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THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARISM IN STIMULATING ORGANIZATION
DEMOCRACY
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This thesis represents a body of work developed over 10 years in the areas of management learning, organizational politics, and change and organization democracy. It focuses on the role of hierarchy in balancing the need for strategic coherence with the ever burgeoning plurality of organizational life. In recent years, there has been a variety of academic discourses that have illuminated this debate. Often coming from different epistemological traditions, each makes a helpful contribution to the debate. However, I argue that none provides, nor in some cases is intended to provide, senior managers with robust and practical methods of re-conceptualising the role of hierarchy in organization.

Based on this analysis, four key requirements for the development of theory in the area are suggested. Using these principles as a starting point, this thesis makes a contribution to knowledge in three interrelated areas. Firstly, by developing the concept of voluntarism, derived from the field of political philosophy, as an alternative organizational binding mechanism that alters the rationale for the role of hierarchy. Secondly, this concept is operationalised as a form of 'representative' leadership. Research data are provided which explore the behavioural dimensions and cognitive antecedents of this approach to leadership. The findings are suggestive of a democratic orientation toward leading and organizing, and on this basis, the third contribution focuses on how such leadership principles may be more widely adopted through the vehicle of management learning.

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List of Publications Submitted

1. Clarke M. (1999a), Management Development: a New Role in Social Change? *Management Decision*, 37(10) 767-778.
2. Clarke, M. (1999b), Management Development as a Game of Meaningless Outcomes, *Human Resources Management Journal*, 9(2) 38-49.
3. Butcher, D. and Clarke M. (2002), Organization Politics, The Cornerstone of Organization Democracy, *Organization Dynamics*, 31(1) 35-46.
4. Clarke, M. and Butcher, D. (2006a), Reconciling hierarchy and democracy: The Value of Management Learning, *Management Learning*, 37(7) 313-333.
5. Butcher, D. and Clarke M. (2006), Political Leadership in Democracies – Some Lessons for Business? *Management Decision*, 44(8) 985-1001.
6. Clarke, M. and Butcher D. (2006b), Voluntarism as an organising principle for 'responsible' organizations, *Corporate Governance*, 6(4) 527-544.
7. Clarke, M. (2006), A study of the role of 'representative' leadership in stimulating organizational democracy, *Leadership*, 2(4) 427-450.

This synoptic paper also contains references to a range of my other published work associated with these topics which includes contributions to research projects, a book, book chapters and other academic publications.

Declarations

PhD by Publication (under Regulation 39.6)

1. None of the publications contained in this submission for the award of PhD under Regulation 39.6 has been presented for any other academic or professional distinction.
2. Seven papers published between 1999 and 2006 are contained in this submission. Four of these are co authored with David Butcher. In all of these four papers the intellectual contribution is jointly and equally held.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Publications Submitted	iv
Declaration	v
Contents	vi
List of Figures	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Organizational Voluntarism	2
1.2 Representative Leadership	3
1.3 Management Learning	4
1.4 Values: Ontological and Epistemological Orientation	5
1.5 Content and Contribution of Papers	7
1.6. Key Concepts Defined	10
1.7 Literature Road Map	14
2. The Research Gap	18
2.1 A Changing Society	18
2.2 Theories of Organising that Reflect Increasing Plurality	19
2.3 The Disjuncture between Organizational Theory and Practice	23
2.4 The Priority for New Theory	24
3. Voluntarism	27
3.1 Voluntarism in Society	27
3.2 Organizational Voluntarism	28
3.3 Voluntaristic Leadership	31
3.4 Organizational Voluntarism as Emerging Practice	36
3.5 Organizational Voluntarism as Emerging Theory	39
4. The Voluntaristic Mindset: Representative Leadership	41
4.1 Conceptualising Representative Leadership	41
4.2 Researching Representative Leadership	42
4.3 Research Findings	46
4.4 A Conceptual Framework for Voluntarism	49
5. Developing Voluntarism through Management Learning	52
5.1 The Synergy between Management Learning and Voluntarism	52
5.2 Educational Principles Required to Develop RL	54
5.3 The Adoption of these Principles in B Schools	58

