question and act. Furthermore, agency in terms of action necessitates spaces of freedom in which struggle can take place and transformation materialise. Spaces of freedom also offer the possibility of trying out novel worker subjectivities, ways of relating to one's self and others as a worker. Finally, in the information-age organisations in which self-management materialises, the agent of control is the worker's self. Thus, the worker is the one above all controlling him/her self, rather than external control mechanisms or controller. However, where agency materialises, agent of control is a misleading term in that it implies negativity as if one was subduing oneself in the process of controlling oneself, in furtherance of external goals such as increased productivity. In fact this is not what the workers experience. The findings indicate that they take pleasure in work. Thus, rather than suggesting that all contemporary workers are masochists, I would suggest that the experience of agency and its tangible materialisation in everyday organisational life are to 'blame' for this enjoyment. In essence, it seems that agency, combined with interesting tasks, an enjoyable organisational atmosphere and a feeling of togetherness, enables workers to experience *pleasure at work*. Furthermore, the emphasis is on *experience* rather than structures. As expected, with a lack of formal structures, there is no tension between these structures, individual subjectivities and lateral social process. On-going relational processes and self-management have replaced structures. Rational thoughts and beliefs in structures have been replaced by the experience of this social togetherness and the experience of senses of the self. *Structures and human creative processes are thus no longer separate* (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). In pioneer organisations of the information age, the emphasis is on social togetherness, communal sense, shared experience and individual senses of self, rather than structural and organisational rationales. This is not just a verbal emphasis, but illustrated in everyday organising,

working and managing. The organisation does not function as a socio-technical system or entity separate from human activities and relational processes. As a consequence, workers cannot hide behind structures and associated positions and titles, but *need to be able to cope with reciprocity*, team-work, and co-operation on an everyday basis. As there are no formal structures, they need to participate in social processes on a rather equal basis, and to be seen *as they are*. This in turn requires social skills and sensitivity together with a strong sense of self, as the worker needs to be simultaneously self-managed, creative and enmeshed in constant lateral relational processes. There is personal autonomy, but also constant sociality. This co-existence of the two would be interesting to explore further. It seems that one way to do this, or indeed to attempt to get beyond it, would be through inter-subjective understanding and exploration.

We have been talking of contemporary *worker* subjectivity, but what, then, of contemporary *managerial* subjectivity? The results indicate (in section 4.4) that managerial subject positions have changed radically. The conventional manager is largely absent in contemporary organisations of the information age. Instead there is an increasing emphasis on self-management; in practice making the worker a manager of him/herself. Certainly there are still some managers. They are project managers and architects. However, these often change from one project to another and, as there are many simultaneous projects, the same person is likely to be simultaneously both a worker and a manager in different projects. In this sense, contemporary managerial subjectivity is rather multi-directional. In considering self-management as a form of management, the emphasis within a worker's subjectivity on self-management has increased. Looking at self-management from this angle, managerial subjectivity has come to be a substitute for worker subjectivity. Has worker subjectivity thus been replaced by managerial subjectivity? I would point to a fundamental difference in the subject position of a conventional manager and that of a self-managed worker. The conventional manager was the agent of control not over him/herself, but over others. S/he had power *over others*, supported by a superior position. On the other hand, s/he was also responsible to a more senior manager. Thus the relationship was potentially a structure of domination, in which the manager was a superior and could impact on the worker, but the worker could not impact to the same extent on the manager. Thus, the relationship was unequal. Also, reciprocity was not necessary. In contemporary organisations, workers tend equally to be self-managed. Also, they do not manage

others, but only themselves. Therefore, we cannot credibly talk of managerial subjectivity replacing worker subjectivity. It makes more sense to talk of a new contemporary worker subjectivity, essentially based upon self-management. Self-management in turn is enabled by professionalism, equality and agency.

Agency is the prerequisite of self-management; it is the premise of contemporary self-management. It is also an escape route from submissive worker subjectivity. However, it is one thing to have an idea of agency - an awareness of it, if you will. It is quite another actually to be able to change one's own surroundings and one's relationship to one's self. Indeed, the results indicate that contemporary workers have agency both on the level of ideas and in practice, in that they are able to change their own surroundings, influence others and work on the self. This requires an altogether new understanding of the worker; a presupposition of the worker as an active being, who is able to struggle and act upon the self and on one's surroundings. *Individual agency* is at the core of self-management. In addition, the possible presence of *collective agency* and the forms it takes in contemporary organisations would be an interesting area to research. Certainly, social sensitivity, trust, equality, togetherness and communal sense offer a fruitful premise for collective agency. However, the findings from this research indicate that the primary emphasis is on individual agency; this consists of self-management and the associated strong themes of *individual responsibility*, on the one hand, and *personal autonomy*, on the other.

What, if anything, do the core characteristics of worker subjectivity imply for the future? Could it be, for example, that the youthful outlook noted in the pioneer organisations of the information age is a forerunner of the way in which the next generation might experience their work? Perhaps enjoyment at work and diversity of experience will come more often to outweigh monetary and status-related rewards in the future. Maybe emotion, experience, communality and sociality will be at the core of future organising. Possibly, clearer conscious distinctions between home life and working life will be made, despite mobile phones, laptops and other technological advances which could allow the invasion of the private sphere by the professional. Possibly, work and working need to be freer and more fun in the future, in order to attract the young professionals of the information age. Workers might also like to have further possibilities of utilising their creativity. With regard to flexibility, on the other

hand, workers might not only adapt more themselves but also demand more flexibility, for example, in terms of working hours and distance work. The demand for flexibility is a function of context, but what if it is not so much the industrial context as the context of the information age that increasingly demands flexibility?

Nonetheless, contemporary worker subjectivity is not simply entirely rose-coloured, with upbeat characteristics of dynamism, innovation and flexibility; it also has a negative side - a side consisting of less popular characteristics (see figure below). Workers get *bored* easily, they constantly need new projects to avoid becoming jaded. Correspondingly, the majority cannot bear bureaucracy or inertia. Workers are *restless*; they need to be constantly on the move, often both mentally and physically. On the other hand, there is also the constant hurry and change, along with the lack of long-term perspective and predictability. In practice this is illustrated by the constant shortage of time experienced by the workers, entailing a lack of vision of the future, of feelings of security and stability, and of sufficient time to get absorbed in tasks. Overall, these factors contribute to *frustration*. Finally, there is an emphasis on excelling oneself, and on the importance of subjective experiences and feelings *per se*. Thus, in these senses *self-centredness* is prominently present.

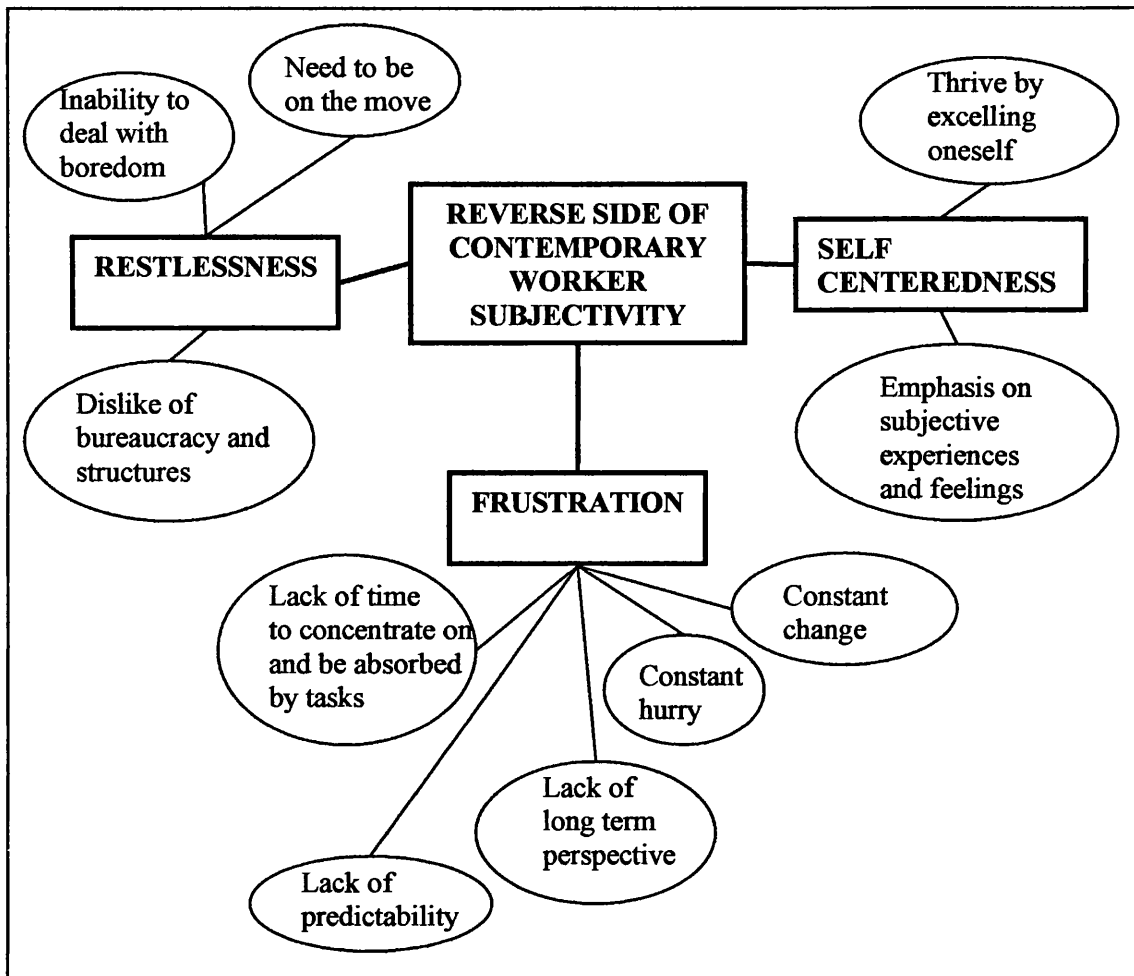


Figure 21: Negative Side of Contemporary Worker Subjectivity

However, that said the workers do not really strive for stability and predictability in that they have these at the top of their agendas. They are aware of the lack of these in the industry, but see factors such as innovating, autonomy and dynamism as more important. Indeed, these factors often provide the very reasons for working in this industry. Also, workers do experience excelling themselves to be of the essence and emphasise the importance of subjective experiences *per se*. However, they also emphasise the experiences of belonging, sharing and togetherness. They act on a daily basis in a manner likely to sustain or enhance enjoyment for all, not just for themselves. In fact, they have realised that there can be very little enjoyment of one's self without a good organisational and team atmosphere. Hence the importance of recruiting those "good characters" who *fit* with the organisation and their respective teams. Finally, despite common characteristics and themes, neither contemporary worker subjectivity nor its reverse side are fixed. Contemporary worker subjectivity is contextual and situational. It is enmeshed in the dynamics of the industry. This means

that it varies *according to* contextual changes. In this sense, it is more accurate to say that we are in fact talking of *contextual social subjectivity*.

How meaningful is the concept of worker subjectivity? Particularly if it is so contextual, why bother to consider it? In the author's view, it is a meaningful subject of examination, particularly in the absence of external control-mechanisms and in the context of the surfacing of a new era. Captivatingly, despite the hectic atmosphere and occasional chaos, there is no anarchy in contemporary organisations. In spite of the lack of external control mechanisms and associated authorities of control, there are no problems with control. Everyday organisational life does function; in fact it functions very well if you think of it, for example, in terms of workers' enjoyment and satisfaction. This raises the question of whether or not there is another, more subtle and subjective way of controlling the workers, a way which entails the incorporation of the worker's subjectivity. This has been examined by Rose as well as by Foucauldian Critical Management Scholars (see, for example, Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Fournier 1998; Knights and Willmott, 1999). Is worker subjectivity also the contemporary way of controlling workers? The empirical findings (in section 4.8) show that there is a contemporary worker subjectivity. Further, this worker subjectivity is different from its predecessors. Finally, there is also self-management founded on the premise of agency. This means that there is no encroaching worker subjectivity that subdues workers *per se*. Are there other control mechanisms? The findings of this research, at least, do not indicate the existence of any other control mechanisms such as systematic peer surveillance, strong leaders or electronic surveillance. In fact, all of the aforementioned are for the most part lacking in the organisations under examination. Finally, the contemporary presupposition of a worker departs from its predecessors. This is evidenced by *the presupposition of a person as more active, able, positive and autonomous* (O'Leary, 2002). It is also reflected in the way in which the way of working is understood as something self-managed, constantly changing, challenging and requiring learning, flexibility and initiative. This in turn is illustrated by the lack of external control and of monitoring, evaluation or assessment. How has this understanding come about? Probably the emergence of a new era has allowed some space to freedom for workers to experiment with different forms of worker subjectivity. Finally, the context is also different and demands different qualities from the worker, and the organisational actors in turn impact upon the context.

What might be the consequences of such an understanding of a person and associated techniques and practices? Contemporary worker subjectivity allows the elaboration of a sense of self. What does this mean? It means that subjective experiences and acting upon the self are aligned with contemporary worker subjectivity. Paradoxically, however, acting upon the self is a form of freedom. Therefore this begs the question: to what extent are these ways of acting upon the self imposed on workers, or indeed limited – and thus the freedom of workers in this respect restricted? “Technologies of the self” offer a way to work on the self (Foucault, 1997, pp. 223-252).⁶⁰ These techniques are based upon methods of self-examination and confession (Townley, 1998, p. 199). However, it is not argued that these ‘technologies of the self’ used for working on the self, are unique, novel or reside in the individual self. On the contrary, these practices are “...not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested, imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group” (Foucault, 1997, p. 291). Furthermore, ‘technologies of the self’ are also associated with a certain kind of domination, as they entail certain forms of training and modification of individuals, not only in the apparent sense of acquiring certain abilities but also in the sense of attaining particular attitudes (Foucault, 1997, p. 225). Thus, *it is our unwillingness to comply with given technologies that points to a space for freedom*. However, this does not mean that technologies of the self are merely forms of domination. In cases where these technologies impose a closure on social political relations, they indeed contribute to domination. However, to the extent that they produce identities, realities, practices and are underpinned by freedom, they are relationships of power. This also supports the suggestion that the contemporary context is characterised by power relations rather than relations of domination, as we are witnessing the emergence of a novel worker subjectivity, new practices for lateral relations and a novel presupposition of the working subject, along with novel ways of working on the self (more in 5.4.1. and 6.2).

⁶⁰ “*Technologies of the self*, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault, 1997, p. 225).

5.3 Organising and Organisational Control in the Information Age

In this section the focus is on exploring organising as it takes place in the pioneer organisations of the information age. First contemporary organising is explicated through the example of HRM system. Then the contextuality and situation-sensitivity of organising is illuminated. Finally the relationship between the working subject and organising is examined.

5.3.1 The Example of the HRM System

The contemporary HRM system epitomises the contemporary way of organising. What, then, is the contemporary way of organising? The contemporary way of organising is essentially unorganised. It is informal, unofficial, irregular and altogether unstructured. Furthermore, rather than a bureaucrat or an administrator, the agent of organising is the worker. Thus, workers are also self-managed in this regard. Workers are also equal in this respect - everyone takes part in organising control. Everyone also takes part in organising in a more general sense. In this sense *organising is a shared responsibility*. Organising is essentially based upon the sharing of information, knowledge and expertise. *The main way of organising is negotiation*. Thus self-managed workers largely negotiate among themselves how to organise and carry out projects. Correspondingly, the main way of working among self-managed professionals is co-operation. Hence, self-managed work and co-operation co-exist. People work by themselves but in constant reach of and in frequent dialogue with others; the change in the locus of control has also impacted on the way of organising and *vice versa*. Thus, rather than having a causal relationship, the two are mutually implicated. The change in organising has brought forth a change in the locus and mechanisms of control and, conversely, the change in locus of control has produced novel ways of organising.⁶¹

Organising is situation-sensitive and context-dependent. In order to be able to survive in a fluctuating and unpredictable industry, the companies are *amoebic*, constantly in the process of changing form. There are some prevailing characteristics, such as the flatness of organisations and the team-based, project-centred way of working. However, all in all, the unpredictability of the sector also makes organising an *ad hoc* and

⁶¹ Precisely because they are mutually implicated, it is impossible to say which came first.

spontaneous, rather than a planned, process. Furthermore, in the absence of organisational structures and hierarchies, organising is informal rather than formal. It is based upon co-operation rather than self-interest and bureaucracy. Correspondingly, it is based upon negotiation rather than delegation. Both of these relate to equality. Equality is founded on proficiency and individual agency. Thus, the workers have, on the one hand, expert knowledge that others need and, on the other hand, personal autonomy and agency. Together these form premises for the actualisation of equality. Given these premises and the contextual circumstances, the contemporary way of working and organising understandably highlights working together, sharing, trusting and respecting. If you cannot delegate and you need the input of others, you must negotiate. If you need to get the work done and you need others in the process, and you do not have power over these others, you must co-operate. This is also reflected in decision making and the way in which it is organised. The decision making is not rational, linear or bureaucratic; it is rather spontaneous, context- and situation-dependent, social and constantly in process.

There does not seem to be much control over the structure and process of organising *per se*. In fact there does not seem to be much structure *per se*. The view of organisation as an entity, a system, a structure is not commonplace in these pioneer organisations. In place of all these, there are people and their lateral relationships, which are changing in an amoebic manner within a turbulent context. Organising is centred on projects and on action. These contemporary organisations are thus human activity systems (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15; Mumford, 1983a, 1983b). Organising just occurs without anyone having control over it. This is illustrated by the fact that bureaucracy is at a minimum. Admittedly, companies still have managing directors and often also some other directors. However, they do not control or monitor the process of organising. How is it possible that no one has control over the organising processes and yet companies still exist and organising still takes place? Probably this flexible, creative way of organising leaves spaces for the materialisation of agency. This, combined with the practice of self-management and the willingness to co-operate, makes spontaneous organising possible. Also, short-term dedication, innovation and the demand for enjoyment impact upon the way in which organising takes place. The fact that workers demand constant challenges and learning experiences impacts on organising, as people have, for example, changes in their job descriptions. Thus it seems in essence that a

positive outlook on work and the contemporary way of organising are closely related and support one another. *Altogether, a contemporary organisation lives; it produces, reproduces and transforms itself on an everyday basis through reciprocal relational processes.* This is not to say that organisations were not previously made up of people and their relational processes. Indeed, they were. However, there was also bureaucracy and structures and, thus, fewer spaces for freedom and creative transformation (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3). There were systems *and* people (ibid.). However, in the pioneer organisations of the information age this split is gone.

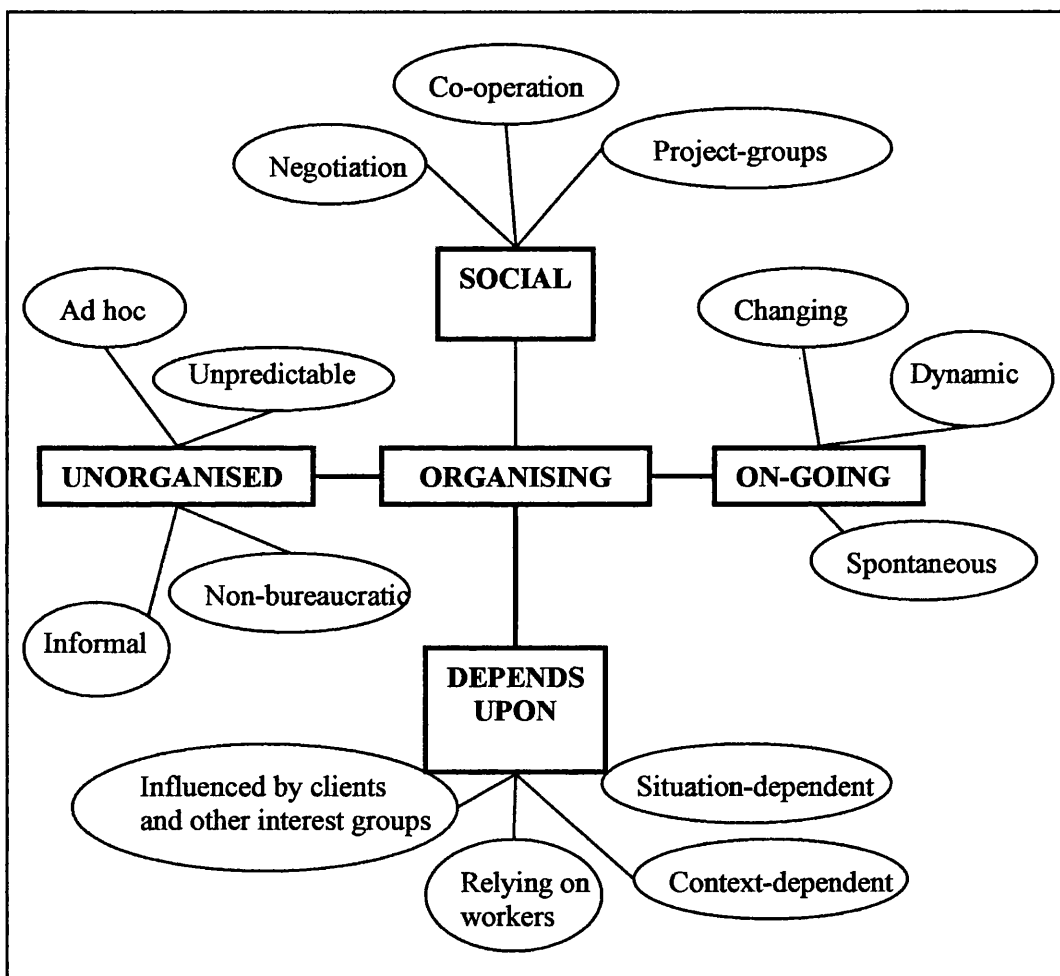


Figure 22: Organising

Contemporary organising is underpinned by a self-managed, positive outlook on work and by the intrinsic meaning attributed to work. The fact that work has intrinsic meaning, and that there are subjective values and aspirations related to work also *impacts on organising*. As workers are internally driven and motivated, they do not require surveillance and external control to the same extent. They are self-managed also in this respect. *The intrinsic meaning of work enables a particular way of organising*

that lacks external control procedures. Self-management, combined with workers' agency and professionalism, would be difficult to combine with organisational structures, groups and pre-structured ways of organising. However, organising is not only premised upon self-management and agency, but in reality is essentially a shared responsibility based upon reciprocal relational processes. Thus, can we talk of *solidarity* in the context of contemporary organising? As stated, people are self-managed, rather equal and have agency. They are also mutually dependent and aware of this, and hence co-operate. The organisational atmosphere is important, but even more important is excelling oneself and gaining experiences. Thus, we are not talking of a community made up of altruistic individuals who prioritise the pleasure of others over their own. The companies, despite their rather small size, consist of different professional sub-groups, project-based working groups and other small groupings. There is often a team spirit within these groupings. However, these groupings have different content and, despite some characteristics shared by all the groups, (namely the core characteristics of worker subjectivity), these groups do not together form one coherent community, like that of the hackers discussed by Himanen (2001, in Castells, 2001, pp. 41-52). They do have a *shared sense of togetherness*, but they do not form a community with a single set of beliefs, attitudes, values and visions more or less shared by all. There are some common premises for values, given this shared sense of togetherness. These are sociality, mutual trust, respect and reciprocity, to the relative neglect of the discourse of self-centred individuality. Thus there are *grounds* for communal sense and solidarity. However, in everyday organisational and industrial reality, there are many professional groupings and teams that have their own sense of togetherness and grounds for solidarity. All in all, in addition to a shared sense of togetherness and distinctiveness from other industries, there are also, within the industry and within the companies, many types of sub-group and division with their respective beliefs, values and life styles.

To conclude this discussion of contemporary organising and control, we can state that *negotiating is the organising principle*. Social and situational sensitivity are also present, thus *sensing and its prerequisite, sensitivity*, is required. Transparent operation based on open and honest communication is deemed essential. Then again, co-operation is the primary way of working among self-managed individuals. The on-going reciprocal social processes are at the core. All of this points in the direction of the inter-

subjective. Therefore, a call for the examination of organising as an inter-subjective phenomenon emerges (more on chapter 7). From an entitative view, the organisation is seen as an entity which is *distinct from the environment in which it exists* (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 40-42). It is merely affected by environmental factors, or *vice versa*, and not intrinsically nested in the environment (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 39-63.). However, the empirical findings cast strong doubts on such assumptions. They indicate that there are inbuilt interdependencies within the industry between the operators, mobile telephone producers and content-providing companies. Also, the turbulent and unpredictable industry is a way of life that impacts on everything, including organising. It impacts on the people working in the industry and the projects they carry out. Furthermore, it impacts on the ways of working, communicating, controlling, managing, deciding and, altogether, on the way of *organising*. Finally, in conventional organisational literature, organisation is seen as a system which is separate from people and their lateral relationships (Humphreys et al., 1996). However, this split is gone in contemporary organisations. There is no systemised way for controlling human resources, i.e. HRM. It is argued that in the pioneer organisations of the information age, control no longer operates indirectly through structures, systems and techniques. Control is no longer organised externally and supervised and exercised by superiors *over* subordinates. *Control is organised by workers themselves, for themselves* - literally. The control of subjects over themselves can be facilitated and supported, for example by some form of mutual checking, but it cannot be managed or controlled.

5.4 Emancipation and Organisational Control in the Information Age

This final section on results and discussion examines organisational control in terms of emancipation. Hence, it explores the ways in which contemporary workers of the information age are emancipated. Emancipation and control are first examined in relation to contemporary worker subjectivity. On the one hand, the focus is on examining the restrictiveness of contemporary worker subjectivity. On the other hand, it is on exploring the linkages between contemporary worker subjectivity and emancipation. This chapter also makes some concluding remarks on organisational control.

Organisational Control in the Information Age

Contemporary worker subjectivity can also be seen as constituting a control mechanism in a contemporary organisation, in that it defines some ways in which workers should be, behave and think in contemporary organisational settings. Therefore it is limiting, as it closes off some spaces of freedom for workers and limits the senses of self that workers can have in the realm of working life. On the other hand it can be seen as enabling and productive, since it enables workers to have a similar, even shared, understanding of how they should behave and be. It is also productive in that it makes workers produce and reproduce themselves and develop themselves in terms of certain characteristics and qualities. It also induces the senses of self associated with these. Thus, this worker subjectivity is not all-pervasive or a mere means of submission. Its core constituent is self-management, which in turn is underpinned by agency. In fact, contemporary worker subjectivity is centred on self-management. Furthermore, agency is closely linked to alternatives and spaces of freedom to escape from all-encompassing worker subjectivity. Altogether, given these changes, *it was argued that it is no longer meaningful and accurate to talk of organisational control rather than of relations of power which are also enabling and productive.* Thus, there is a shift from domination and associated control mechanisms to power relations that are productive, omnipresent and contextually and historically dependent.

Is this era, then, completely novel? In spite of many sweeping changes, this is not what is argued. There are legacies, also in terms of control, from previous organisational discourses such as Taylorism and those discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement that can be seen still to impact upon contemporary organising (Humphreys et al., 1996, pp. 1-3; 1998). There are still demands for efficiency, as in Taylorism. Then again, group working and the emphasis on the social-psychological reality of organisations have their roots in discourses associated with the Human Relations Movement (Guillén, 1994; O'Connor, 1999, pp. 223-256). The communal aspects were emphasised as early as the end of the 1800's in the Industrial Betterment phase (Barley and Kunda, 1992). There are also radical changes, such as the challenging of the classical worker-manager-owner triangle. In contemporary organisations of the information age, these relationships take many forms. What is more, often they are not fixed, but dynamic and changing. In sum, there is something old and something new in this era. In addition to novel ways of organising, working and managing, there are also *continuing threads from preceding eras*. These are manifested in legacies still present in contemporary organisations, despite their fresh rhetorical disguises (Humphreys, 1998, pp. 1-23). To summarise, we are witnessing the emergence of a new era (Castells, 1996, pp. 500-509; Castells, 2001, pp. 1-8). However, it is firmly rooted in history. This is exemplified by the continuation of threads, discourses and power/knowledge systems from previous eras.⁶²

5.4.1 The Emancipated Worker?

There was also one research question posed at the beginning of the study that required the examination of the results from all the other questions in a combinatory manner. This was:

Research Question	Specific Research Questions
Overall, 7. Can it be postulated from the way in which the subjects speak of themselves, of others and of their work, that rather than being repressed and restricted the workers are in fact enabled, liberated and, in short, emancipated?	Limited to: a) Examination of emancipation from organisational control b) Examination of ways in which emancipation might - or might not - manifest and materialise itself in the avant-garde professional organisations of a pioneer industry in the information age

⁶² As to why the surfacing of this era is important, Castells provides an extensive answer with his trilogy on the rise of a network era (Castells, 1996, 2001). The purpose here is not to summarise his accounts, but to point out that, from a Foucauldian frame of reference, the surfacing of an era is particularly interesting as it provides potential spaces of freedom to struggle, to transform and to try out novel subjectivities.

In order to answer the question, *the present day situation* in contemporary organisations is explored. In particular, the extent to which emancipation *already* takes place in the industry researched is examined. The findings show that the researched contemporary workers are already satisfied with their job description(s), position(s) and salary. Also, the contemporary worker is at present primarily responsible for controlling him/herself. Indeed, there is a contemporary worker subjectivity that can be seen as a control mechanism. However, this contemporary worker subjectivity has self-management at its core and agency among its premises. There is a conscious struggle against previously alleged subjectivities of, for example, bureaucracy. This is illustrated by a tangible everyday struggle against bureaucracy. It is also illustrated on the attitudinal level by a negative, avoiding attitude to bureaucracy and associated tendencies such as hierarchy, stratification and careerisation. Furthermore, there is already social togetherness in groups and teams and to a certain extent this is also an organisation-wide social togetherness. There are *premises* for a wider communal sentiment already present in contemporary organisations. These premises are trust, co-operation and equality. Correspondingly, manager-owner-worker relations have also been challenged and take multiple forms in the industry in question. Further, work is viewed in a positive manner, as enjoyable and fun. In addition, there are creative processes and innovating taking place. Also, in groups the whole production process is visible and workers can participate in it. The tasks are multi-faceted, changing, challenging and flexible and hence require constant learning. There are few monotonous tasks and a lack of rigid job descriptions and roles. The workers have expertise and autonomy. What is more, *they also acknowledge their value*. Likewise, they also know they depend on their colleagues to get the job done. All in all, the workers see themselves as self-managed. They experience themselves as having individual agency with the associated freedom and responsibility. The workers see their colleagues in a similar manner. This view, combined with proficiency, culminates in general respect for colleagues. The workers view their work as autonomous, responsible and challenging. Furthermore, they have a positive take on work. Throughout the interviewees' accounts, personal autonomy and responsibility come together and culminate in *the practice of self-management*. In essence, then, there is no talk of restrictions but only of responsibilities. There is no talk of submission but only of empowerment. There is no talk of domination but only of equality.

Examination of the findings in terms of control indicates the following. The/se workers are emancipated from organisational control, as understood in terms of Human Resource Management. They are emancipated from external control *per se*. They are emancipated from organisational structures, hierarchy and bureaucracy. They are emancipated from the systems thinking that has set them apart from the organisation. They are also liberated from the dominating structures and unequal power relations intrinsic to conventional management. The workers are largely emancipated from negative and serious conceptualisations of work. They are also emancipated from a limiting, linear, future-oriented understanding of work i.e. the idea of a career. The workers are emancipated in that they in fact have agency on an operative organisational level, within organisational social reality, as well as on the level of their work practices. On the level of an idea of agency, the workers consciously question their organisation and work practices; they are aware of themselves and of their surrounding and, finally, they talk of alternatives. On an operative level, the workers are able to affect and decide upon their own everyday working realities to the relative neglect of owner, managers or anyone else in the realm of the organisation. They also have agency which allows them to influence the organisational social reality; - the opportunity to influence others, as well as to impact upon some organisation-wide practices. They also have agency on the level of their everyday working practices. The workers can largely decide upon their working hours, job content, targets, and overall can impact on their own everyday working realities to a greater extent than anyone else. They also carry out work and projects which by and large enable self-expression and pleasure. The workers talk of themselves and others, on the one hand, as creative and innovative and, on the other hand, as enjoying and having fun. Finally, the workers are largely emancipated from the earlier worker subjectivities of the eras of production (alienated subjectivity) and consumption (self-actualising subjectivity) (Marx, 1884; Rose, 1999). Contemporary subjectivity, by contrast, is based upon a positive understanding of work, allowing the entrance of pleasure, play and enjoyment. Furthermore, this subjectivity is centred on agency, freedoms, enabling, inclusion and mutual negotiation. It is reflected in practices of self-management, co-operation and team work. It is illustrated by the ability to maintain an empowering atmosphere despite economic setbacks and fluctuations. However, this worker subjectivity is not all-encompassing and restrictive. It is merely centred on a few shared attitudes, ideals and practices. Its liberality and flexibility is illustrated in practice by the fact that workers in the different sub-groups have differing

interests, work preferences and ways of communicating, as well as different levels of participation. In addition to differences on the sub-group level, there are individual differences. Despite the individual differences, a discourse of individuality is largely lacking. On the contrary, there is a strong discourse of co-operation, negotiation and sociality.

Overall, the results show a lack of conventional structures and systems. This has contributed to spaces of freedom in the everyday organisational reality of the workers. It is epitomised by a novel worker subjectivity. In order to further explore these findings, contemporary (paid) work is examined through the concept of *alienation*. Thus, emancipation in the context of contemporary organisations of the information age is explored in terms of alienation. The core of Marx's concern was the oppressiveness of the capitalist system as it emerged from the Industrial Revolution; oppressiveness in the sense of treating labourers as profit-generating *commodities* took place, in his view, to the relative neglect of their treatment as *human beings* (Audi, 1995, p. 538, emphasis added; Ritzer, 1996, p. 27).⁶³ Marx believed that human beings were *naturally productive*. For him, this basic productivity represented the way in which the natural impulses of man were expressed. Furthermore, he saw people as *intrinsically social*, and thus that cooperation (working together) was necessary in order for people to produce what they needed in order to survive (Ritzer, 1996, p. pp. 27-28). He saw the different structural arrangements of various societies as interfering with these natural processes; however, in his view it was capitalism that was the culmination of the fundamental breakdown in these natural productive processes, since in capitalism "the natural interconnections between people and between people and what they produce were lost" (Ritzer, 1996, p. 28, see also Audi, 1995, p. 538). The consequence of this breakdown was, according to Marx, '*alienation*' (Marx, 1844, pp. 61-74).

⁶³ According to Giddens (1991, p. 197) capitalism commodifies in a variety of ways. As Marx revealed, abstract commodification functions as a premise for the expansion of capitalism as an overall production system. "Commodification crucially affects labour power: in fact, labour power as such only comes into existence when separated as a commodity from 'labour' as a whole". In addition, "commodification directly affects consumption processes, particularly with the maturation of capitalistic order. The establishment of standardised consumption patterns, promoted through advertising and other methods, becomes central to economic growth. In all of these senses commodification influences the project of the self and the establishing of life styles."

"The *devaluation* of the world of men is in direct proportion to the *increasing value* of the world of things. Labour produces not only commodities: it produces itself and the worker as a commodity - and this is at the same rate as it produces commodities in general. (...) the object which labour produces - labour's product - confronts it as *something alien*, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour, which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour realisation is its objectification. (...) this realisation of labour appears as a *loss of realisation* for the workers; objectification as a *loss of the object and bondage to it*; appropriation as *estrangement, as alienation*." (Marx, 1844, p. 63, emphasis in original)

Alienation is "a state of radical disharmony among individuals, between individuals and their own life activity or labour, and between individuals and their system of production"(Audi, 1995, p. 538). Marx reasoned the occurrence of alienation to be the two-class system into which capitalism had evolved (Ritzer, 1996, pp. 28) - the system whereby a small number of capitalists own the production process, the products as well as the time of those who work for them. Thus, instead of naturally producing for themselves, people produce unnaturally in a capitalist system for a small number of capitalists. Or, as Ritzer posits in interpreting Marx, "Capitalism is structure (or, more accurately, a series of structures) that erects barriers between an individual and the production process, the products of that process, and other people; ultimately, it even divides the individual himself or herself. This is the basic meaning of the concept of *alienation*" (ibid.).

Alienation and Contemporary Organisations of the Information Age

Let us next examine the applicability of the concept of alienation to contemporary organisations and current working practices, and how the Marxian conceptualisation of alienation can be understood in the context of contemporary work practices and workplaces. Some contemporary organisational theorists argue that, indeed, alienation is also present in modern workplaces, in the sense that organisational routines and structures are *split* from the creative practices and subjective experience of human subjects (Humphreys et al., 1996, p. 1). No doubt organisational literature points to this; however, the empirical results here indicate that this is *no longer* the case in the everyday reality of contemporary organisations. In the absence of systems and structures *per se*, the split between organisational structures and creative human practices has lost its relevance. Of course, there are still projects and tasks, but there is

no rationalisation of these independently of, or to the relative neglect of, creative human practices.

Furthermore, some contemporary organisational theorists argue that workers can develop themselves within their work only very narrowly and in a manner and direction suited to the organisation (Deetz, 1992; Knights and Willmott, 1999). This does not seem to be entirely the case here; as the organisation lacks direction and long-term perspective, it is actually the workers who, through their everyday operation, are shaping and mapping the future route. The point is acknowledged and, in the absence of overriding visions and missions, the common reality and future vision are constantly negotiated and reproduced. The future materialises, for example, in the projects selected, carried out and envisioned. Admittedly, professional specialisation is high and job descriptions require specific knowledge and know-how. The specialisation required in order to be able to carry out one's duties seems continuously to advance. This in turn means that workers need to specialise even more, i.e. they need to become 'experts' in their field. This in turn causes alienation, as understanding of and control over the whole production process is lost (Ritzer, 1996, pp. 27-28). Thus, in essence, the specialisation and associated fragmentation inhibit workers from being on familiar terms with the entire production process. Admittedly, the production process is not in the hands of one contemporary craftsman-type worker, but *the whole production process is often overseen in a project group*. Furthermore, each member of the respective project groups *needs* to have an idea of the whole production process in order to contribute adequately.

In addition, some contemporary theorists suggest that one can observe another type of alienation, whereby individuals, as a consequence of experiencing work as increasingly meaningful, become alienated from other sources of meaning in contemporary life (Fournier, 1998; Rose, 1989/1999).