5.4 Changes in Demand	60
5.5 Changes in Supply	62
6. Conclusion	67
6.1 Practical Contribution: the Role of Voluntarism in Stimulating Organization Democracy	67
6.2 Potential Limitations and Further Research	69
6.3 Conclusion	72
References	73

List of Figures

Figure 1 Literature Road Map	15
Figure 2 Comparison of Theories Addressing Organizational Plurality	25
Figure 3 Leadership Behaviours	38
Figure 4 A Continuum of Perceived Plurality	45
Figure 5 A Model of Voluntarism	51

List of Abbreviations

AE	adult education
COP	community of practice
CMT	critical management theory
CME	critical management education
OEE	open enrolment executive (programmes)
ML	management learning
OCB	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour
RBV	resource based view
RL	representative leadership

The role of Voluntarism in Stimulating Organization Democracy

1. Introduction

There seems little doubt as to the plurality of interests at work in contemporary organization forms (Child and Rodrigues, 2003; Caldart and Ricart, 2004; Colbert, 2004). Such is the rate of change, complexity and interdependence in the business environment that organizations have to be responsive to a plethora of stakeholder interests in order to survive (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson, 1999; Friedman and Miles, 2002). The sheer velocity of environmental change now means that organizational success is likely to be as much the product of continual innovation as it is of efficiency (Child and McGrath, 2001). Such innovation is recognised as being inextricably intertwined with organizational knowledge networks (Ashmos et al, 2002) and the willingness of employees to share their social and intellectual capital freely (Stewart, 1997). Greater employee participation provides organizations with the opportunity to self-organise, innovate and co-evolve in more effective ways (Ashmos et al., 2002). In such pluralist settings, “harnessing the capabilities and commitment of knowledge workers is, it might be argued, the central managerial challenge of our time. Unfortunately, it is a challenge that has not been met” (Manville and Ober, 2003:48). Despite several decades of attempts to reconfigure the role of organizational hierarchy by empowering workers and enabling them to participate in organization decision making, little progress has been made (Heller, 1998) and employees remain essentially disenfranchised (Manville and Ober, 2003).

For at the same time as organizations strive to build the commitment of their employees, they are engaged in a second objective tugging in the opposite direction, one of coherence; standardising procedures, integrating systems and creating consistent corporate cultures (Adler, 1999). The rational bureaucratic model of organising, implicit in this objective runs deep in managerial mindsets; how can business leaders improve on such a well-developed concept of how human beings collectively best accomplish their objectives (Child and McGrath, 2001)? Despite their best intentions to empower employees, most are still working from a perspective that values unity and control over plurality (Brunson, 2002). Thus attempts to liberalise the workplace through strategies of empowerment and culture management have only tended to reinforce a hierarchical approach to organization, one that values conformity, a priority towards economic and technical values, power focussed at the corporate centre and top down decision making (Willmott, 1993; Cludts, 1999).

March and Simon (1958) and March (1991) characterised this tension between the requirements for rationality and plurality as one of organizations needing to both exploit past successes to increase efficiency whilst exploring new possibilities to facilitate innovation. Managing these competing issues is particularly important in contemporary environments that often call for rapid structural change (Malnight, 2001). Effective organizational governance is thus ever more concerned with finding the synergy between “unity, solidarity,

community, rules integration and efficiency....and diversity, differentiation, individual autonomy, individual liberty, disintegration and experimentation” (March and Olsen, 1995:168). How these tensions are managed reflect core values about organizational democracy and this thesis is concerned ultimately with how this ideal may be furthered in practice by more voluntaristic approaches to governance.

In recent years there have been a number of discourses that have illuminated the problem of reshaping hierarchy to take account of a plurality of competing interests. These have included the development of stakeholder theory (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson, 1999); Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB) (Organ, 1988; Podaskoff and MacKenzie, 1997); Community of Practice (COP) theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991, 2001); Resource Based Theory (Barney, 2001; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Dierickx and Cool, 1989); and the nascent co-evolutionary and complex systems movements (Lewin and Volberda, 1999; Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). Other contributions have provided helpful metaphors such as jazz improvisation (Weick, 1998; Hatch, 1999);, ambidextrous organizations (O’Reilly and Tushman, 2004; Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004); and organizational hypocrisy (Brunson, 2002; Huzzard and Östergren, 2002).

Often coming from different epistemological traditions, each makes a helpful contribution to the debate on how to reconfigure hierarchy in dynamic multi stakeholder environments. However, despite offering rich insights into the issue, I believe that these contributions deal inadequately with four key requirements that are central for the development of theory in this area. That is, they fail to address one or more of the following: the need to (i) reflect a genuinely pluralistic perspective on organization form; (ii) acknowledge the centrality of power relationships in organizational working; (iii) provide clear outcomes for improved organizational performance and, (iv) address the individual motivations of managers to work with alternative models of organizing. On this basis, the collected work reflected in this thesis provides a contribution to the debate on how to reconfigure hierarchy in a way that takes full account of the need for ‘employee voice’ whilst still being responsive to the drivers of organizational efficiency and organizational innovation. Three interrelated academic contributions are offered; the consideration of organizational voluntarism as an organizing principle, its operationalization through ‘representative’ leadership and its encouragement through management learning.

1.1 Organizational Voluntarism

Firstly, I develop the concept of organizational voluntarism borrowed from political philosophy (Eztioni, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). From a communitarian perspective, in the ‘good’ society the moral voice that determines the nature of good citizenship is the product of a diversity of voluntary associations or communities. These groups serve to mediate between the private world of individuals and the large institutions of society. The

opportunity to participate in associations, free from state influence, is fundamental to the creation and preservation of liberty. However, most importantly, a good society is determined by such voluntary associations implicitly inculcating a level of self control in its members by introducing them to particular values that reinforce individuals' normative commitments to that society. I argue that in an organizational setting, the concept of voluntarism not only potentially makes good the shortfalls in existing theory highlighted but and also provides principles for harnessing plurality whilst still encouraging voluntary levels of coherence (Clarke and Butcher, 2006).

The principle of voluntarism predicts that unofficially constituted groups in organizational settings are able to provide the level of self-control necessary for the maintenance of congruence (Ashmos et al., 2002); a multiplicity of stakeholder agendas does not necessarily create organizational incoherence (Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003; Thietart and Forgues, 1997). Further, such groups are more likely to do so when they can express voice and contest views about which organizational values are important to them (Cludts, 1999). As with voluntary associations, organizational arrangements of this type would bring people together to pursue interests through collective action, serve to distribute power, and mediate between individuals and the organization, thereby creating a sense of involvement. Crucially, they would voluntarily facilitate the flow of information between different groups and the organizational connectivity required to stimulate innovation (Ashmos et al., 2002).

The concept of voluntarism offers practical principles for mediating the need for plurality and coherence because it responds to two complementary drivers of organizational change. Firstly, at a time of growing unease about the role of organizations in society (Bowles, 1997), and the attendant consequences for corporate governance and social responsibility (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2001) the issue of who determines the 'moral voice' in organizations is significant (Courpasson and Dany, 2003). In this context, voluntary association may serve to mediate between individuals and their work organization in a way that enables employees to contribute to this debate. In turn this organizational voluntarism may enhance societal voluntarism. Secondly, in encouraging debate about values, identity and commitment to local causes is enhanced. In doing so, senior managers are implicitly encouraging levels of self organization that are viewed as central to the pursuit of innovation and the timely re-configuration of strategic capabilities critical to competitive advantage (Child and MacGrath, 2001; Rindova and Kotha, 2001; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000).

1.2 Representative Leadership

The second contribution lies in the operationalisation of voluntarism as a form of 'representative leadership' (RL) Clarke (2006). This model is also informed by political institutional theory in which political leadership is characterised by a continual process of bargaining, coalition building, pulling and hauling amongst diverse stakeholders (DeGregorio, 1997; Held, 1987). This behaviour is legitimised on the assumption that political leaders are able to balance the need

for cohesion and diversity (Leach and Wilson, 2000) and self interest and civic virtue, - the ability to forgo personal interests in the pursuit of collective outcomes (Starrat, 2001; Patten, 2001; Preston and tHart, 1999).