“The new career model knows no boundary; it extends its logic to all domains. *All life experiences (leisure, social relationships...) are to be harnessed and translated into career opportunities*; and the movement is no longer constrained to the confines of one organisation, occupation or profession. The new career ostensibly breaks through all conventional barriers to open up a ‘world of opportunities’” (Fournier, 1998, pp. 54-55).

The authors arguing from this view emphasise that alienation is present at work and affects the everyday life as well as the identity of a modern/contemporary worker. Thus, alienation is not solely exemplified by the split between organisational processes and creative human practices, or by the specialisation and fragmentation of work, in which the connection to the whole production process is lost. In addition to these, current working practice such as employing the 'new career discourse' have *alienated modern individuals from other spheres of life such as family, social relations and leisure*' (Fournier, 1998). Similarly, Knights and Willmott hypothesise that in our time people who devote themselves to their work and 'career' have very little time for anything else in life (1999, p. 38-40; see also, Fournier, 1998, Rose, 1999). Thus, the more work is experienced as meaningful, the more time and energy is devoted to it, to the relative neglect of other spheres of life. Therefore, according to Wilmot and Knights, work has a negative effect, since it absorbs other sources of meaning and pleasure in life, such as family, marriage and leisure (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 38-40). In doing so, work becomes the increasing source of meaning and self-esteem in one's life (Knights and Willmott, 1999, p. 38-39). Taking this stance means that alienation is not solely estrangement from the natural production process, but also the alienation from the other meaningful sources of life promoted by current working practice.⁶⁴ However, in contemporary organisations workers seem to be conscious of the impact of work on the self and on the quality of life as a whole. For this reason they try, for example, to distinguish their spare time from their working time, and many succeed in this. Work and working is challenging, demanding and often stressful; however, it is not some mysterious self-actualising ritual or routine in which contemporary workers engage unconsciously and without agency. Contemporary workers are aware of the implications of work for their being and living, and thus consciously attempt to minimise the effects they perceive to be harmful for them.

⁶⁴ For more on the limiting consequences of work see for example Marcuse's '*one-dimensional man*' (1991).

In conclusion, the presupposition of a worker coming through is again *aware, active and able* rather than ignorant, passive and subdued. Also, contemporary workers seem to be emancipated in the sense that alienation is present to a lesser extent in contemporary work practices than in the practices of, for example, modern bureaucracies (Clegg, 1990, pp. 33-41). Thus, emancipation seems to be, in part, closely linked also to the absence of bureaucracy and its associated tendencies. This in turn points to a lack of rationalisation. This lack of rationalisation is illustrated by a lack of linearity and planning, as well as a lack of attempts at control. Linearity is lacking in decision making and in the way in which organising takes place. It is a matter of constant relational processes and amoebic organising rather than linear processes and stable structures. Decision making is a spontaneous and dynamic process. Intuition, feelings and experience are relied upon in the absence of data and in constantly changing circumstances and situations. Planning is lacking in general, and in its long-term forms in particular. Altogether, the attempt to order and control organising is at a minimum. There is frequent flux, dynamism and transformation; however, there is no general chaos. The archetypal illustration of rationalisation, i.e. bureaucracy, is absent. The absence of rationalisation is also illustrated by the findings which indicate that all of the characteristics supposedly avoided by rationalisation are in fact present in contemporary organisations. Hence, there is human emotion, communal sentiment and creative transformation. What is more, far from there being a loss of meaning or freedom in the social life of the organisation, these are brought to centre stage.

However, there are no findings of resistance taking place in these pioneer organisations of the information age. In the absence of explicit resistance, how can I, in all seriousness, argue that the workers are emancipated? Surely, lack of resistance indicates that contemporary workers are in fact suppressed? However, I argue that, like power and organising, resistance has also changed. *In the absence of socio-technical systems and structures and associated authorities and practices, there is hardly anything to resist –at least externally. To resist systems, institutions and authorities requires that those systems, institutions and authorities be present.* Furthermore, the Foucauldian understanding of power is intertwined with resistance, thus whenever there is power there are also the potential and the spaces for resistance (Foucault, 2000, pp. 342-348).

This is because power - unlike domination - requires freedom (Foucault, 2000, pp. 341; O'Leary, 2002, pp. 156-157). Thus, it is suggested that rather than looking for resistance in its traditional form as a coherent front against something definable, resistance in the information age is different; *it is a subtle, contextual struggle, the object of which is the subject itself*. It is a struggle to find novel senses of self along with spaces of freedom in terms of subjectivity and action. It is a struggle for the ability to construct one's everyday reality and subjective experiences.

But what leads one to believe that this is emancipation as opposed to yet another imaginative form of exploitive practice aligning the worker's subjectivity to work in order to boost productivity? The empirical evidence points out that there is a lack of external surveillance and control mechanisms. It is not just the structures and systems that are missing, but also the people with *the gaze* who are gone (Foucault, 1977). The conventional structures are also gone, in terms of the splits between structures and human practices and between the manager and the managed. Thus, there is self-management in place of external management. There is a positive attitude to work in place of a negative one. Work is enjoyed rather than detested or viewed as a necessary evil. Most importantly, there is agency. There is social sensitivity to the social reality of the 'organisation'. There are grounds for solidarity and communal sentiment. There is clear context- and situation-dependence and associated sensitivity to these. There is a change in the mode of power from domination to relational – pastoral - power. The relationships between worker, manager and owner are also challenged in practice. There is an emphasis on experience and feelings in place of reason and structures. The action remains central, but the way in which it is organised both individually and collectively has changed. There is innovation and creativity. There is a lack of discourses of self-interest and pervasive individuality. There is a strong emphasis on sociability, sensitivity and experience. The worker has materialised as an aware, active and able *subject*.

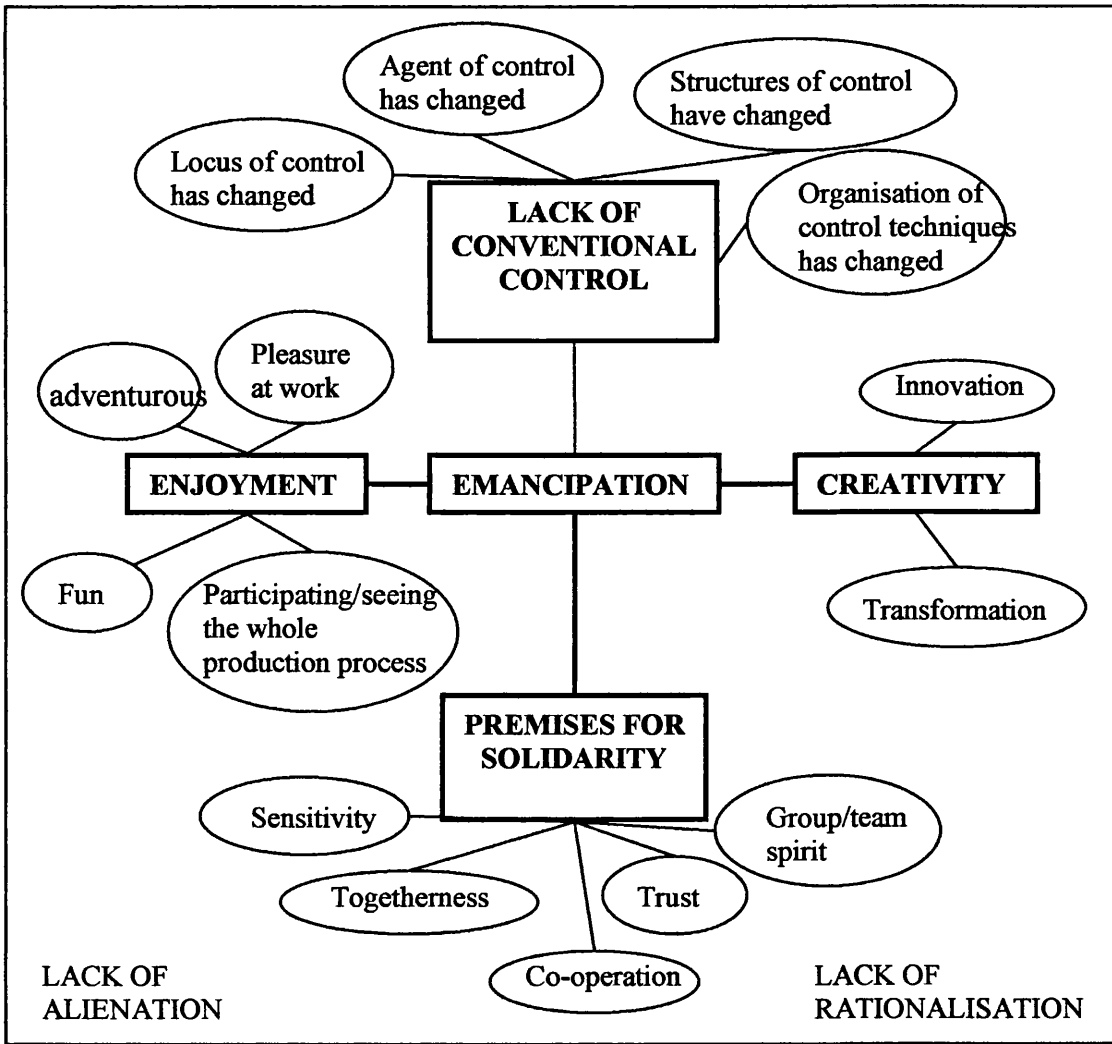


Figure 23: Contemporary Emancipation in Avant-garde Professional Work Organisations of the Information Age

IV Conclusions and Implications

This chapter consists of the conclusions of the study and their implications for organisational research. First the conclusions in terms of organisational control are drawn. Then, joint conclusions on power, subjectivity and organising in the pioneer organisations of the information age are elaborated upon. This is followed by a wrapping up of the core concepts of the study, namely: power, subjectivity, organising, control and emancipation. After this, the study is *problematized*, particularly in terms of the dangers it poses and the shortcomings it has in drawing on Foucault. Finally, some implications of the study for organisational research in general and the realms of organisational psychology and Foucauldian organisational studies are deliberated upon.

6. Conclusions from the Study

6.1 Conclusions on Organisational Control

The workers are *emancipated from conventional organisational control*, as understood in terms of Human Resource Management. Empirical evidence clearly points out that conventional HRM control mechanisms relying on external control are missing from contemporary organisations. Furthermore, the results indicate that HRM techniques, discourses, fads and language are largely absent. What is more, there is also an almost complete lack of HRM personnel and departments *per se*. In practice this means that the HRM personnel are no longer in particular organisational sites with their own departments, techniques and subordinates. Further, the supporting structures of hierarchy, management and bureaucracy are also largely absent. Thus, the HRM personnel no longer have their organisational positions backed up by specific titles and hierarchies, encapsulated in specific groups shown on organisational charts. HRM techniques themselves are also largely absent or used in an arbitrary manner. To sum up, there are no official HRM structures, standardised and stable subject positions, language or fads. Specialised discourses and jargon are also missing. Thus, there seems to be a rather clear lack of organised external control mechanisms and systems based upon HRM.

It is not just HRM methods that are absent, but workers are largely *emancipated from external control per se* and instead there is internal control. Thus, I argue that contemporary control operates in a different manner. I view this as being the case for three reasons. First of all, these new ways of controlling are *based upon different power and associated techniques*. Thus, instead of having their premise in “disciplinary power”, they are based upon “pastoral power” and require self-understanding and conscious working on the self, i.e. “the technologies of the self” in the forms of self-examination and confession. Thus, the types of technique that are used and the power that underpins them are different. They essentially *subjectify* the worker and make the worker a subject for him/herself. Secondly, this new way of controlling requires an altogether *different presupposition of the worker*. Instead of seeing the worker as passive and subjugated, the worker is now seen and, what is more, sees him/herself as someone who is active and has freedom and responsibility and agency. The worker has become *a subject in place of an object*. Thirdly, many of *the ways of organising have changed*. There is a lack of management, hierarchy and bureaucracy and, instead, a strong emphasis on informal social processes as the way of organising. This is exemplified by emphasising negotiation as a principal way of deciding, and co-operation, along with self-management, as an essential way of working. In the context where all the aforementioned have happened, *the way* in which contemporary control mechanisms operate is different from the conventional HRM-based control-mechanisms. Conventional HRM is a socio-technical system aimed at managing human resources. However, the contemporary workers who have become subjects for themselves can no longer be externally managed and controlled; therefore conventional HRM has become obsolete. Contemporary organising is no longer based on a view that organisation, or any part of it, is a socio-technical system that can be engineered and is independent of human social processes and relations. On the contrary, the contemporary organisation does not have systems, it *is* itself a human activity system, consisting of human processes and lateral, reciprocal social relations (Humphreys et al., 1996, p. 1-3; Checkland, 2000, pp. 5-15).

Thus, the workers are *emancipated from organisational structures, hierarchy and bureaucracy*. The findings clearly illustrate that organisational structures and creative human practices can no longer be viewed as independent entities (see also Humphreys et al., 1996). Also, relational processes such as negotiation and co-operation can no longer be ignored. *Organisations consist of creative human practices and multifaceted social*

processes and relations. Therefore, organisations *cannot* be viewed as unitary entities consisting of rather stable structures or as being autonomous from people as well as from their environment, but rather must be viewed as consisting of people and their social relations, to the relative neglect of structures. In consequence, we need to be talking of *organising, construction and process instead of organisation, entity and structures*. Furthermore, we need to start explicating how organisational reality is constructed and reconstructed on an everyday basis, as opposed to examining the organisation in terms of fixed organisational charts and stable entities and structures. We need to understand the omnipresence and ongoing nature of these social and relational processes, their context-dependence and, finally, their productive function in creating organisational reality.

Instead of decision making and management, we should talk of deciding and managing. This entails understanding the way of deciding as an *on-going process*. Furthermore, the way of deciding is essentially based upon negotiation. Thus it is innately social with a relative lack of individuals bossing each other around or delegating tasks. Management principally takes two forms in contemporary organisations. First of all, there is *self-management*, which is closely linked to personal autonomy and responsibility. Secondly, there are *relational processes* of managing everyday organisational life. I refer to negotiation, communication, co-operation and group work. These are largely lateral and take place *in the context of action*. These processes enable communal and shared organisational life in a context that is highly dynamic. Also, deciding in contemporary organisations is for the most part based upon negotiation rather than delegation. Finally, there is a striking lack of structures and discourses, which have conventionally both supported and legitimised management and hence in essence enabled its operation. Now these structures and discourses are absent, as is management in its conventional form. Instead of conventional management there is negotiation, co-operation and self-management. The '*agent of managing*' has largely changed from an external controller to the worker's self. This implies a significant change in the conception of a worker, from object to subject. Furthermore, this has implications for the understanding of power and control. Conventionally, management has been closely associated with external control, in that managers have in practice been the ones planning, exercising and overlooking the external control exercised within organisations. In the present day, external control has been superseded by techniques associated with internal control. This has culminated in practice in self-management, thereby making *the worker's self* the

locus of control. Thus, are we to draw the conclusion that everyone is now a manager? Or are we to reach the opposite conclusion, i.e. that management *per se* is disappearing? I suppose it depends on how we conceptualise management. However, the main point is that management is no longer present in a conventional form in contemporary organisations. Instead, different control mechanisms are in operation. It is argued that this again illustrates the disappearance of the organisation as a socio-technical system (Checkland, 1999, pp. 5-57; 2000, pp. 5-15; Hosking and Morley, 1991, p. 215). Thus, it is proposed that not only is HRM no longer run as a socio-technical system, but the whole concept of an organisation as a socio-technical system is becoming obsolete.

Conventionally, management has been substantiated by the understanding of power as the superior's *'power over'* the subordinate. However, in contemporary organisations where there is a lack of both hierarchy and conventional management, the operation of this type of power is, at best, difficult. Therefore, in order to understand how power operates in contemporary organisations, a different view of power is called for. Furthermore, it is not merely a reformulation of the manager's subject positions, but a vanishing of the conventional manager that we are witnessing in contemporary organisations. Finally, this cannot be explained in terms of expert power outweighing subject-position-based power. There are problems with both of these conceptualisations of power; the former assuming power to reside in the individual (functional-behaviourist view) and the latter seeing power as deriving from structures (radical-structuralist view). In consequence both are unable to view power as relational and omnipresent. The conventional views of power fail to capture organisational phenomena which are relational and inter-subjective. It is argued that contemporary organisational control mechanisms have their premises in "pastoral power" (Foucault, 2000, pp. 331-336). This power essentially subjectifies workers and thus functions by making them subjects who act upon their own selves and their own subjectivity. This presupposes a particular understanding of a worker – as a subject who is active and able.

Workers are *emancipated from a negative and serious conception of paid work*. A worker's basic understanding of work is positive; work is talked about as something which is rather enjoyable, at times is even fun. In short, work is perceived as yielding pleasure, as opposed to being innately negative and serious. Despite individual differences, as well as differences among the various professional groups of the industry, the basic understanding of work remains positive. This is peculiar, given the current

circumstances of the industry and many of its companies. The fact is that the industry is noticeably going downhill and many of the companies have laid off large numbers of their workforce. Work is talked about as having intrinsic value rather than instrumental value. This is illustrated by the emphasis on subjective experiences and feelings in place of external rewards and merits. All in all, the contemporary attitude to work and the value placed upon work are in sharp contrast to their conventional counterparts. Work is no longer viewed as innately negative, but as positive and every so often even enjoyable. Furthermore, it is no longer viewed as a dull compulsion but as an exciting opportunity. However, it is not merely the mindset that has changed but the practices of organising and the ways of working and managing. These *tangible changes* in everyday organising, managing and working give reason to believe that real changes have indeed taken place and are taking place. Thus, that there is not merely attitudinal change but also solid behavioural and organisational change.

The workers are also *emancipated from the limiting, linearly future-oriented understanding of work, i.e. the concept of a career*. Work is experienced as meaningful in itself. What is more, people acknowledge the effects of work on the self and on the quality of life as a whole. They are very conscious of these effects and in consequence *demand* interesting and challenging work. Also, contemporary workers explore their limits; they take pleasure in excelling themselves and seize opportunities for constant learning. In fact these, rather than money, career or status, are seen as the main motivators for work. That said, the workers are satisfied with their salaries and often do not even want a career. Their work-related aspirations also relate to experiences of excelling one's self and feelings that one is learning. All in all, subjective experiences and feelings time after time outweigh external and instrumental values, meanings and motivators. In essence, the way in which people understand and experience their work has changed. In consequence, the predominant model of working life, namely that of a career, is becoming obsolete. Accordingly, there is also a lack of supporting structures for a career, namely bureaucracy with its associated tendencies to hierarchy and stratification. *In place of the career, the predominant model of working life in contemporary organisations is self-management.*

The workers are *emancipated in that they in fact do have agency*. The agency of the contemporary worker is manifested in numerous ways, on four analytical levels. First of

all, it is illustrated on the level of an idea of agency. Secondly, it is demonstrated on an everyday operative level in deciding upon one's work and way(s) of working. Thirdly, it is verified in organisational social reality as an influence on others and on common organisational practices. Fourthly, it is manifested on the level of individual practices that enable self-expression and pleasure. All in all, the workers in these contemporary organisations have agency. They also have spaces of freedom and the possibility of escaping from conventional forms of being a worker. What is more, they are actually pursuing these getaways in their everyday working, managing and organising. However, this does not mean that the workers can take all matters into their own hands and change them as they please. There are also many matters upon which workers can only impact very little, such as the existence of project- and team-based work. Also, the industry's impact on the way of working is hard for individual workers to resist or alter, no matter how much they might be self-managed. This would require a different level of *collective* action.