In this context, leadership reflects a collective phenomenon (Barker, 1997) in which the *representation* of different organization constituencies, by a wide range of individuals assumes a greater significance. I argue that this behaviour is characterised by four behaviour sets; (1) representing the interests of constituencies not immediately connected with a leader's own formal responsibilities; (2) providing others with space, autonomy and power to experiment; (3) encouraging debate and challenge, and providing opportunity for voice; and (4) constructive political behaviour. My research Clarke (2006) indicates that the individual cognitions that enable these behaviours are reflective of attitudes that legitimise individual agency. When individuals perceive plurality as highly legitimate, the tension between the pursuit of coherence and diversity is negotiated in a way that encourages the affirmation of self identity and autonomy as being dependent on those of others (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Knights and McCabe, 2003). That is, they recognise "that the very source of [this] individuality is, in effect, social not individual" (Knights and McCabe (2003:1594). In doing so, and in the absence of any alternative model, these managers largely 'make it up for themselves'. In seeking to work with the tensions of plurality and coherence, they arrive at their own conclusions largely irrespective of immediate organizational circumstance.

1.3 Management Learning

On the basis of the argument to be developed here, that voluntarism can contribute both business and emancipatory benefits, the third contribution addresses the issue of how to encourage the wider adoption of a voluntaristic mindset in contemporary organizational forms, where the dominance of unitary thinking is likely to undermine its legitimisation (Clarke, 1999a, 1999b). I consider the development of managers as being central to this process. Yet the potential for Management Learning (ML) to impact on the coherence-plurality debate has been largely unfulfilled. For Burgoyne and Jackson, ML's effectiveness has been curtailed by a preoccupation with unitary values (1997:54). This has the effect of oversimplifying ML processes by excluding the cognitive, symbolic and political elements of management development activity. In turn, this has led to a situation where many organizational management development initiatives have failed to make a substantive impact on organization behaviour because they focus on an idealized notion of what should be happening, rather than factoring in inherent organizational and interpersonal complexities (Clarke, 1999b).

In contrast, I argue that ML provides a vehicle for the wider adoption of voluntarism for three particular reasons. Firstly, the aspirational adult education (AE) values reflected in ML; above all, enlightenment, personal autonomy and emancipation, are integral to the processes of voluntarism (Clarke and Butcher, 2006). In essence, voluntarism is concerned with effecting greater levels of

organizational democracy - the freedom to deliberate and make choices. I argue that AE/ML, at least in theory, is also fundamentally concerned with this process at an individual level (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997). In consequence, liberal management educators should see a natural affinity with the goals of voluntarism. Secondly, in this regard, I argue that a voluntaristic mindset provides both the means and ends for management educators. That is, if liberal management educators struggle to realise their emancipatory project in reality, the attainment of this goal can be accelerated by this community's adoption of RL behaviours that will enable them to represent more effectively the different agendas of managers and business. Thirdly, as the need for managers who are capable of embracing a plurality of organizational agendas increases, business leaders may well turn to ML, as an accepted source of development, to help effect such change. Indeed, at this point in time, in an environment where unitarist thinking predominates organizational working, if change is not initiated through ML, from where else will it come? Business schools in particular have a role to play here.

I argue that in contemporary society, business schools carry a symbolic value for business, and are viewed, as evidenced by recent negative critique of business education, as capable of exerting a disproportionate influence on management behaviour. Thus even small changes in the institutional approach of business schools may assume significance far beyond the immediacy of a differentiated educational programme and have the potential to exact an undue influence upon business. On this basis, the drivers of, and barriers to, change at both a business school and individual level will be explored and the rationale for changes in both the supply and demand of B school based ML considered. The pedagogic principles required to effect a voluntaristic mindset will also be explicated.

1.4 Values: Ontological and Epistemological Orientation

This PhD by publication represents a sample of my writing over 10 years and therefore reflects some variation in epistemological and ontological perspective. This is for two reasons. Firstly, as one would anticipate, my thinking has matured and developed over this time as I have explored and experimented with different perspectives. I see this as the fruit of a constructive process of self reflection rather than an eclectic approach to management research. Secondly, this development process has been influenced by researching and writing with colleagues of different orientations where the output is co-authored and therefore reflective of a mutually beneficial ontological position. Nevertheless a set of common value premises informs all of this work.