The workers are largely *emancipated from the previous worker subjectivities* of the eras of production (alienated subjectivity), and consumption (self-actualising subjectivity) (Marx, 1887; Rose, 1999). They are also liberated from the bureaucratic subjectivity of rationalisation, which operated to the relative neglect of emotion, experience, creativity and communal sense (Weber, 1947, in Clegg, 1990). Thus, there is a novel worker subjectivity emerging in the information age. This worker subjectivity is different from its predecessors. It is based upon a constructive, even positive, understanding of work and correspondingly allows pleasure, play and enjoyment to enter. *Instead of being centred on restrained subjectivity or obedient personality, contemporary worker subjectivity is centred on agency.* In actuality this agency is illustrated as freedoms, as enabling, as inclusion and as mutual negotiation. It is reflected in the practices of self-management and team work among *equal* professional workers. There is also reciprocity and equality which are illustrated by open and honest communications and overall organisational transparency. These in turn impact upon the organisational atmosphere. This has culminated in the upholding of an empowering atmosphere at work despite economic setbacks and fluctuations. This in turn has further contributed to the sense of togetherness and communal sense.

However, this contemporary worker subjectivity is not all-encompassing or restrictive, but merely centred on a few shared attitudes and characteristics. These shared characteristics are *dedication, flexibility, proficiency and youthful outlook*. All of these are underpinned by a *positive attitude to work* and an emphasis on *social togetherness*. As stated, contemporary worker subjectivity, despite being distinct from its predecessors, is not all-encompassing. This is illustrated by the fact that workers have, for example, differing interests, work preferences and ways of communicating, as well as different levels of participation. Hence, there are individual differences as well as some variation among different professional groups. Furthermore, these differences are not considered as a deviation from the norm but, on the contrary, viewed as normal. Nevertheless, despite these differences in individual action and experiences, the discourse on individuality is rather weak. In contrast, there is a strong emphasis on co-operation, communication, sociability and negotiation, to the relative neglect of individuals experiencing themselves as self-contained entities.

All in all, there are several themes that cut across the findings of different research questions. To start with, the focus is on *sensing, understanding, organising, enjoying and being*. These words, *sensing, understanding and organising*, clearly refer to the inter-subjective. At the same time, there is hardly any talk of topics with which social psychology normally deals and which have also been used in organisational language and HRM terminology, such as values and attitudes. In fact, the utilisation of these terms in contemporary organisations is rare. What is underlined instead is *the way of operating*. This way of operating is referred to as open, transparent and honest. However, more than explaining and describing the end results of this way of operating, the workers focus on describing *how* something is, or *the way in which* it operates. *Understanding* and *sensing* are also emphasised. These concepts clearly lean towards social psychology. They also *lean towards the inter-subjective*, in that they are situated somewhere between individual subjectivities and the societal. Furthermore, new concepts are needed in order to describe them; concepts such as '*social sensitivity*' and '*situational sensitivity*'. Finally, these inter-subjective themes are not just in the air, but *contextual* and *situational*, and thus clearly dependent on time and place. Finally, there is a strong *discourse on people*, as, throughout the accounts, workers are time after time referred to as people and human beings rather than workers. People are also often called by their names or nicknames,

highlighting personhood as opposed to worker identity or work-related subject position in the organisation.

Now, do such findings not lead us to the conclusion that we are in fact seeing a contemporary embodiment of normative control? What better to epitomise this than the constant talk of human beings and people as opposed to workers and employees? Is not Rose correct in his arguments that the subjectivity of the person has been aligned to work and the person, as opposed to becoming emancipated from work, has become fulfilled in it (Rose, 1989, pp. 103-104)? Am I in all seriousness countering this argument and suggesting that, instead, the workers of the contemporary era are emancipated? *No, I am not saying that workers are wholly emancipated and that contemporary work and working do not incorporate many kinds of problems.* Nor am I naively suggesting that work is all good, without harm or trouble, and that the future of work is enlightened, saved and altogether wonderful. What I am suggesting is that *we should also be able to examine work from a more constructive stance.* That is to say, that we should not merely see work as an embodiment of evil, as a manifestation of struggle and repression, but as something which can also yield pleasure in the doing. Indeed, we can also see it as something which can enable us to utilise our *productive agency*. Essentially, the empirical findings clearly point out that there are other aspects to work than the merely economic (Marx, 1884, 1967). Furthermore, these other aspects are strong in their influence on contemporary work, working and worker, and thus cannot be ignored.

Thus, the joint findings from the working propositions indicate that *in addition to the economic aspect, work also has several other aspects.* In fact, these other aspects emerge time after time as those which constitute the contemporary meaning of work. In essence, workers draw on the intrinsic, as opposed to the instrumental, meaning of work. What, then, are these other aspects of work? Through work we can have a set of social relations that are different to the social relations in which we are enmeshed in our spare time, on our own or at home with the family. Work also gives us an ability to develop and put into practice our knowledge and expertise, to further develop our knowledge in other contexts, namely in the context of work and the work place (Wilenius, 1981, pp. 18-21). It enables us to belong to an organisation and learn organising skills and to take part in relational processes (Morgan, 1997, pp. 141-145; see also, Hosking and Morley, 1991; Weick, 1995). It also adds another dimension to our social subjectivity (Fiske, 1987). All

in all, it gives us an opportunity to be enmeshed in another type of social relations, culture and power/knowledge systems (Knights and Willmott, 1999). It gives us the opportunity to put our being into different context(s), test the different roles and express the different sides of the self, and hence to experience different senses of the self. Likewise, it enables us to produce novel working selves and to construct fresh senses of self. "I don't feel like it is necessary to know exactly what I am. *The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning...* All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions and show which space of freedom we can still enjoy and how many changes can still be made" (Foucault, 1988b, 9, 11, emphasis added). Also, work enables us to take on and explore different roles and identities. Agency, among other things, also enables us to *play* with these different roles and identities. Finally, viewing work from a constructive stance opens up a possibility of seeing that people can indeed enjoy working, relating, playing and being, also in the work context(s).

Therefore, we ought also to incorporate the constructive elements of work into the analysis. This entails abandoning the possible negative twist that research on work can instinctively take, due to the innately negative connotation that work *per se* tends to have. Furthermore, *this entails including in the analysis the concept of agency and emancipation*. In more pragmatic terms this necessitates asking questions that also give the respondent the possibility of explicating their positive experiences of work. Hence, the methodological implication is simply that, as with any other research topic, we should treat the negative twist as a bias and try to avoid it. After all, it would be dangerous to have a bias functioning in the premises of research conducted on work. This is even more dangerous if it is taken for granted and disguised as truth and normality. This said, going to the other extreme is equally dangerous. Therefore, the claims of emancipation and associated freedom need to be carefully scrutinised and empirically validated.

Another theme that cuts across the findings from all the research questions is the *activeness of the worker*. This activity of the working subject comes across, for example, in the form of self-management, participative group work and agency. The implication of these research findings is that *workers should be viewed as more active and able*, instead of passive and repressed. As stated, the results indicate that workers have agency and are

largely self-managed and altogether active and able. Furthermore, this is not the privilege of a few but the normality for all. Finally, *we should not undermine the social relations, practices and processes*. In terms of research this simply means that we should not examine individuals in isolation and attempt merely to explicate individual experiences. We should also examine their relationship to others and, in a nutshell, *explore how they relate to each other and in what ways this occurs*. We can do this, for example, by examining individuals working, meeting or communicating with others in everyday organisational context(s).⁶⁵ Finally, there can be many theoretical frames of reference, but those which enable the incorporation of the constructive and social aspect of organising and work ought certainly to be included. To end, there is *the particular point of time in history, the situation and the moment, all of which culminate into examining the relation and impact of the context to the phenomena under research* (Flick, 1998; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000).

The results distinctly indicate that contemporary work, workers and organisations cannot be interpreted without including agency in the analysis. Does this then mean that workers are indeed emancipated? Well, agency does not in itself provide sufficient evidence of emancipation. However, when combined with the results of the other five research questions, each of which separately clearly indicates that the conventional control structures and restrictions have disappeared, it is difficult to argue that there is *not* some level of emancipation. Thus, it is the consistent lack of organisational control mechanisms and the disappearance of conventional splits, combined with the clear illustrations of agency, which together point in the direction of emancipation. Emancipation does not mean that people are situated outside power/knowledge structures, but that *novel ways of being and expressing agency in a particular context and at a particular historical point in time have emerged*. These escape conventional organisational control and its associated structures and challenge conventional notions of power and control. However, we are always enmeshed in and partly produced by our

⁶⁵ This can be done by examining and exploring the frequency, type or quality of the interaction. We can also examine the way in which people in organisational settings communicate with each other in company corridors as well as in official meetings or situations where external parties are involved, and look for discrepancies and/or commonalities. We can examine the ways in which they email each other or what sort of text messages they send. We can monitor what is discussed on company chat lines or put on notice boards. However, it is not just research on organisational communications that I am bringing out; in addition, *attitudes, values and action* in relation to others could also be examined. In asking about attitudes, both spontaneous and assisted questions on organisational atmosphere, colleagues, ways of communicating and interacting could be included; these can be probed both directly and in a more indirect manner.

time, history, culture and social relations. This is inescapable (Foucault, 1997, 2000). Also, despite the fact that there is no escape in this sense from discursive power/knowledge structures, emancipation can be seen as having different senses of the self and as expressing these via action, i.e. agency. In examining Foucault's all-embracing power-knowledge systems, it is important to bear in mind that power is also positive and productive, and thus not just an all-inclusive restraining and subduing force that represses and alters subjects as it pleases (Foucault, 2000). Foucault's power structures are like structures of reality, explicating the relational processes and power/knowledge systems that shape the way we think of, experience, relate to and govern both ourselves and others.

6.2 Conclusions on Power, Subjectivity and Organising

In jointly examining the results in terms of power, subjectivity and organising the following conclusions emerge. To start with power: conventionally power has been seen as residing in the individual or deriving from structures (Kearins, 1996, pp. 1-7). Overall, power has been seen as visible and external. It has also often been viewed in terms of domination, control and restrictions, i.e. as negative, particularly for the ones governed. It has been argued here that in order to grasp organisational control in contemporary organisations a different understanding of power is needed. Conventionally, the locus of organisational control has been above all external. Correspondingly, the agent of control has also been external to the worker, i.e. the manager and/or the owner. Management has been substantiated by the conventional understanding of the power of a superior *over* the subordinate. Essentially, power has been equated with external means of control and modes of domination; hence the negative understanding of power. However, in contemporary organisations there is a lack of these external means of control and modes of domination. In their place is self-management, with its associated freedom, responsibility and agency. Thus, in the context of contemporary workplaces this negative understanding of power as domination is difficult to locate. Therefore, we need to draw upon a different view of power relations and the way in which they operate. From this stance *power is viewed as relational, productive, enabling and as contextually and historically dependent*. The power referred to is "pastoral power", which operates by subjectifying the object and thus by making the subject an object for him/herself (Foucault, 2000, pp. 331-336). The subject then acts upon the self through the "technologies of the self", namely confession and self-examination. Peculiarly, in the

context of the pioneer organisations of the information age, these techniques are taking new forms. Confession is *mutual confession* (and approval-seeking) in projects and professional groups. This takes place through negotiation and sharing. It is delicate and therefore social sensitivity and social abilities are required. In addition to self-examination, others are also checked for comparison, hence there is also *mutual checking* taking place in these organisations. Thus, there are *new forms of lateral pastoral power* developing. This is consistent with the new presupposition of a worker as a subject, in that subjects cannot be externally controlled - only objects can. However, the self-control of subjects can be facilitated. It is proposed that these new developing forms of pastoral power are precisely indications of these novel ways of laterally facilitating the subjects' practices of self-control. Thus, a contemporary working subject manages and controls him/herself, but this is facilitated by lateral and contextual means (such as open-plan offices).

With regard to subjectivity, the results show that contemporary worker subjectivity is social. This is illustrated by the fact that social attributes such as an ability to work together, to negotiate and to co-operate are seen as innate in the characters working in the industry. The results point out that contemporary worker subjectivity is essentially social, partly communal, and also entails a sense of self. Therefore, it can be said to permeate intra-subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and extra-subjectivity. Is this not complete manipulation? Are we witnessing the emergence of contemporary discourses which have made the worker fully believe in the illusion of freedom and to which the researcher in this study also contributes? There are clear empirical results that indicate that this is not the case. If this is not the case, how, then, is this worker subjectivity different? The difference is that the workers have agency. Agency translates as the ability to challenge, question and act. Furthermore agency, in terms of action, necessitates spaces of freedom where the struggle can take place and transformation can materialise. Agency is the prerequisite of self-management; it is the premise of contemporary self-management. It is also the escape route from submissive worker subjectivity. Contemporary workers have spaces of freedom and the possibility of constructing novel types of worker subjectivities and working realities. What is more, they have actually *already* been doing this, and the struggle continues. The struggle materialises in everyday working, organising and managing in the contemporary organisations of the information age. Why, then, examine worker subjectivity? Despite the materialisation of agency, it is

meaningful to examine contemporary worker subjectivity because of the lack of other control-mechanisms.

With regard to organising, the results show that the contemporary HRM system epitomises the contemporary way of organising. What, then, is the contemporary way of organising? It is essentially unorganised. It is informal, unofficial, irregular and altogether unstructured. It is essentially based upon the sharing of information, knowledge and expertise. The main way of organising is negotiation. Organising is situation-sensitive and context-dependent. The contemporary way of working and organising highlight working together, sharing, trusting and respecting. However, this does not necessarily point to some mysterious rise of humanism. It can be interpreted as a commonsensical reality, in that if you need the input of others and you cannot delegate, you must negotiate. Likewise, if you need to get the work done, need others in the process and do not have power over them, you must co-operate. There is a lack of control over the structure and process of organising *per se*. There is a lack of entitative and socio-technical thinking and practices. The extent to which emancipation *already* takes place has been examined. The findings indicate that there is a lack of external surveillance and control mechanisms. Instead, there is an emphasis on experience and feelings and on reciprocal relational processes. There is innovation and creativity. There are *premises for* communal sentiment. There is also situational sensitivity. Work is enjoyed and viewed from a constructive stance. Altogether there is a strong emphasis on sociality, sensitivity, and experience. Furthermore, rather than being merely alienated puppets of the system, contemporary workers are conscious of the impact of work on the self and on the quality of life as a whole. Thus, contemporary workers are aware of the implications of work for their being and living, and consciously attempt to minimise the effects they perceive to be harmful for them. It would be interesting to research whether or not contemporary workers take *care of the self*. Workers do not talk explicitly of ethics or morals, but instead have a very *pragmatic orientation* to work. This is also illustrated by the fact that the implications of work for the self and for life as a whole are discussed in a very tangible form and exemplified by not taking work home or by leaving the office at a certain time. However, these practices could be interpreted as taking care of the self. It would be interesting to research whether *contemporary workers consciously use the spaces of freedom in order to take care of the self*. Furthermore, do

they also use the spaces of freedom to enhance the ability of others to do the same? Basically, can we talk of *ethical* working subjects?

Finally, Castells, in his exceptional accounts of the rise of a network era, argues that in the network era the main way of organising is networking (Castells, 1996, 2001, pp. 1-2). However, these results indicate that contemporary organising in the pioneer organisations of the information age is more than networking and networks. Contemporary organising is laterally reciprocal and social. It is above all informal and *ad hoc*, essentially based on co-operation and on self-control. Castells views networks as communication structures that are rather systematic and professional yet adaptable and flexible (*ibid.*). However, these findings suggest that networks are much more lateral, reciprocal and human than Castells presupposes. Also, networks are above all personal and, rather than sharing knowledge, centred on sharing activities, on working and doing together. Thus, we can talk of *lateral human activity networks*. All in all, it seems that a new system for organising is emerging, which is beyond the internalisation of discourses and utilisation of external networks.

6.3 Dangers and Problematisations

In taking a Foucauldian view, one must also consider the *problematisations* and possible *dangers* that the propositions presented in this study can bring up. I shall start by problematising a phenomenon underpinning psychology in general, including organisational psychology, namely *understanding*. This is followed by a brief discussion of the possible dangers of talking of emancipation and associated freedom. Finally, some of the shortcomings of Foucault's later accounts are discussed.

Shifting attention to explicating human experience, and in particular to *understanding* human experience, poses its own dangers. First of all, private experience thus becomes known. This experience can become a part of political games and objects of manipulation (Rose, 1999). It becomes known to both the researcher and the research subject, who before all the probing might have been not so aware of his/her experience. The experience becomes something which is explored and explicated. It becomes something which is scrutinised and placed under examination (Foucault, 1977). It becomes something which is interpreted and given possible interpretative frameworks. It is put into the context of a particular frame of reference and specific explications,

conceptualisations and theories, and linked to these. In fact, the experience is explicated through these categories, concepts and theories and becomes known *only* through these. Thus, it becomes linguistic, observable, documented and altogether more *governed*. Foucauldian understanding does not provide any exception to the rule. By drawing on a Foucauldian frame of reference we also develop a particular reading of reality, individual, and history. This reading excludes other readings and closes off other interpretations. This closing down of alternatives is dangerous, as it limits the other ways of reading and seeing human existence and associated possibilities. For this reason, self-criticism, awareness and reflexivity are required (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; and sections 3.3.4 and 7.2 of the thesis).

Taking a Foucauldian view, one must also consider the problematisations and possible *dangers* that putting forward such postulates on emancipation can lead to. Talking of workers' emancipation, liberating practices along with agency is dangerous in the sense that it can be used to prevent further spaces of freedom being opened up for workers. It can also be used out of context to justify the position of contemporary workers. On the other hand, in the light of the foresight provided, there might be resistance to similar changes happening in other industries; after all, workers are here becoming self-managed at the expense of administrative staff and middle management. Then again, talking of emancipation can be empowering in itself, particularly as it is associated with a positive view of work and actual agency. Also, identifying the practical use of agency in contemporary organisations and distinguishing the premises present for collective agency can be empowering.

Finally, not only are problematisations very Foucauldian, but there are also problems in Foucault's own account. These have been thoroughly argued from both sides by distinguished scholars, and the debate continues (Giddens, 1991, p. 160, 162; Hoy, 1986b, p. 11, cited in Berard, 1999, p. 210). The purpose here is not to summarise this debate but to point out a few significant shortcomings and inadequacies in an attempt to understand the contemporary worker by drawing on later Foucault. The main problem faced in this study is the lack of explicit discussion by Foucault of *agency* and its implications for reality. This is indeed a serious deficit, as it leaves room for interpretation of the location, as well as the materialisation, of agency in the midst of power, subjectivity, knowledge, truth, technologies of the self and spaces of freedom. In

fact, it would have been interesting to know what comes after “care of the self” and, indeed, how care of the self is even possible in the first place without some form of individual agency.

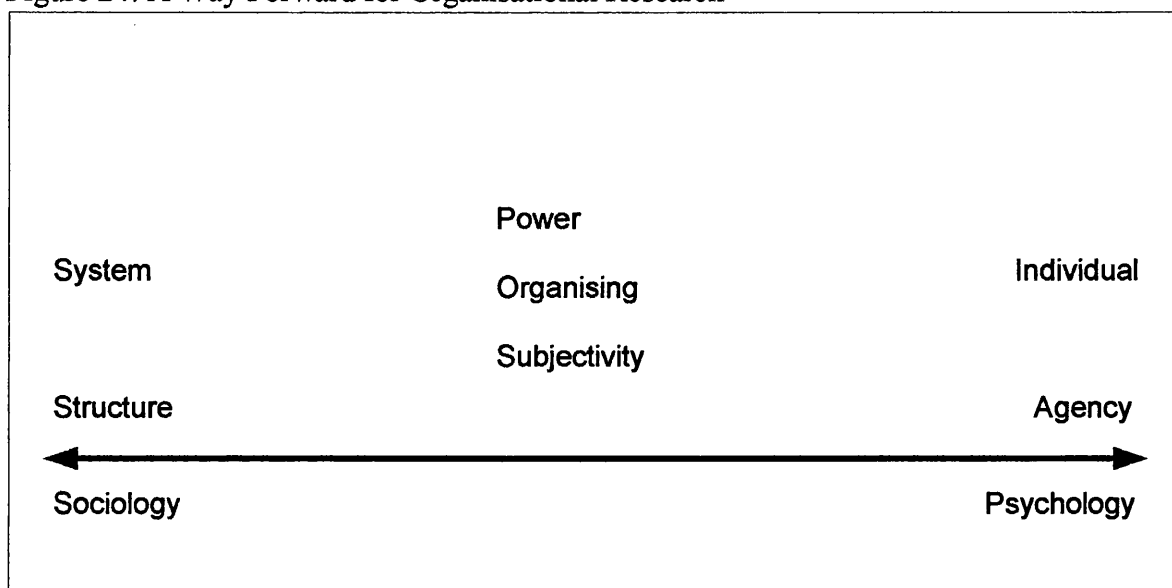
Why is struggle preferable to submission? This is another important question to which Foucault does not provide a direct answer. Indeed, this is precisely the reason why many major social theorists, such as Habermas and Giddens, cast doubt on Foucault’s work. Instead of giving a normative justification for resistance and rationales for why people struggle, Foucault merely describes *how resistance comes about* (O’Leary, 2002, pp. 155-156). “It is not a question of advocating such resistance, of praising autonomy or blaming domination as respective exemplars of good and evil for all... ” (Patton, 1994, p. 69, cited in O’Leary, 2002, p. 156). Indeed, understanding is at the core and, rather than using Foucault to justify and explicate the reasons why there should be resistance, Foucault can be used as a tool for understanding *how* such struggles take place. In this study the purpose has not been to explain why contemporary workers struggle against conventional subjectivities and associated ways of working, organising and managing, but to explain and explore *how* people struggle in one of the forerunner industries of the leading information society in the world. This in turn can yield tactical hints on how contemporary workers might be able to struggle against previously alleged worker subjectivities as well as conventional ways of organising their own control.

7. Implications for Organisational Research

7.1 Organisational Psychology in the Information Age

The new era has indeed brought out many novel questions. These empirical findings show that there are many significant changes taking place in the current period. It is indeed a new era (Castells, 1996). In order to research, analyse, interpret and theorise this new era, we need new tools. These tools are, for example, new conceptualisations and problematisations. The empirical evidence clearly points out that, in order to understand and be able to accurately research this era, we need to re-conceptualise some of the core notions of organisational research in general and organisational psychology in particular - namely: the notions of work, organisation, power and the working subject. What is more, the results indicate that contemporary work, workers and organisations cannot be interpreted without including agency in the analysis. The other problem is that organisational psychology largely fails to take into account *what lies between the system and the individual*. These research results point, time after time, to *the social and the relational*. On the other hand, the results point to the importance of contextuality and situationality. In other words, they signify that it is precisely the *realms of the relational, the contextual and the inter-subjective which are of essence* (see also, Hosking and Morley, 1991; Weick, 1995; Humphreys et al., 1996).

Figure 24: A Way Forward for Organisational Research



Prior to the numerous accounts drawing on Foucault, power, subjectivity and their interrelation were little researched in the fields of social and organisational psychology. This is perhaps because of the belief that subjectivity is for the psychologist and power for the sociologist to examine. Due to this belief, power and subjectivity are little examined from an inter-subjective stance. However, the empirical evidence suggests that power and subjectivity are among the core concepts in comprehending contemporary organisations, organising and managing. Critical Management Studies, particularly Foucauldian organisational studies, have brought the extensive examination of power and subjectivity also into the realm of work organisations (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). For the most part, the accounts offer convincing arguments for the need to include power and subjectivity in organisational analysis and describe thought-provoking case studies exemplifying this (Fournier, 1998). However, the outcomes of this study cast doubt on some of the propositions put forward in this literature. Primarily, the results lead us to seriously question the stark view of the working subject. The omission of such a stark view is probably due, on the one hand, to drawing on Foucault's "disciplinary power" (1977). Correspondingly, it might be due to excluding agency from the analysis. After all, it is rather difficult to examine a person's activity if there is nothing but the suppressed subjectivity of an object to draw upon. Thus, we ought to incorporate agency into the analysis along with subjectivity and the self.

Furthermore, we should not just concentrate on either reproducing the splits or attempting to illustrate their prevalence, *but should go beyond the splits*. Thus, we should attempt to see beyond the splits in the sense that we do not presuppose the split between organisational structure and human practices or take the split between the managers and the managed as given, but instead *focus our attention on the everyday construction and reconstruction of organisational reality and relations in general and attempt to explicate relational processes in particular*. How are we to go about this? One way is to focus on exploring inter-subjective phenomena such as organising and power, and in particular to explore their practical realisation of negotiation, group work, co-operation and communication – and thus to examine how these relational processes of negotiation, group work, co-operation and communications manifest themselves and occur in contemporary organisations. Furthermore, we should also examine formalised structures, in particular the extent to which they exist in the aforementioned relational

processes. By looking at relational processes, we can research organising from a viewpoint that enables us to see it as *an everyday negotiation of social order* (Hosking and Morley, 1991, pp. 79-81). This entails talking of organising as an ongoing process, as opposed to an organisation as an entity or system (Hosking and Morley, 1991, p. 215).

The results indicate that in place of set structures and tasks there are people taking the initiative, and that in place of systems and entities there are dynamic relational processes. Altogether, there is constant production, reproduction and transformation of organisational reality through lateral processes. In my view this continuous construction and reconstruction of social, inter-subjective organisational reality ought to be central in future research in organisational psychology. In understanding the social reality of organising, the hoped-for second edition of Hosking and Morley's book is not seen as providing a complete answer. The ideas put forward in their book *A Social Psychology of Organizing* (1991) provide a good starting point, but not an end result *per se*. The contemporary context needs to be understood, as does the peculiarity of the emergent information age. Last but not least, an understanding of the intrinsic nature of power and its connection with subjectivity is also essential. Fundamentally then, an organisational psychology that is critical and social is called for, i.e. *critical organisational social* psychology. Essentially, this would combine the constructivist ideas of Hosking and Morley on organising (1991) and the understanding of power and subjectivity of the Foucauldian organisational theorists (Gray and Flores, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Finally, it would place them in the contemporary organising context(s) of the information age (Castells, 1996, 2001).

The examination of contemporary organisational control vividly exemplifies the misunderstanding of power in organisational literature. It is a practical illustration of the failure to grasp the operation of power, which is essentially relational, productive, contextual and historical. This is quite the opposite of the negative view of power as a means of control, coercion and domination which is omnipresent in the conventional literature (for a summary of conventional views on power and organisational politics see Morgan, 1997, pp. 153-250). *Organisational studies can – and should - be critical, but to be critical does not necessarily mean to be negative*. Indeed, critical examination of organisations, in terms of bringing to light the political and questioning the taken-for-

granted, have been a major achievement of CMS. They have offered thought-provoking and illuminating analysis. Critical Social Science in general and Critical Management Studies in particular provide the foundation of the critical tradition that is called upon. Critical Management Studies *already* offers theory (Alvesson and Deetz, 1992), empirical case studies (Starkey and McKinlay, 1998; Fourier, 1998) and particular methodological guidelines (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). These writers also question the *status quo* of a researcher as an apolitical, objective figure who can undermine, undercut and outweigh the experiences of others with objective knowledge and better judgment (*ibid.*). Surely, such elitist positions that undermine the experiences of one category of persons in place of another are in themselves exemplifications of an attempt to dominate. This is particularly dangerous if it is done through seemingly neutral processes and apolitical persons (Lindqvist, 2002, pp. 109-112; see also, Deetz, 1992; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000).

Overall, organisational psychology ought to take a view on power which incorporates subjectivity, relational processes and contextuality. Power, subjectivity and organising are on-going relational processes; therefore the research conducted needs to be consistent with this. It entails coming up with new tools, models and ways of understanding. Further, these ought to be examined in particular contexts. A research agenda could, for example, include case studies situated in particular localities and examining the operation of power in terms of its pragmatic illustrations in the everyday life of an organisation.

So, then, is it a matter seeing a dichotomy between good and evil in the context of organisational literature, whereby the conventional literature is bad and the Foucauldian literature is good? Surely such a view is black and white, to say the least? Thus, it is important to recognise that timely contemporary research is also constantly being conducted in the more traditional realms of organisational studies, such as Management Science, Organisational Psychology, Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, in which there is discussion for example of post-bureaucratic organisations, network organisations and project-based organisations. Indeed, these realms and discussions offer new models and ways of understanding contemporary organisations and changes in these. However, these are separate fields from Critical Management Studies and Foucauldian organisational analysis, upon which this particular study draws

and to which it contributes (pp. 18-22). There are also fundamental differences between the premises of these more traditional approaches and that of Critical Management Studies, as explicated in the theoretical part of the thesis (pp. 23-31). Furthermore, one might ask, is all well if we recognise the shortcomings of conventional literature and in consequence bury the entitative and socio-technical view of organisations along with the conventional splits and, finally, put Marx's ideas on alienation to sleep as well? Thus, am I essentially asking – asking with the provocative title - whether we ought to replace Marx with Foucault? No, that is not what I am trying to put across. I am merely suggesting that Foucault provides some useful conceptualisations of power and subject that further facilitate our attempt to grasp the contemporary operation of organisational control in the information age.

What are the implications of these suggestions for the discipline of organisational psychology? Indeed, should organisational psychology become entirely organisational *social* psychology? Undeniably, organisational psychology has been criticised rather intensively throughout this study, both in terms of its underpinnings and conceptualisations. However, rather than crucifying organisational psychology *per se*, the point has been to compare and contrast the findings from contemporary organisations and conventional literature and in particular to examine the relevance of some of the core concepts in the light of the findings. However, given the wide scope of organisational literature, the majority of the research and phenomena examined in the realm of organisational studies has not been discussed. Therefore, rather than claiming the ineffectiveness of conventional organisational studies in general or organisational psychology in particular, an additional angle *emphasising the social and political reality of organising* is called for.

Finally, with regard to the further question brought out by the findings, questions like the following come forward: is this really a foresight of what the future of the information age will be? As expected, the sample and thus the statistical generalisation is limited; however, in terms of *purely analytical generalisation* it is thought-provoking to consider the possible wider implications of the findings. Hence, is there an upcoming social shift in organisations, which in practice is illustrated as a movement from competition to co-operation? Will we see a reform of the managerial subject position and the practice of management? Might we even become eyewitnesses of the decline of

the classic models of management? Furthermore, will we see a parallel increase in self-management? Are people becoming all the more aware of the social and political reality of organisations? Are we witnessing the death of the traditional linear career? Is the basic attitude towards work changing to become less serious and negative and, in contrast, more positive? Are workers becoming both more cohesive and more interconnected in attitude despite their increased professional specialisation? Will we witness more exemplifications of workers' use of agency? Will this utilisation of agency become the everyday organisational reality and, indeed, will it function as a premise for future organising? In consequence, will we see the information age bringing forth an emancipated worker?

7.2 Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude this study by first discussing four issues in relation to the study, and finally by deliberating upon two themes which are on the whole broader than the topics touched upon in this thesis.

There are four overall issues that I would like to further discuss, as it is important to bear these in mind in relation to this thesis and the claims it makes. These are: 1) The generalisability of the findings and the specificity of the organisations studied, and the limitations this poses; 2) The nature of broader historical claims that can or cannot be made on the basis of this case and of the sample used in this study; 3) My own position as a researcher and the way in which it may refract the interpretation of findings; 4) The truth claims that may or may not be made about the interview accounts, in terms of explicating the actual experience of the subjects researched.

So how far can we generalise the findings? In this context I would like to highlight the specificity of the study – in the spirit of Foucault - in terms of contextuality, locality, historicity and politicality (Foucault, 1997, pp. 303-321; 1980, pp. 97-99; 1988b, pp. 9, 11; 1998a, p. 431). *The context* is that of the information age and network – on a global scale (Castells, 1996, pp. 500-509; Castells, 2001, pp. 1-8), whilst on a societal level the context is that of a world leading information society, Finland (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 13-20). In terms of mode of production, the context is that of Capitalism. The *organisational context* is that of small and medium sized organisations with 10-200 workers. Therefore, as stated already in defining the limitations of the study (p. 14), this piece of work does not aim to generalise these findings as such to large contemporary organisations. *The locality* is that of one sector of industrial production in one part of a small country. That said, the industry is rather novel and a leading hub for the whole industry world-wide. Also, this one small sector of one small country happens to be one of the global birthplaces of the whole industry in question. Thus, the locality of the study is rather exceptional. It is precisely this locality that also makes the case worthy of note: the industry in this particular location is the pioneering industry of the leading information society in the world. Clearly, the statistical generalisability is limited by the sample to the sampling base, i.e. to this particular industry. It is also limited by the

selected research design, i.e. a cross-section case-study, to a particular point in time. However, due to the exceptional locality of the study it is thought-provoking to deliberate – beyond all plausible statistical generalisations – upon whether or not this case can possibly tell us something about a changing nature of relations between power, subjectivity, agency and organisational control under capitalism, in small and medium sized professional organisations, in the era of information and networks.

With regard to *historicity*: it is more common to examine the discourses underpinning one's own historicity, subjectivity and era in a linear manner and in retrospect, rather than in a genealogical manner (Foucault 1998a, pp. 367-389). However, one can try to deconstruct the historicity of contemporary worker subjectivities – as fabricated through discourses – through genealogy, by for example comparing and contrasting these with the threads, as well as with discontinuities from the preceding and co-existing epistemes. That is, one can try to understand and problematise the making of the contemporary working subject - in terms of worker subjectivity - through its historicity. *However, this way of analysing should not be confused with the historical truth claims made in this study.* This study is a snapshot of a particular point in time and tells us something only of that particular point in time. Its purpose is not to make grand historical claims about the changing nature of work or control, but to illustrate something about the *contemporary organisational control* of present-day working subjects, in a particular locality, by comparing and contrasting its contemporary forms with some preceding and co-existing discourses, mentalities and epistemes - and indeed with their continuities and discontinuities. Revealing the historical construction of 'normality' - of organisation, of worker subjectivity and of organisational control - is one way of illustrating in part how who we are today as working subjects has been fabricated, produced and reproduced. From such a stance, Capitalism *per se* can be seen as a mode of production whose naturalness is socially constructed as normality (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994, pp. 3-4). Historicity (knowledge), truth and power thus become interwoven (Foucault, 1980, pp. 78-134). However, in spite of taking a view that the industry case discussed is nested in the national and global contexts, the purpose here has not been to examine social control *per se* in terms of governmentality, but to conduct an exploratory case study on *organisational control* in the specific context of the novel industry of the leading society of the new era of networks and information. This has been done in order to learn about contemporary organisational control. Paradoxically, it seems that organisational control

has been replaced by self-control, which is enabled by a new form of power, a novel understanding of the working subject as well as that of an organisation. Whether this is – or is not - a way forward, or indeed a preview of the future, only the future will tell.

So what is my own position as a researcher? Basically, I conduct Foucauldian organisational research and subscribe to the views of Critical Social Science in general and Critical Management Studies in particular. These views, by and large, question the performativity and naturalness of the more traditional approaches to work organisations and in addition call for reflexivity (Fournier and Grey, 2000, pp. 17-19). They often deconstruct the traditional theories in order to illustrate their unnaturalness and what are seen as hidden presumptions. However, they too, despite all the self-criticism and reflexivity, close down the alternative views on organising by limiting interpretation and offering a specific view of the world, to the relative neglect of other views, and thus they too embody a potential for domination and control. In addition to interpreting the data through these particular paradigms, another way in which my role intrinsically involves power is that in collecting, explicating and interpreting the experiences of the interviewed subjects, I to some extent also come to control those experiences. Therefore, let me problematise the understanding of a research subject *per se* in thinking about the truth claims that may or may not be made about the interview accounts in terms of explicating the actual experience of the researched subjects.

Lindqvist points out that the whole culture of helping and educating is based on a premise of understanding in general, and on professional understanding in particular (2002, pp. 107-111; see also Lindqvist, 1999, p. 80; 2000, pp. 56-63). The root vision of this understanding is in *caring*. He distinguishes two meanings of the word, namely *compassion* and *having an explanation* (Lindqvist, 2002. p. 109.). He argues that there has been an unnoticed shift from caring to providing explications from the top (*ibid.* 2002. p. 110.). A professional machinery (and mechanism) of understanding has emerged which undermines the individual experience and poses serious *ethical* problems (*ibid.*). The experience is undermined by routinely and efficiently trying to explain this experience without hearing the individual and his/her story. This operation has its foundation in the belief that there is a foreknowledge and pre-understanding that enables the researcher to describe and interpret the individual's world, problems and needs. In this way the researcher seizes the other person, before this individual has any chance to

open up and tell his/her story and the situation as s/he *experiences* it. Combined with a possible tendency to dependency and belief in authority, the worst thing that can happen is that the individual absorbs a new set of definitions of him/her self. The only thing that occurs in this instance is that the researcher increases his/her own power, in the classical sense of the word. (ibid. p. 110). Having clearly specified frame of reference, theoretical frameworks, concepts and conceptualisations the new information can bring about only *nominal and illusory understanding*. The only way to understand is to give up the need to control the other person's story and concentrate on listening, and to accept the fact that one is going to be puzzled and bewildered (ibid. pp. 111-122).

What does this entail in terms of this particular study? It seems that in following the line of argumentation of Lindqvist, one is forced to research narratives and thus only conduct in-depth narrative interviews where the subjects can have the chance to recount their experience fully and the researcher's role is to listen and be perplexed. The methods of analysis become quite problematic, as the quotations cannot be taken out of the overall context of the story. The primary data for this research was collected through semi-structured interviews and the data was analysed with thematic analysis. Thus, have I contributed to the partial understanding and indeed to the controlling of the individual experience from above, or even to tearing and manipulating the experiences of the interviewed individuals? To a certain extent I have, as, surely, the story told is just one story. The researcher always needs to interpret the findings and no researcher is a 'tabula rasa' (Flick, 1998) nor outside the power/knowledge systems, as has been convincingly argued by Alvesson and Deetz (2000). Therefore, this - researcher's reflexivity - is required.