Connell and Nord (1996) argue that debates over the role of epistemological and ontological differences have been overstated and that a more fruitful method of differentiating perspective is to focus on value differences. They classify these as values concerned with pursuing precision (exact descriptive/predictive patterns), expansiveness (to add or change existing patterns), emancipation (freeing people from frozen social relations), and power

(gaining influence/resources). In this regard my work has been heavily informed by an 'emancipatory' and 'expansive' agenda, both of which, in turn, can be viewed as drivers of societal voluntarism. Connell and Nord (1996) also note that scholars in this field are increasingly willing to discuss their values, and in this spirit, I acknowledge that in this thesis my own agenda is one of enhancing organizational democracy as a vehicle for improving organizational performance.

These values have led to a research orientation located between the polar extremes of positivism and phenomenology. Positivism does not acknowledge the social construction of institutionalised relationships inherent in a voluntaristic approach to civil society and the pure interpretivist view is ill-suited to the researcher who wishes to change existing patterns by adding his or her own theories through the speculation of social mechanisms and causal tendencies (Partington, 2000).

In practice, this has led to an ontology that has developed from an initially broad emphasis on social construction (Berger and Luckman, 1966), to more recent work which has moved through Critical Realism (Bhaskar, 1974) toward Structuration theory (Giddens, 1984).

There are of course differences between Critical Realism and Structuration. In particular, critical realism places greater emphasis on the search for "enduring transfactually active mechanisms" (Bhaskar, 1974:20), and thus adopts a more structuralist or materialist ontology than Structuration (Blaikie, 1993). However, Structuration theory attempts to bridge the traditional divide between subjectivism and objectivism by addressing the duality between agency and structure (Blaikie, 1993). What distinguishes this perspective is the belief that social theory needs to be more clearly connected to the analysis of the properties of institutionalised structures and their interpretation and reinterpretation by social actors. In this way my transition from Critical Realism toward a Giddensian ontology reflects themes that are consistent with both viewpoints. Both are interpretivist in orientation (Blaikie, 1993), both acknowledge the social reproduction of structures, and distinguish between the knowledge (meanings) used in social action and the beliefs (motives) that prompt or rationalise it (Blaikie, 1993). In this regard both can be seen to reside within a hermeneutic tradition that seeks to make sense of others actions within the context of one's own horizons of understanding (Chia, 2002).

The research methodology I have used is reflective of these common themes. Qualitative case studies have been the favoured methodology throughout, a strategy that fits well within a Giddensian approach as it allows for a focus on how individuals make sense of, and understand, their environment (Easterby Smith et al., 2002). It is also particularly conducive to the interpretivist orientation in which priority is given to obtaining rich and sensitive data, whilst allowing for both deductive and inductive approaches to theory building (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Harrison, 2002).

1.5 Content and Contribution of Collected Papers

1. Clarke M. (1999a), Management Development: a New Role in Social Change? *Management Decision*, 37(10) 767-778.

This paper represents an early mapping of the territory covered in this synopsis and reflects ideas that are elaborated in papers 3-7 below. This exploratory paper draws together embryonic thinking about how self organised, bottom up/voluntaristic action might be facilitated by political activity and developed through a cynical (sic) critical viewpoint. It is reflective of early thinking about the emancipatory potential of a political mindset and also considers in very broad terms how ML might play a wider role in stimulating this process of change. This idea is developed further in section 5.

Peter Brodbeck has referenced the paper heavily in two papers in *Team Performance Management* (2002a) and *Business Process Management Journal* (2002b). Both focus on the importance of self organization in organization design. Brodbeck cites the work in these papers to challenge rational bureaucratic approaches to managing by encouraging self organizing “pockets of good practice”. However, Brodbeck questions the overt political/subversive dimension of this approach, preferring a more indirect approach over a longer period of time. Bernard Burnes also cites this paper in the *International Journal of Management Reviews* (2005) as a critique of the effectiveness of organization-wide change programmes and to highlight the paucity of change management expertise in such activity.

2. Clarke, M. (1999b), Management development as a game of meaningless outcomes, *Human Resources Management Journal*, 9(2) 38-49.

This early paper reflects a personal frustration at the lack of real value derived from much ML activity. It examines how executive education is enacted within the workplace and explores the psychological and institutional barriers that inhibit effective learning. The wider social impact of this is explored and the potential role of business schools and ML professionals in undermining this malaise considered. The ideas in this paper are re-examined and developed in paper 4 below and in section 5 of this thesis.

Chris Mabey in the *Journal of Management Studies* (2002), and Mabey and Ramirez in the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* (2005) have cited this paper to indicate the capacity managers have for serving their own interests by collusive game playing with those investing in and designing management development activities. William Tate (2004) cites the paper in *Leadership in Organizations*, edited by John Storey. He uses the paper to highlight the need for management educators to undermine the assumptions and values that create such game playing in order to deliver more effective ML solutions (2004:307). Finch-Lees et al., (2005) in *Human Relations* and Heraty and Morley in the *Journal of Management Development*, have cited the paper

as evidence to counter the claim that most management development is effective (2003:67).

3. Butcher, D. and Clarke M. (2002), Organization Politics, The Cornerstone of Organization Democracy, *Organization Dynamics*, 31(1) 35-46.

This paper explores the idea that organizational politics is both an important and necessary managerial discipline and central to the development of real organizational democracy. As such it reflects a central platform in my work on voluntarism. The paper provides practical advice on how to work with a constructive political 'mindset' and highlights how such behaviour underpins, rather than undermines the process of redistributing organizational influence. The basic premise that political institutional leadership can provide a credible template for business leaders is developed in papers 6 and 7 below and explicated in section 3.

Jason Ferdinand (2004) extensively analysed this paper from a Critical Theory perspective in a contribution to *Management Learning*. The work was taken here as being representative of an approach to 'ideal' organization democracy and was closely allied with the work of Coopey and Burgoyne (2000). Other citations include James (2006) and Gunn and Chen (2006).

The paper is derived from the book, *Smart Management, Using Politics in Organizations* (2001) by David Butcher and myself. Jim Stewart, reviewing the book in the *International Journal of Training and Development* believed that, "an interesting and useful book like this ought to be read by management students, especially those on courses like the MBA" (5:4, 2001:304). Philippa Wilhelm, reviewing the book for the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* described it as "without doubt an outstanding managerial guidebook on how to open our minds to a political perspective...." (2003:382).

Further iterations of this paper by Butcher and Clarke have been published in the *FT Handbook of Management* (2004), edited by Crainer and Dearlove and the *Handbook of Organization Politics* (2006), edited by Vigoda-Gadot and Drory.

4. Clarke, M. and Butcher, D. (2006a), Reconciling hierarchy and democracy: The Value of Management Learning, *Management Learning*, 37(7) 313-333.

This paper argues that the aspirational values of liberal adult educationalists have a significant contribution to make to the coherence - plurality debate. These values are positioned alongside the business requisites that shape organizations and examine the motivations of senior managers to apply these ideas in practice. The paper lays out the tenets of organizational voluntarism and explores its potential role as an alternative organizational binding mechanism that alters the rationale for the role of hierarchy. The implications for

senior executives and management educationalists are considered and form the basis for the ideas discussed in section 5.

This paper was described as by one reviewer as “very strong and makes a significant contribution” and summarised by the editor as follows “...I particularly liked this article - it speaks to a number of things that I find quite interesting. And as a by-product, it has inspired some ideas and a spark for a manuscript.....”.

5. Butcher, D. and Clarke M. (2006), Political Leadership in Democracies – Some Lessons for Business? *Management Decision*, 44(8) 985-1001.

This paper provides a comparison between organizational and political institutional leadership contexts and based on this analysis describes in detail the basis for the model of ‘representative leadership’ considered in sections 3 and 4. A distinction is made between the value premises of democracy and the structural mechanisms through which those principles are enacted, arguing that whilst the former have increasing relevance to the business organization context, it is the latter that strike such a discordant note when considered within that context. However, the paper demonstrates that this is a matter of perspective, since the structural mechanisms of democracy are not enacted rationally. The paper thus offers an initial analysis of the main precepts of democracy to establish the basis upon which a comparison between institutions of democratic government and the business context might be made. The significant features of both settings are explored, together with the impact these settings have on the enactment of leadership in each. Conclusions are drawn as to the differences and similarities between each context, and the implications for business leadership are considered. (section 3).