Thus in a sense I agree with Lindqvist that these *a priori* developed theoretical frameworks undermine experiences by putting them into pre-existing categories or by attempting to create new categories for them. However, these same theoretical constructs, theories, research questions, explications of methodology and so forth also give the research its credibility, repeatability and reliability in the academic context. On the other hand, experience is explicated only to a certain extent through verbal communication and, furthermore, language itself limits the way/s in which experience can be spoken about and whether there is even terminology with which to talk about it. Consequently, one can ponder to what extent it is ever possible for people to

express their thoughts accurately or to capture their experience - and thus to control it - *per se*. In methodological terms, the purpose has been to find, rather than narratives, the *themes* that are emerging among different groups of individuals in relation to the research questions. However, the purpose has not been to undercut individual experience by assuming at the outset that the individuals experience ways of working and organising in an identical fashion. On the contrary, the author's view is that the way in which individuals experience the phenomena under research varies, for example, in relation to time and space. However, there are some *common themes* that have been found to underpin the way in which workers in this sector understand, experience and think about their working, managing and organising. The purpose is not to argue that these themes would constitute the individual's whole experience of the matters, but that there are significant commonalities to be found in the way in which the workers understand and talk about their experiences. These commonalities, despite not being able to provide the full account of each individual's experiences, and the explication of these, do tell us something about the(se) contemporary workers' subjectivity and approach to working.

Finally, there is no denying that interpretation has also taken place in this study. It is assumed at the outset that research in general and qualitative research in particular always incorporates an element of interpretation (Flick, 1998; Gaskell and Bauer, 2000). Also, there is no denying that my own position as the narrator of the thesis intrinsically involves power. After all, the story told is just one story and closes down other ways of viewing issues and findings. Thus, it is in itself a method of domination and control. However, I do believe that a subject is an active agent also while s/he is a reader - if not even more consciously so at that moment. Therefore, from where I stand, there are as many stories as there are readers of this thesis. And rather than just closing down choices, it can also open up alternative way/s to view organisational control – or indeed, the lack of it.

I would like to conclude with a deliberation on two themes which are much broader than those directly touched upon by the findings of this study. First of all: emancipation and its association with the prevalent mode of production. Secondly: the nature of revolution in the information age.

Overall, the results indicate that much has changed in the landscapes of power, organisation and the working subject. However, the mode of production and the aims of production remain the same. The workers researched have become subjects rather than objects, but the fact that they still need to be productive for at least one third of their day has not altered at all. This begs the question: can we talk of emancipation in a context where there is no fundamental change in the production system itself? I think that, given the stability of the context in this sense, many would probably be careful in making any claims of emancipation. However, despite the lack of change in the system of production and the aims of production *per se*, there are fundamental changes in the organisation of control of these working subjects, as well as in the premises of this control in terms of power. These changes increase the spaces of freedom and open up alternative worlds of existence for these contemporary workers. These in turn provide a basis for novel ways of struggling and resisting – and thus form a *potential* for revolution in the realm of working life.

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.
Proletarians of all countries unite! (Marx and Engels, 1848)

The proletarian's chains are lost when those chains are understood as the organisational structures of domination. These structures of domination refer to conventional ownership formation, management function and associated control mechanisms. Furthermore, with regard to the proletarians of all countries uniting, we are now in an even more global world and a *globalising era* (Castells, 1996), in terms at least of the Western world and its information flows. This is particularly the case in the telecoms, computer and communications industries, i.e. the information industry (Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 21-25). There is also an increasing amount of networking taking place and possibilities for this networking (Castells, 1996). Workers *unite*; they are uniting, not in terms of classical trade unions but in terms of co-operating and working together on a daily basis. This uniting also takes place via networking. Uniting is seen on the level of attitude and mind-set, in addition to the behavioural level. It is reflected in the fact that, rather than individuality, these contemporary workers emphasise sociability. They emphasise the importance of sharing, sensing, co-operating and communicating. Furthermore, this communication and co-operation is transparent; there is a strong belief in the need for open and honest communication founded on trust. There is also a strong belief in and practice of equality, which, together with trust, can form a *solid premise for solidarity*. Altogether,

there is equality, sociality and sharing in place of domination and individuality centred on self-interest. There is also awareness of conditions and surroundings; there is social, contextual and situational sensitivity. All of this is *already* materialised in practice in the everyday ways of organising, working and managing *in these avant-garde professional organisations of the information age*. Workers co-operate, negotiate and decide together; they negotiate their social realities together. Furthermore, they have agency which is manifested in the struggle for novel forms of subjectivities and organisational realities that escape the previously alleged conceptual constraints and realities. Thus, it seems that emancipation in the realm of work has begun with the avant-garde professional workers of the information age.

To end, am I drawing a conclusion that all is good, that the presuppositions and realities of contemporary work and the contemporary worker are as they ideally should be - indeed, that we are living a dream, that the utopian has finally come to pass? In spite of talk of agency and even of emancipation, this is not what I am suggesting. Work, in my view, has become too dominant and the production logic too intensive. The effects of this can be seen as emergent problems in social, personal and family life (Lindqvist, 1999; 2000, 2002; Hellsten, 2000). However, contemporary organisational actors have agency through the ability to question and act. In the surfacing of a new era of networks and information, there are spaces of freedom and escape from all-pervasive structures and mindsets. These form the basis for an active, aware and able working subject. There are also premises for solidarity. These in turn are the prerequisites for dynamic struggle. The workers' revolution did not come about in the mines with industrial labourers; the premises and *potential* for revolution are materialising only now, some 120 years after Marx, with the professional workers of the pioneer industry of the Information Age. However, the revolution is not centrally organised, but dispersed and lateral. Furthermore, these workers have no chains of control to break, but a web of power relations to recognise and productively to draw upon. They have no institutions or authorities to resist, merely unwanted forms of selves and self-management to refuse. Contemporary control is a direct control through subjectivity. Thus, in place of an objectifying system there is a subjectifying self. Paradoxically, it seems that freedom can only be bought with complete self-control. This means that in place of revolution, there is a subtle, contextual struggle, the object of which is subjectivity itself.

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Appendix 1: Industry Level Topic Guide

[This topic guide was originally compiled in Finnish in January 2002]

Purpose of Interview [explained to the company when negotiating on access as well as at the beginning of each interview]:

1. To define the industry and to specify the differences between and definitions of content providers and service providers in the industry.
2. To define and list the main categories which enable one to analyse and evaluate the companies operating in the industry [there is a list of proposed categories that I will go through with the interviewee and the interviewee can add as many criteria as s/he wishes]
3. To list 10 companies operating in the industry in random order, for the purposes of sampling. These companies are to be 'independent companies', in the sense that subsidiaries of e.g. Nokia or MTV3/tele are *not* considered to be.

[Before the discussion started I also checked the accuracy of the information that I had used in selecting the operators in which to hold these industry-level interviews, i.e. the three currently largest telecom operators in Finland in terms of mobile network connections].

1. Defining the Industry and its Operators

- How would you define content provider and service provider respectively?
- What are the essential differences between the two?
- How would you describe this industry in general [in just a few words]?
- How would you define and draw the boundaries of the industry?
- What would you call/ how would you label the industry?

2. Categories Used in Distinguishing and Evaluating Companies in the Industry

What kind of criteria would you use/do you use in evaluating the companies operating in the industry? [Go through the list below and ask for other criteria]

1. The company itself

- history of the company
- vision of the company
- “face” of the company (owner/leader/manager) and other personnel
- degree of internationality
- company name/brand, its appreciation by partners and consumers' awareness of it
- company size:
 - in terms of personnel
 - in terms of products
 - in terms of turnover and profits
 - as part of a larger organisation (subsidiary company)

2. Products of the company

- number of products
- product range
- legal rights (copyright, brand)
- originality of products
- brand power of products.

3. Different technology platforms that the products/services function on/can be utilised in

4. The partners and clientele of the company

5. Interactivity with other media (e.g. the Internet)

6. Is the company a service provider or a content provider? (i.e. in whose name is the content provided?)

3. List of 10 Companies Providing Mobile Content
(in random order, **not** a preference list)

Name of company and www address	Content provider or service provider	Additional information
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

More detailed information on the named companies
(part of the information gained in the interview and the rest researched on the companies' home pages)

Name of company and www address	Founded and location	Employees and management (size)	Business field	Venture capital ownership and employee ownership	Partners, main clients
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

Appendix 2: Company Level Topic Guide

Interviews with individuals responsible for company's HRM

[This topic guide was originally compiled in Finnish in February 2002]

I Background Information

a) On company

1. When was the company established and what is its history in a nutshell, e.g. possible mergers?
2. What is the current vision of the company?
3. What is the total number of personnel employed by the company?
 - i) Number of people on permanent contracts?
 - ii) Number of people on other types of contract?
4. What are the main professional groups and divisions in the company?
5. Is the company a service provider or a content producer in the industry?
6. What kind of products/services is the company currently providing?

b) On clients

1. What kind of clients do you currently have and where (in Finland/abroad)?
2. Is your business based more on permanent client relationships or more on project-based ones?

c) On industry

1. How many companies would you say operate in this industry?
2. Who would you say were your main competitors?

d) On employees

1. How would you describe the employees of this company?
 - i) In terms of age ?(average age and age range)
 - ii) In terms of educational background (estimated % of each main degree-level of education represented)
 - iii) In terms of family status? (estimated % of employees married, in common-law marriages, single)
2. For how many employees is this company the first "real" workplace? For how many is this the first workplace within this particular industry?

3. With which three adjectives would you describe the ideal way of working in this company?

- a)
- b)
- c)

II Working Practices and Everyday Life in the Organisation [Links to research question 2]

1. What are the official working hours in use in your company?
2. How about workplaces; is the work done in the office or is there also distance work [at home or at client's workplace]? Please specify the currently most common working practise(s).
3. How are vacations arranged?
4. What type of employment contracts do you mainly use?
5. What type of employment contracts do the employees ask for/seem to prefer?
6. What codes of conduct do you have? [in relation to dress, working hours, lunch, overtime etc.]
7. Is the work mainly carried out individually or in teams/groups? (differences in different functions)
8. Are the employees often working in more than one team simultaneously?
9. How have you tried to enhance internal communications in the company? [do you have, for example, internal meetings, intranet, notice board etc.]
10. Who usually defines what is to be done in terms of employees' job content?
11. Who defines the schedules and targets for the work to be done?
12. Who monitors that work is done properly in terms of quality and within the timeframe given?

III The Use of HRM Techniques and Practices [Links to research question 1]

* Note that in this section *the main question is the one posed first*. These 'first questions' are general questions on the prevalence and usage of each of the main HRM techniques in the company. The other questions are more like props and are only asked when the interviewee does not bring them up in answering the first question of each part.

1. *In what ways have employees usually been recruited and selected into this company?* How were you recruited into this company? Who usually selects new

employees? How do you select new employees? How formal are these recruitment and selection procedures? Why are these particular recruitment and selection methods used?

2. **Do you use written job descriptions in this company?** What is their main content/ what are the main categories specified? How detailed are they? Do they, for example, include sections on targets and budgeting and specify lines of responsibility as well as developmental liability? Do they specify lines of responsibility in terms of informing others/sharing information? Do they specify issues one is to discuss with one's manager?

3. **How is a new employee introduced and brought into the company and the job?** What techniques do you use to do this? [e.g. do you give written brochures, use mentoring etc?]
How formally is this procedure used? Does it vary by person or by function?

4. **How is training and development arranged in this company?** Is it an internal company function or an external function? How does it work in practice? Who decides who is trained, on what and how? How is training budgeted for? (i.e. per person or per function etc?) What is the company view on further education and on its employees obtaining professional diplomas (examples)? How established are these training and development procedures?

5. **How are employees and their work assessed?** Do you have development and target discussions? Do you use performance appraisals? Do you use self-estimation, estimation of others? giving feedback?

6. **How is work monitored?** What exactly is monitored (working hours, use of money, manners with clients, targets, personal development)? How is this done in practice (by managers, colleagues, clients, electronically etc.)

7. **What internal research is conducted and on what issues** i.e. job satisfaction etc.?

8. **Do you have individual career planning?** What does this entail? How structured and formal is it? Who takes part in it?

9. **What do you view as the current priorities of this company's personnel function?**

IV Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Reward and Commitment

[Links to research question 2]

1. How do you aim to increase the **motivation** of employees in this company? (e.g. financial incentives, career progress, professional training, team spirit, company culture)
In what ways does the company try to increase its employees' job satisfaction and enjoyment of their work?

2. How are the employees **rewarded** and for what are they rewarded? (what do they receive, e.g. benefits, bonuses, further training, merits/medals, public recognition etc?)
How are employees disciplined, and what are they disciplined for?

3. How do you get people to **commit** themselves to this organisation? What practical means do you use [e.g. bonuses, employee ownership schemes, target rewards, extra vacations, further training, promotions, titles]?

4. What is the *percentage turnover of personnel*? What is the *level of absences*? How would you substantiate/explain these figures?

V Divergence and Peculiarity

[Links to research question 2]

1. Do you think that the attitude towards work among those working *in this industry* in general is somehow different? In what way? Why do you think this is the case?
2. Do you think that the attitude towards work among those working *in this company* is somehow different in comparison to other companies in the industry? In what way?
3. How would you describe the independence/autonomy given to people in this company? In this industry in general?

VI HRM-related Background Information

[Links to research question 1]

1. How is HRM organised in practice in the company?
 - a) is it a separate department/function /unit?
 - b) does it have its own specialist personnel? Full-time staff?
2. What is your own role in this?
 - a) Do you do this full time/part time? Do you have other responsibilities? What is your main responsibility?
 - b) For how long have you been responsible for the company's personnel matters?
 - c) Were you hired to do this?
 - d) What is your title here?
 - e) What is your educational background?
3. How old are you? (also note interviewee's gender)
4. For how long you have been working in this industry and in this company?
5. How many jobs have you had in this industry? Have you worked in other industries? Have you worked in HRM positions in other industries?
6. Would you say that this industry or this company differs from the other companies/industries you have worked in, in terms of HRM ? In what ways? How would you explain this?
7. How do you get information on HRM-related matters and their development? Internally and externally? (books, colleagues, web-pages etc.)

Finally, is there anything you would like to add, further specify or ask?

After the interview

If the interviewee comes from one of the 50% of the organisations that have been selected through SRS for the final interview round, agree with this interviewee upon conducting the worker-level interviews

1. Discuss and deliberate on who will be interviewed (establish the different main sub-groups represented in the company)
2. Get the person to arrange this internally, handle the permissions needed, book the room etc.
3. Use the “format” of getting 3 persons in a row in the company’s staff meeting room during office hours. Arrange the sequence of interviewees so that each interview is planned to last approximately 1 ½ hours
4. Explain to the HR person organising the interviews internally what information the interviewees should be given:
 - the topic of the interviews
 - preparation for the interviews (that no preparation is needed)
 - give my cards to them beforehand as well as a paper on the research, so that they can contact me directly and find out about what they are taking part in, if they so wish.

Appendix 3: Worker Level Topic Guide

[Topic guide originally written in March 2002 and in Finnish]

I Background Variables of the Interviewee (go through relatively quickly)

1. How did you enter this industry and how did you enter this workplace?
2. How do you define the industry in which you are currently working?
3. How do you define your own professional reference group?
4. To which function/department do you belong in this organisation?
5. What is it that you actually do, i.e. your job content and main lines of responsibility [generally speaking]?
6. How have you experienced your work here [in this organisation]?
7. How have you experienced this organisation as a working community?
8. How old are you? [also note the gender of the interviewee]
9. Are you married? Do you have children?
10. What is your educational background?
11. For how long have you been working in this industry? How many different jobs have you had in this industry?
12. For how long have you been interested in the issues currently central to your work? Were you interested in these sort of things prior starting to do them for a living?
13. What type of employment contract do you currently have?
(permanent - fixed-term/ full-time - part-time / project-based etc.)
14. What is your current place of residence?
15. What are your hobbies? Do you have any hobbies which relate to your current work?
16. How well do you, in your opinion, manage to distinguish your spare time from your work time? Do you think about work-related matters and/or do extra work after office hours?

II Divergence and Peculiarity

[Links to research questions 4 and 6]

1. How would you describe people working in this industry in general?
2. How would you describe people working in this organisation in general?
3. How would you describe the way in which people working in this organisation do their work? How would you describe the way in which the members of your own department /professional group do their work?
4. What do you view as the most distinctive way in which the employees of this company do their work?
5. Do you think that there is something peculiar in working in this industry?
6. Would you say that the employees in this industry form a group of their own? If yes, how would you describe this group?

III The Experience and Organisation of One's Own Work

[Links to research questions 2 and 5, and 4]

1. With which three adjectives would you describe *your work*?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
2. With which three adjectives would you describe *the way in which you work*? (i.e. how you work)
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
3. All in all, what does your work mean to you?
4. Do you mainly work alone or in a group/team? [description of team/group]
5. Who defines your job content, i.e. what you actually do? How does this take place in practice?
6. Who defines the schedules and targets for your work? How does this take place in practice?
7. Who monitors that your work gets done and is properly done, both in terms of quality and timetables? How does this take place in practice? Generally speaking, to what extent do you experience that your work is being supervised/monitored?
8. Working hours and place

What are your working hours in general?
Who decides upon your working hours?

- c) How flexible are your working hours?
- d) Who decides upon your vacation times?
- e) Where do you usually work?
- f) Do you do distance work?

9. Do you think that you get a reasonable payment for your work?
10. How and to what extent do you experience profit orientation as impacting upon your work? Has this changed while you have been working in the industry/in this organisation?
11. How do you experience bureaucracy in your work? How do you experience bureaucracy in this organisation?
12. How independent/autonomous do you feel your work is? What makes your work independent/autonomous?
13. In general, what do you view as the main difference between doing the same thing as work and as a hobby?

IV Going Through the Previous Week with the help of Interviewee's Calendar (in brief) [Links to research question 3]

1. How many standard meetings did you have last week?
 - Number of meetings? _____
 - Style of meeting (e.g. internal to the company, external)? _____
 - How were the meetings agreed upon? _____
2. How many meetings were agreed upon beforehand? _____
 - Number of meetings? _____
 - With whom were the meetings (e.g. with project team, boss, client, subordinate)? _____
 - Were the meetings internal or external? _____
3. How many unofficial chats did you have with members of your organisation?
 - Estimated number? _____ (per day and then per x number of working days)
 - How many lunches, coffee breaks and drinks after work did you have with your colleagues?
4.
 - a) Working hours
 - b) From _____ to _____
 - c) How much did you work at home and at the office? _____
 - d) Did you also work during the weekend? _____
5. Of the work you did last week:
 - a) How much was individual work (%)? _____
 - b) How much was team work (%)? _____
 - c) Would you say that the week reviewed was a rather normal/typical week? _____

(to go through a week in a calendar takes approximately 10 minutes altogether)

V Work Motivation

[Links to research questions 2 and 4]

1. What do you experience as most difficult in your work? What do you experience as most interesting in your work?
- 2.a. What motivates you? (money, job content, colleagues etc...) Why [do you think this is]?
- 2.b. Which one of the aforementioned motivates you the most?
3. How important is the actual content of your work to you?

VI Personal Commitment to Work

[Links to research questions 1-2 and 4a and 4b]

1. What does this job mean to you?
2. What does working in this company mean to you?
3. What do you hope for from your work?
4. Do you view your work as enjoyable?

VII Creativity and Innovation (ask at the end -if time left)

[Links to research questions 4, 5 and 6]

1. What have been the funniest/most amusing moments at work? Could you further describe what kind of moments these have been in general?
 - Have they occurred whilst you have been by yourself or in a group or team?
 - How often would you say you have these sorts of moments on average? How often do you get to laugh and smile here? Daily?
2. What do you view as good ways to stimulate and further develop innovativity? How does this organisation attempt to increase and improve innovativity?
3. How and where were your best ideas born? [Could you describe this in a bit more detail...]
4. How important do you feel innovativity to be for yourself [and for your work]?

VIII Opportunity to Influence Ones Work and Workplace

[Links to research question 5]

1. How much can you impact upon your own job? (i.e. your job content; your working tempo, your work priorities etc.)
2. How much can you influence the development of organisational practices? Could you give me an example of this?

IX Management and Decision Making

[Links to research questions 3b and 5]

1. How important is your supervisor/manager *for your work*? How meaningful do you experience your supervisor/manager to be *for you*? How would you describe an **ideal** supervisor/manager for you?
2. Decision making [Fill in the chart below)

What kind of things are decided:	In what way is the decision is made?
By yourself	
By teams/project teams	
By your manager	
By your manager's managers	
By the Chair and Board	
Other: by, for instance, venture capitalists/financiers or clients	

Do you think you can participate in and make enough decisions concerning your own work as well as your way of working?

X Career

[Links to research question 4b]

1. Do you try to develop yourself in your work?
2. What do you aim at in developing yourself in your work?
3. Where do you see yourself in 3 years time?
 - in terms of salary and bonuses
 - in terms of status/title
 - in terms of position, i.e. having subordinates/people working for you
 - in terms of expertise

(cross-check with motivation)

XI Background Variables

1. To what work-related associations and groups do you belong? (are you an active or passive member)? (e.g. professional organisations, expert networks etc.)
2. How much time do you spend with people working in this line of business? In what forums? In how official manner?
3. How much time do you spend with members of your own professional group who do *not* work in the same organisation?
4. How important is it to you to feel that your job is steady? [To have a permanent contract of employment?]

5. What is the professional background of your parents?
6. Are there any entrepreneurs or artists in your family or among your relatives?
7. Could you imagine yourself as an entrepreneur in this line of business?
8. What would you do if you were not doing this sort of work? [dream occupation as a child]

Finally, is there anything you would like to add, further specify or ask?

Appendix 4: Overview of the Interviews

Interview round; interview time-period and method of agreeing interview	Interview type and duration	Persons interviewed	Aim of interview
I Industry-level Interviews Interviews with the heads of content production or products in three operators -Conducted in January 2002 in Finnish -Agreed by phone	Expert interview; informal, 1h per interview	Head of content production or a content product manager of an operator	The purpose of these interviews was threefold. The first aim was to establish the definition of the industry and to distinguish between content producer and service provider. The second aim was to distinguish the relevant criteria for how to assess the companies operating in this business as well as to establish their core characteristics. The final aim was to get each operator to list 10 companies from the field that they thought would be worth talking with, in random order. I also asked for the approximate number of companies which they thought operated in the business as a whole.
II Company-level Interviews Interviews with HRM managers of 10 companies in the industry (partly selected with SRS) -Conducted in February-March 2002 in Finnish -Agreed by phone	Semi-structured interviews; one and a half hour interview	The manager of company's HRM; as senior a person in HRM as possible in cases where there are a number of people dealing with HRM	The purpose was to get the official HRM discourse of the company; information on the organisational structures; information on the people handling HRM, and information on the techniques used and documentation kept on workers.
III Employee-level Interviews Interviews with 3 employees from different functions of 5 of the 10 companies in which the company-level interviews were conducted (organisations selected with SRS) -Conducted in March-April 2002 in Finnish - The individuals were jointly selected by the researcher and the HRM representative. In practice, the HRM representative organised the interviews	Semi-structured interviews; one and a half hour interview; All 3 interviews conducted in each of the 5 companies were carried out on the same day, one directly after the other.	Employees of the 5 organisations sampled were selected from different functions/ within groups of the company as described by the HRM representative interviewed earlier.	-The purpose was to get the employees' experience [as explicated via speech] on work, career and organisational life and the organisation of this (see research question table in section 2.4 for more details).

Appendix 5: Company Level Coding Frame

Codes developed and used in analysis conducted with Atlas/ti

Code Categories and Associated Codes	Number of Associated Quotations
Code category: HRM 1A: Techniques	
HRM 1A1: Recruitment	Number of quotations: 27 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A2: Job descriptions (inc. responsibilities)	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A3: Job orientation (inc. mentoring)	Number of quotations: 11 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A4: Training and development	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A5: Assessment and evaluation (inc. performance appraisals)	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A6: Internal research	Number of quotations: 4 Number of interviews: 4 (all)
HRM 1A7: Feedback	Number of quotations: 11 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A8: Job monitoring and surveillance	Number of quotations: 12 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A9: Rewards (inc. benefits)	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A10: Career planning and development	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A11: Company culture and values	Number of quotations: 26 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A12: Motivation	Number of quotations: 18 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A13: Job satisfaction (inc. personnel turnover % and absences)	Number of quotations: 11 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A14: Enjoyment and atmosphere	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A15: Commitment and loyalty	Number of quotations: 19 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
HRM 1A16: Internal communications	Number of quotations: 24 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
Code category: HRM 1B: Departments	merged code
Code category: HRM 1C: Personnel	merged code
Code category: HRM 1D: Consciousness and mentality	merged code
Code categories HRM B, C and D combined into "HRM organisation and personnel"	48
Code category: External Control***	
CONTROL 2A1: Traditional HRM structure (Same as "HRM organisation and personnel")	Code renamed for the purposes of analysing research question 2
CONTROL 2A2: Traditional HRM techniques (Same as "HRM techniques")	Code renamed for the purposes of analysing research question 2
CONTROL 2A3: Traditional HRM mentality (Same as "HRM departments" and "HRM personnel")	Code renamed for the purposes of analysing research question 2
Code category: Organisational Split***	
SPLIT3A1: Ideal way of working	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 10 (all)

SPLIT3A2: Everyday life: working hours and place	Number of quotations: 12 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3A2: Everyday life: holidays	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3A2: Everyday life: type of contract	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3A3: Codes of conduct	Number of quotations: 10 Number of interviews: 9
SPLIT3A4: Way of working: group/individual work [codes SPLIT3A4:Way of working and SPLIT3A4: Everyday life: way of working have been merged here]	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3A5: Job role and diversification	Number of quotations: 10 Number of interviews: 9
SPLIT3A6: Internal communication	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 8
SPLIT3A7: Hierarchy	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 9
Code category: Management Split***	
SPLIT3B1: Deciding on job content	Number of quotations: 11 Number of interviews: 9
SPLIT3B2: Deciding on deadlines and goals	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3B3: Job quality surveillance	Number of quotations: 11 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3B4: Personal autonomy	Number of quotations: 24 Number of interviews: 10 (all)
SPLIT3B5: Group decision making (peer surveillance)	Number of quotations: - Number of interviews: - [code deleted, not enough quotations]
SPLIT3B6: Decision making and negotiation	Number of quotations: 6 Number of interviews: 4 [code deleted, not enough quotations]
SPLIT3B7: Group/peer surveillance	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 7

*** These code categories were added after the analysis in order to make the coding schedules more understandable to the reader.

Appendix 6: Worker Level Coding Frame

Codes used in analysis conducted with Atlas/ti

Code Categories and Associated Codes	Number of Associated Quotations
Code category: Internal Control***	
CONTROL 2B2: Self-development*	Number of quotations: 7 Number of interviews: 6
CONTROL 2B3: Self-management	Number of quotations: 45 Number of interviews: 15
CONTROL 2B4: Self-empowerment	Number of quotations: 28 Number of interviews: 15
Code category: Organisational Split***	
SPLIT3A1: Ideal way of working	Asked from the HRM personnel not from the workers
SPLIT 3A2: Everyday life: holidays	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 13
SPLIT 3A2: Everyday life: working hours and place	Number of quotations: 45 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
SPLIT 3A3: Codes of conduct	Number of quotations: 14 Number of interviews: 14
SPLIT 3A4: Way of working: group/individual work	Number of quotations: 31 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
SPLIT 3A6: Internal communication	Number of quotations: 38 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
SPLIT 3A7: Hierarchy	Number of quotations: 9 Number of interviews: 7
SPLIT 3A8: Profit-orientation	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
SPLIT 3A7: Bureaucracy	Number of quotations: 28 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
Code category: Management Split***	
SPLIT 3B1: Deciding on job content	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 12
SPLIT 3B2: Deciding on deadlines and goals	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 14
SPLIT 3B3: Job quality surveillance	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
SPLIT 3B6: Decision making and negotiation	Number of quotations: 39 Number of interviews: 14
SPLIT 3B8: Ideal manager	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 14
Code category: Work Attitude	
WORK ATTITUDE 4A: Enjoyment [Merged from codes 4A2-4A10, note that code 4A1: upbringing has not been included in this code category but in background variables]**	Number of quotations: 39 (after all deductions) Number of interviews: 15 (all)
WORK ATTITUDE 4B: Motivation	Number of quotations: 33 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
WORK ATTITUDE 4C: Commitment**	Number of quotations: 57 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
WORK ATTITUDE 4D: Innovation**	Number of quotations: 51 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
Code category: Career	

CAREER 4B1: Family background	Number of quotations: - Number of interviews: -
CAREER 4B2: Value of work (intrinsic/instrumental)	Number of quotations: 84 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
CAREER 4B3: Work motivation	Number of quotations: 37 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
CAREER 4B4: Goal-orientation	Number of quotations: 36 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
CAREER 4B5: Future planning	Number of quotations: 33 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
Code category: Agency	
AGENCY 5A1: Job content	Number of quotations: 65 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
AGENCY 5A2: Way of working	Number of quotations: 59 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
AGENCY 5A3: Influence on organisation- wide matters	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 14
AGENCY 5A4: Influence on others	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
AGENCY 5A5: Lack of management/boss	Number of quotations: 14 Number of interviews: 13
AGENCY 5A6: Entrepreneurship	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
AGENCY 5A7: Conscious questioning/ seeing alternatives	Number of quotations: 31 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
Code category: Distinctiveness	
DIVERGENCE 1: People-industry	Number of quotations: 18 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
DIVERGENCE 2: People-company	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 14
DIVERGENCE 3: Company-people-work1	Number of quotations: 12 Number of interviews: 12
DIVERGENCE 4: Company-people-work2	Number of quotations: 14 Number of interviews: 14
DIVERGENCE 5: Industry-people-work	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15 (all)
DIVERGENCE 6A: Industry-people-group	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 13
DIVERGENCE 6B: Industry-people-sub-groups	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 9
Code category: Background Variables	
Entry to the field	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Defining Industry	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15
Defining sub-groups	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 14
Division/function	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 13
Job content - main tasks and responsibilities	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Experience of work	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Experience of work organisation	Number of quotations: 29 Number of interviews: 15

Entry to the Company	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Division/function	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 13
Age	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 15
Marital status and number of children	Number of quotations: 14 Number of interviews: 14
Educational background	Number of quotations: 17 Number of interviews: 15
Previous direct work experience in the industry	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 14
Type of employment contract	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Importance of stability in employment relationship	Number of quotations: 14 Number of interviews: 14
Place of residence (before, currently)	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
Work-related hobbies	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 15
Interest area prior to entry to the field	Number of quotations: 6 Number of interviews: 6 (not enough)
Code category: Framework [Framework questions established at the beginning of the interviews]	
Defining sub-groups	Number of quotations: 16 Number of interviews: 14
Division/function	Number of quotations: 13 Number of interviews: 13
General experience of work	Number of quotations: 15 Number of interviews: 15
General experience of work organisation	Number of quotations: 29 Number of interviews: 15

* These themes have a frequency of less than 50% across the interviews of the interview round in question; however, due to their predominance in the remaining interviews they have been taken forward to the analysis

** Quotations relating to the direct questions on “experiences of fun moments at work” and “frequency of laughing at work” have been deleted due to the bias in the topic guide, i.e. lack of corresponding questions on experiences of unhappy moments at work.

*** These code categories were added after the analysis in order to make the coding schedules more understandable to the reader.

Appendix 7: Coding Schedule for Worker Level Topic Guide

I Background Variables of Interviewee (go through relatively quickly)

1. How did you enter this industry and how did you enter this workplace?

Framework 1 AND Background 1

2. How do you define the industry in which you are currently working?

Framework 2

3. How do you define your own professional reference group?

Framework 3

4. To which function/department do you belong in this organisation?

Framework 4 AND Background 2

5. What is it that you actually do, i.e. your job content and main lines of responsibility [generally speaking]?

Framework 5

6. How have you experienced your work here [in this organisation]?

Framework 6

7. How have you experienced this organisation as a working community?

Framework 7

8. How old are you? [also note the gender of the interviewee]

Background 3

9. Are you married? Do you have children?

Background 4

10. What is your educational background?

Background 5

11. For how long have you been working in this industry? How many different jobs have you had in this industry?

Background 6

12. For how long have you been interested in the issues central to your job? Were you interested in these sorts of things prior starting to do them for living?

Framework 8

13. What type of a employment contract do you currently have? (permanent –fixed term/ full-time - part-time/ project-based etc.)

Background 7a

14. What is your current place of residence?

Background 8

15. What are your hobbies? Do you have any hobbies which relate to your current work?

Background 9

16. How well do you, in your opinion, manage to distinguish your spare time from your work time? Do you think about work-related matters or do extra work after office hours?

Work Attitude 4a4: leisure time and work

II Divergence and Peculiarity

1. How would you describe people working in this industry in general?

Divergence 1: people – industry

2. How would you describe people working in this organisation in general?

Divergence 2: people – company

3. How would you describe the way in which people working in this organisation do their work? How would you describe the way in which the members of your own department /professional group do their work?

Divergence 3: company - people – work 1

4. What do you view as most distinctive in the way employees of this company do their work?

Divergence 4: company - people – work 2

5. Do you think there is something peculiar in working in this industry?

Divergence 5: industry - people – work

6. Would you say that employees in this industry form a group of their own? If yes, how would you describe this group?

Divergence 6a: industry - people – group
 Divergence 6b: industry - people –
 subgroup

III The Experience and Organisation of One's Own Work

1. With which three adjectives would you describe *your work*?

- a)
- b)
- c)

Agency 5A1

2. With which three adjectives would you describe *the way you work*? (i.e. how you work)

- a)
- b)
- c)

Agency 5A2

3. All in all what does your work mean to you?

Career 4B2

4. Do you mainly work alone or in a group/team? [description of team/group]

Split 3A4

5. Who defines your job content, i.e. what you actually do? How does this take place in practice?

Split 3B1

6. Who defines the schedules and targets for your work? How does this take place in practice?

Split 3B2 AND Control 2B3: self management

7. Who monitors that your work gets done and is properly done, both in terms of quality and timetables? How does this take place in practice? Generally speaking, to what extent do you experience that your work is being supervised/monitored?

Split 3B3 AND Control 2A3: external control (if there is external supervision of work) OR Control 2B1: internal control (if the employee is self-controlling and there is a lack of external control)

8. Working hours and place

What are your working hours in general?

Who decides upon your working hours?

How flexible are your working hours?

Who decides upon your vacation times?

e) Where do you usually work?

f) Do you work remotely?

Split 3A2 AND Control 2B3: self-management

9. Do you think that you get a reasonable payment for your work?

Career 4B2

10. How and to what extent do you experience profit-orientation as impacting upon your work? Has this changed whilst you have been working in the industry/in this organisation?

Split 3A8: Impact of profit-orientation

11. How do you experience bureaucracy in your work? How do you experience bureaucracy in this organisation?

Split 3A9: Impact of bureaucracy

12. How independent/autonomous do you feel your work is? What makes your work independent/autonomous?

Control 2B3 AND Agency 5A1 (deciding of work content) OR Agency 5A2 (deciding on organising of work)

13. In general, what do you view as the main difference in doing the same thing as work and as a hobby?

Work attitude 4A3: Hobby and work

IV Going Through the Previous Week with the help of Interviewee's Calendar(in brief)

1. How many standard meetings did you have last week?

-Number of meetings? _____

- Style of meeting (e.g. internal, external)? _____

-How were the meetings agreed upon? _____

Split 3A6 AND Triangulation Q1

4. How many meetings were agreed upon beforehand? _____

- Number of meetings? _____

-With whom were the meetings (e.g. with project team, boss, client, subordinate)? _____

-Were the meetings internal or external to the company? _____

Split 3A6 AND Triangulation Q2

5. How many unofficial chats did you have with members of your organisation?
-Estimated number? _____ (per day and then per x number of working days)

Split 3A6 AND Split 3A9 AND
Triangulation Q3

- 4a. How many lunches and coffee breaks?

Split 3A3: Codes of conduct AND
Triangulation Q4a

- 4b. How many drinks after work did you have with your colleagues?

Work attitude 4A4: Leisure time and work
time AND Triangulation Q4b

5. Working hours

- from _____ to _____

- How much did you work at home and at the office? _____

- Did you also work during the weekend? _____

Split 3A2: Everyday life: work time and
place AND Triangulation Q5

Of the work you did last week:

6. How much was individual work (%)?

Split 3A4: AND Triangulation Q6

7. How much was team work (%)?

Split 3A4: AND Triangulation Q7

8. Would you say that the week reviewed was a rather normal/typical week? _____

“Normal Week”= is a separate code

(*to go through a week in a calendar takes approximately 10 minutes altogether)

V Work Motivation

1. What do you experience as most difficult in your work? What do you experience as most interesting in your work?

Career 4B3 AND Work attitude 4AB

- 2.a. What motivates you? (money, job content, colleagues etc...)

Career 4B3 AND Work attitude 4AB

Why [do you think this is]?

Career 4B3 AND Work attitude 4AB

2.b. Which one of the aforementioned motivates you the most?

Career 4B3 AND Work attitude 4AB

3. How important is the actual content of your work to you?

Career 4B3 AND Work attitude 4AB AND
Career 4B2

VI Personal Commitment to Work

1. What does this job mean to you?

Career 4B2 AND Work attitude 4AC:
Commitment

2. What does working in this company mean to you?

Framework 7 AND Career 4B4 AND
Career 4B5 AND Work attitude 4AC

3. What do you hope for your work?

Agency 5A7 AND Career 4B4 AND Career
4B5 AND Work attitude 4AC

4. Do you view your work as enjoyable?

Work attitude 4A5 AND Work attitude
4AC

VII Creativity and Innovation (ask at the end - if time left)

1. What have been the funniest/most amusing moments at work? Could you further describe what kind of moments these have been in general?

- Have they occurred while you have been by yourself or in a group or team?
- How often would you say you have these sorts of moments on average? How often do you get to laugh and smile here? Daily?

[Question not analysed due to bias]

2. What do you view as good ways in which to stimulate and further develop innovativity? How does this organisation attempt to increase and improve innovativity?

Work attitude 4AD: Innovation

3. How and where were your best ideas born?

[Could you describe in a bit more in detail...]

Work attitude 4AD: Innovation

4. How important do you feel innovativity to be for yourself [and for your work]?

Work attitude 4AD AND Control 2B4:
self-empowerment

VIII Opportunity to Influence Work and the Workplace

1. How much can you impact upon your own job? (i.e. your job content; your working tempo, your work priorities etc.)

Agency 5A1 AND Agency 5A2

2. How much can you influence the development of organisational practices? Could you give me an example?

Agency 5A3 AND Agency 5A4

IX Management and Decision Making

1. How important is your supervisor/manager for your work? How meaningful do you experience your supervisor/manager to be for you?

How would you describe an **ideal** supervisor/manager for you?

Agency 5A5 AND Agency 5A1

Split 3B8: ideal boss

2. Decision making [Fill in the chart below]

Split 3B6 (all of this paragraph AND added with following)

What kind of things are decided:	In what way is the decision is made?
By yourself	
By teams/project teams	
By your manager	
By your manager's managers	
By the Chair and Board	
Other: for instance by venture capitalists/financiers or clients	

Do you think you can participate in and make enough decisions concerning your own work as well as your way of working?

Agency 5A1 AND Agency 5A2 AND Control 2B4

X Career

1. Do you try to develop yourself in your work?

Control 2B2

2. What do you aim at in developing yourself in your work?

Career 4B2 AND Career 4B4

3. Where do you see yourself in 3 years time?

-in terms of salary and bonuses

-in terms of status/title

-in terms of position, i.e. having subordinates/people working for you

-in terms of expertise

Career 4B2

(cross-check with motivation)

Background Variables

1. What work-related associations and groups are you a member of (active or passive)? (e.g. professional organisations, expert networks etc.)

New code: "Company External Networks"

2. How much time do you spend with people working in this line of business? In what forums? In how official manner?

New code: "Company External Networks"

3. How much time do you spend with members of your own professional group who do *not* work in the same organisation?

New code: "Company External Networks"

4. How important is it you to feel that your job is steady? [To have a permanent contract of employment?]

Background 7b

5. What is the professional background of your parents?

Work attitude 4A1: upbringing

6. Are there any entrepreneurs or artists in your family or among your relatives?

Work attitude 4A1: upbringing

7. Could you imagine yourself as an entrepreneur in this line of business?

Agency 5A6

8. What would you do if you were not doing this sort of work? [dream occupation as a child]

Agency 5A7

Finally, is there anything you would like to add, further specify or ask?

Code by using the existing codes or, if the text does not fall under any code, code under "additional information"

Appendix 8: List of Themes Selected for the Analysis

All themes from both interview rounds in alphabetical order

Theme
Adventurous
Change
Commitment
Communication
Contextuality
Co-operation
Dedication
Enjoyment
Equality
Experience
Flexibility
Freedom
Future-orientation
Good character
Group work
Idea of agency
Individuality
Influence
Innovation
Market situation*
Motivation
Negotiation
Non-bureaucratic
Own initiative*
Positive
Proficiency
Profit-orientation
Relational
Satisfaction
Self-expression
Self-management
Situational
Situational sensitivity
Social
Social sensitivity
Social togetherness
Subjective
Support
Time
Trust
Unorganised
Youthful outlook

* These themes have a frequency of less than 50% across the interviews of the interview round in question; however, due to their predominance in the remaining interviews they have been taken forward to the analysis

Appendix 9: Theme Descriptions of the Themes Analysed

All themes from both interview rounds in alphabetical order

Theme	Theme Description in Terms of Core Dimensions Constituting the Theme
Adventurous	References to open-mindedness, flexibility and unserious ways of dealing with work; linked to the unpredictability of work, along with industry and company context
Change	Translates as flux on one hand and dynamism on the other.
Commitment	Commitment is primarily to oneself and to the opportunities for excelling oneself. Commitment has its foundations in the understanding of intensity of time and instability of context. It is strongly linked to workers' personal agenda and experiences.
Communication	References to both informal and formal communication
Contextuality	References to the dependence of context, the importance of context and/or the impact of context to the given phenomena in question.
Co-operation	References to co-operation as a way of working
Dedication	Dedication is a combination of hard work and ambition
Enjoyment	Enjoyment is closely associated with fun and play, with social togetherness and organisational atmosphere.
Equality	References to the relationship with an ideal manager, which is without superiority, hierarchy, bureaucracy and formality. In context of colleagues, refers to egalitarian way of working, which has its premises in mutual professional respect.
Experience	Refers to work experience in general and to expertise located in context of action, in particular. In context of description of an ideal manager, refers to someone with both professional and managerial experience.
Flexibility	Refers to flexibility of the way of working; flexibility of the company; flexibility of job descriptions; and to ability of a worker to be flexible. Also translates as adaptability and dynamic way of working, organising and conducting one's work
Freedom	References to an ability to be self-managed and autonomous. This is illustrated in everyday working, organising and managing. Freedom is directly associated with autonomy and responsibility
Future-orientation	Future-orientation refers to foresight of the impact of the future and potential future prospects on today's actions and ways of thinking, and to using these to orient one's self today.
Good character	References to a person's being as someone who is professional, social, flexible and fits into the team and organisation. More than the sum of its parts - escapes clear definition.
Group work	References to working in a self-managed manner in co-operative groups and teams for common benefit and common ends
Idea of agency	References to awareness of one's ability to act, be and speak; ability to see other alternatives in the realm of working life; ability to see one's self in an altogether different role in the realm of work, i.e. being an entrepreneur rather than a worker
Individuality	Associated with self-expression and having autonomy and responsibility
Influence	Translates as influence on others via negotiation and co-operation, as well as reciprocity, in context where traditional management and supporting structures are largely obsolete
Innovation	Innovation and innovating translate as a pragmatic trial and error approach, in an unglamorous everyday context which is fundamentally social
Market situation*	References to change/s in company policies due to market situation

Motivation	Motivation translates primarily as feelings of success and experience of having opportunities to learn
Negotiation	References to negotiation as the way of deciding organising and communicating; Firmly spoken of in context of action
Non-bureaucratic	Refers to a contemporary way of operating which is informal, unstructured, undocumented and unmonitored
Own initiative*	Refers to workers' ability and will to initiate projects, tasks, activities and new practices
Positive	General way of looking at things – an attitudinal underpinning. In practice, reflected in contemporary attitude to work, working and colleagues
Proficiency	References to one's own proficiency as well as to the proficiency of colleagues. Also talked about the industry and the ideal manager
Profit-orientation	Refers to a taken-for-granted presupposition and associated awareness that money and profits need to be made, and that one's work and the organisation's existence depend upon that.
Relational	Refers to a contemporary way of operating among self-managed workers, which is co-operative, social and based on negotiation.
Satisfaction	Workers' references to satisfaction with job and company
Self-expression	Translates as creativity, innovating and an ability to express one's self and one's ideas, thoughts and beliefs in organisational settings.
Self-management	Consists of self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-directedness and initiative as well as self-empowerment. Illustrated in the ways of working, controlling, organising and in constructing one's everyday working life as well as job content.
Situational	Refers to contemporary way of operating, which is project- and client-centred, context-dependent and situation-sensitive
Situational sensitivity	Refers to a special sensitivity to situations; an awareness of the situation and taking that into account in one's actions.
Social	Multidimensional concepts. References to team and group work and spirit –including decision making; references to networks; references to organisational atmosphere, enjoyment and job satisfaction; references to social sensitivity.
Social sensitivity	A special sensitivity to organisations' social reality. Not only awareness but also action, in that the social reality of the organisation is taken into account in organising as well as in carrying out one's everyday work.
Social togetherness	A feeling of sharing combined with a feeling of moving together in the same direction
Subjective	References to one's own views and aspirations and predominantly to one's experiences
Support	Refers to tangible assistance from colleagues as well as to the feeling that support is around the corner if needed. Support in context of description of an ideal manager translates as understanding, feedback, physical presence, proximity and reachability
Time	Translates as three dimensions: immediacy, shortage of time and hectic atmosphere
Trust	Described as an ingredient of human relations in the work place which are characterised by honesty, openness and transparency. In particular, emphasised in describing the relationship with an ideal manager.
Unorganised	References to informal, unstructured, undocumented and irregular way of organising.
Youthful outlook	Youthful outlook consists of enthusiasm, energy, play and enjoyment

* These themes have a frequency of less than 50% across the interviews of the interview round in question; however, due to their predominance in the remaining interviews they have been taken forward to the analysis

Appendix 10: Web Search Questionnaires

Company-level Web Search Questionnaire

Code number of company and date web search was conducted: ____

I INFORMATION ON COMPANY

1a) Information on Company

1. Main categories listed on introductory page
2. History of company in brief, including possible mergers
3. Owners of company (venture capital and other financing arrangement)
4. Current target and vision of company

1b) Information on Company's Workers

1. Total number of workers employed by the company?
2. Main company divisions and professional groups mentioned?
3. Information on ways of working; is there a discourse on team working and/or project working? How dominant is this discourse?

1c) Information on Company's Product/s

1. Does the company provide and market its own services (service provider) or is it providing content for other companies to market as their own (content provider)?
2. What type of products/ services is the company producing/providing?
3. Target group for company's products/services (business-to-business or individual clients; domestic/international)

1d) Information on Company's Office Location

1. Where does the company currently have its offices (regions, countries)?

1e) Information on Company's Clients

1. What kind of clientele does the company have and in which geographic localities (domestic/international)?
2. Are the clients permanent partners?

1f) Information on Company's Partners

1. How many partners does the company have?

II INFORMATION ON HRM PRACTICES

2a) Recruitment; Job Vacancies

1. How is the company advertised as a workplace?
2. Contact person/s and their title (given for recruitment purposes)
3. What is said about the process of recruiting?
4. How many job vacancies are currently advertised on company's web site (note date when this was checked)?

What type of job vacancies are they (level, professional group)?

Which functions are these posts for, and how many vacancies are advertised in each?

- a. Sales and Marketing
- b. Client relations
- c. IT
- d. Graphical work
- e. Administrative
- f. Other, what: __

2b) Organisation of Human Resources

1. Is HRM department mentioned? Is anything else mentioned about the company's HRM practices or organisation?
2. HR titles: how many and what are they (see personnel contact data)?

2c) Worker-related Information Given

1. What information is given on the company's workers? (e.g. worker profiles)

III INFORMATION ON THE INDUSTRY

1. What is said about the industry? (If www links to industry-related web-pages are given, note these)

IV OFFICIAL DISCOURSES

4a) Discourse on Company Workers

1. How are the company's workers described on the company web-pages? (for instance "young, innovative, highly qualified, young professionals" etc.)?
2. See especially references to:
 - Age
 - Professional skills
 - Innovation/creativity
 - Education
 - Work experience
 - Group/team spirit
 - Other frequently mentioned adjectives (what adjective is most used)

4b) Discourse on Innovation

1. How many times is innovation mentioned on the general introduction page of the company? (Calculate how many times this word or its synonym occurs on the introductory page of the company, also list synonyms used)

Industry-level Web Search Questionnaire

In addition to the companies, a web search was conducted on all five operators active in the Finnish telecom market at the time the research was conducted.

Name of Telecom operator and date of conducting web search: _____

1. Introductory Information on Company

-What is emphasised? Are mobile content services and products emphasised?

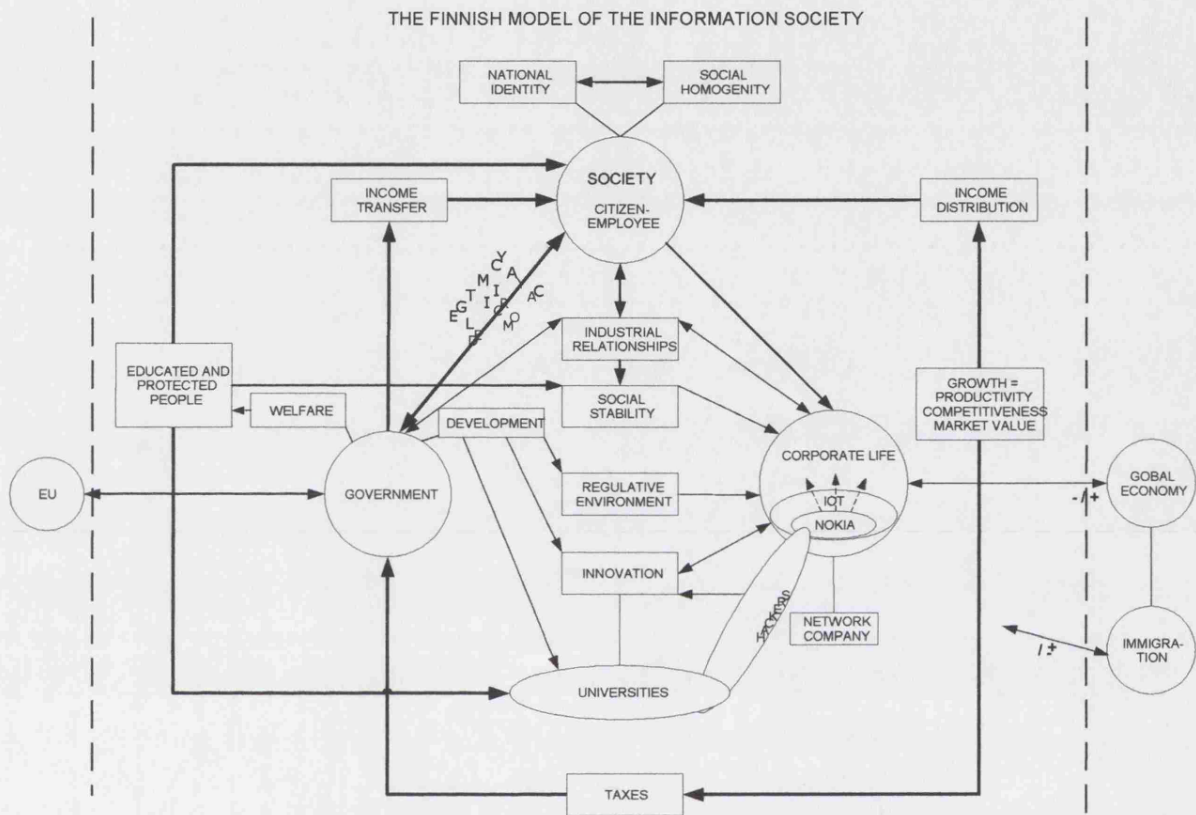
2. List content providing/service providing partners in Finland and abroad?

3. What is company's current market share in telecom market? (check electronic annual report)

4. Does the company have its own content production?

5. What are the company's main content products/services? List main service categories with examples

Appendix 11: The Finnish Model of the Information Society



Source: Castells and Himanen, 2001, p. 150; 149-161

[Translated from Finnish to English by the author]

Appendix 12: Comparative Study on the Information Society in Finland, the USA, Singapore and the EU

	Finland	USA	Singapore	EU
TECHNOLOGY				
Infrastructure				
1. Internet servers (per 1000 inhabitants)	200	179	72	69
2. Mobile connections (per 1000 inhabitants)	752	401	583	654
Production				
3. High tech export / total export of goods (%)	27	32	58	18
4. Electronic commerce (SSL-servers per 100 000 inhabitants)	9,6	28,4	1,3	6,2
Skill				
5. Users of Internet (%)	57	55		42
6. 3. Students of natural sciences, mathematics and engineering (3 rd level)	27	14	24	14
ECONOMY				
National				
7. Competitiveness (index 0-100)	83	100	88	68
8. GDP per capita (US\$)	23,430	36,144	22,949	22,551
Sector of enterprises				
9. Productivity (index, 100=USA)	99	100		
10. Growth of stock exchange market value, previous 5 years (%)	994	529		
Innovativity				
11. Research and development investing/ GDP (%)	3,1	2,6	1,9	1,8
12. Copyright and licence fee income (US\$ per 1000 inhabitants)	126	130(4)	26	81

WELFARE				
Education				
13. 1., 2.3. overall level of students (combined figure)	103	95	75	94
14. Functional literacy (%)	90	79		82
Health				
15. Life expectancy (years)	77	77	77	78
16. Number of inhabitants with health insurance ? (%)	100	82		
Welfare				
17. Relationship between richest 20 % and poorest 20 % (index)	3,6	8,9	9,6	4,8
18. People living below poverty line (%)	5	14		
OPENNESS				
Politics				
19. Freedom of press (index 0-100; 0=free)	14 (free)	15 (free)	68 (not free)	16(free)
20. Gender equality measure (GEM 0-100, 0=unequal)	783	738	509	684
Civil society				
21. Belonging to associations	1,8	1,1		
22. Number of prisoners (per 100 000 inhabitants)	62	554	255	74
Globalisation				
23. Foreigners/ population (%)	2,5	10,4		
24. Environment: CO ² emissions (per capita metric ton)	10,9	20,1	23,4	9,0

Source: Castells and Himanen, 2001, pp. 17-18; pp. 13-20

[Translated from Finnish to English by the author]

Appendix 13: Worker Profile

Description of company workers by person responsible for HRM

Because of the request for and promise of anonymity, these descriptions of the company's workers as a whole by persons responsible for HRM are shown rather than the background variables of the individual interviewees. The industry and companies are rather small; therefore interviewees with atypical degrees, professional experience or age can be recognised and thus this data cannot be made available.

Company	Age (average age and age range)	Educational background (estimated % of each main level and field of education represented)	Family status (estimated % of employees married, in common-law marriage, single)	First workplace
1.	Age range: 24-40 Average age: 33	50% university of technology; 40% from university, remaining 10 % from colleges. Most from universities with academic degrees	Married/Single: many in common-law marriages Children: 20%-30%, mainly men.	Previously, it was common for people to come directly from university of technology, now more experience is required, usually 2-3 years of work experience.
2.	Age range: 20-40 (Coders are young, on average 21, sales people more experienced and older - closer to 40)	Main 'gurus' are self-educated coders who have been doing this since junior high school	Married/Single: 1 of young workers, others not, all of older workers (sales) except one	Many are in their first workplace, and even still studying as well as working. However, those in sales have strong experience
3.	Age range: 22/23-30 Average age: 25-27 (Sales people are a little older)	All from universities with academic degrees; 1 with business degree; 1 with arts degree; others with technical degrees.	Married/Single: 1 married, 1 in common-law marriage, rest unmarried Children: 1	Not for anyone, as everyone nowadays works whilst studying. However, for a few the first permanent job
4.	Age range: 25-40 Average age: 27 (mostly 25-28). (Average age has increased, used – even a year ago - to be closer to 25)	One with academic degree, all the rest have degrees unfinished; 16 technical, of which 14 highly educated. 30% graphic, 30% business, 30% technical	Married/Single: 10% Children: 20%	For 20% the first (permanent) work place

5.	Age range: Average age: 27/28 management over 30, youngest are in R&D	8 university, a few from polytechnic, a few self- taught	Married/Single: 5 married, 2-3 going steady Children: 4	For 3 people the first (permanent) workplace
6.	Age range: 23-35 Average age: - (does not vary by professional group)	Mostly people with academic degrees, 1 still studying	Married/Single: 10 single, rest going steady Children: 15	No, most have experience from other workplaces
7.	Coders directly from school: Average age 25 mostly 28/29, a few 40 and one CEO 50	Mostly people with academic degrees (90% university, 10% polytechnic), and mainly in technology-related subjects	Married/Single: Children: not many, older workers only	5 for whom first permanent job (can be seen from their unrealistic expectations)
8.	Age range:20/22-40 Average age: 28 (sales older; R&D younger)	50% business, 50% technical with associated degrees	Married/Single: 10 married, depending on age Children: -	For 10 workers
9.	Age range:20-30 Average age: closer to 30	Many from technology backgrounds, founders from Helsinki School of Economics, few from polytechnic. Fewer than half still students.	Married/Single: 70% have no family, 30% have, latter group is growing Children: depends on age, young workers do not have children, older ones do.	For some coders yes, not for people in marketing. Though, can be first in this industry. (note the use of industry)
10.	Age range: 18-35 Average age: 25-28	University level degrees	Married/Single: 30% single; 20% married; rest single Children:-	40% first permanent workplace

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