6. Clarke, M. and Butcher D. (2006b), Voluntarism as an organising principle for ‘responsible’ organizations, *Corporate Governance*, 6(4) 527-544.

This paper essentially reflects many of the ideas contained in this thesis, especially sections 2 and 3. It explores the lacuna in organization thinking about hierarchy, reviews the contributions of COP, OCB and so on, and provides a detailed exploration of voluntarism. It lays out several propositions for further research, including the need to investigate individual motivations for working from a representative leadership perspective that forms the basis for the research in paper 7.

The paper was originally presented at The European Academy of Business in Society Conference, Warsaw, 5th-6th December, 2005, (blind referee selection) and later selected as one of the best papers for this special edition of *Corporate Governance*.

7. Clarke, M. (2006), A study of the role of 'representative' leadership in stimulating organizational democracy, *Leadership*, 2(4) 427-450.

The model of representative leadership is explored in the context of data derived from senior management behaviour in five different commercial organizations reflecting varying levels of formally acknowledged plurality. Observations are provided about the causal relationship between organization context, leadership behaviour and managerial cognitions of plurality, personal interest, discretion and politics. The potential for representative leadership behaviour to assist in the wider establishment of democratic forms and the implications for business leaders is considered. This paper forms much of section 4.

An earlier iteration of this paper was accepted for the European Academy of Management (EURAM) Conference (2004), 'Governance in Managerial Life', 5th-8th May, St Andrews, Edinburgh.

This synoptic paper will also contain references to a range of my other published work associated with these topics which include contributions to research projects, a book and book chapters and other academic publications.

1.6 Key terms/concepts defined

Organizational Democracy

There are many different conceptions of institutional democracy (Lijphart, 1984; Held, 1987; March and Olsen, 1995; Dahl, 1998; Kaiser et al., 2002) that are used to illuminate the idea of organizational democracy. However, in simple terms most debates revolve around the appropriateness of representative versus participative (or deliberative) democracy models (Dahl, 1998). In an organizational setting, attempts to adopt the mechanisms of representative democracy have met with considerable criticism. For example, Kerr (2004) and Harrison and Freeman (2004) are particularly critical about its broad practical application. Thus, organizational democracy is not conceptualised here in terms of grafting the structures of representative democracy onto organizational working, such as extending voting power to stakeholders, but as means of enacting the value premises of democracy, that is, as a vehicle for enhancing self government and voluntary association (Harrison and Freeman, 2004). In this context, I define organizational democracy in keeping with the notion of deliberative participatory democracy (Gutman, 1995; Patten, 2001) which reflects the need for enhanced individual autonomy and the legitimisation of processes that enable such individuals to be self reflective - to deliberate, judge, choose and act upon courses of action (Held, 1987) as free as possible from unequal power relationships.

Organizational Voluntarism

Derived from political philosophy, the principle of organizational voluntarism predicts that unofficially constituted groups in organizational settings are able to provide the level of self-control necessary for the maintenance of congruence

(Ashmos et al., 2002); a multiplicity of stakeholder agendas does not necessarily create organizational incoherence (Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003; Thietart and Forgues, 1997). Further, such groups are more likely to do so when they can express voice and contest views about which organizational values are important to them (Cludts, 1999). As with voluntary associations, organizational arrangements of this type would bring people together to pursue interests through collective action, serve to distribute power, and mediate between individuals and the organization, thereby creating a sense of involvement. Crucially, they would voluntarily facilitate the flow of information between different groups and the organizational connectivity required to stimulate innovation (Ashmos et al., 2002).

Representative Leadership

A disposition in which managers recognise the need to engage in debate and action to represent matters of individual and organizational concern, irrespective of hierarchical position or explicit authority. The term 'representative' leadership is used here to emphasise the political dimension of this behaviour rather than a formal process of representation. Thus, representative behaviour is also most akin to principles of participative democracy, that is, encouraging difference, voice, self organization and decision making (Patten, 2001), than to those of formal representation. As in civic and public affairs, these discursive practices are predicated on the basis that they help to form local identities and influence organizational values.

Civic virtue

Theorists have long viewed civic virtue or 'self restraint' (Gutman, 1995) as an essential aspect of citizenship and in consequence as a key ingredient of a civil society and constructive political activity (Dahl, 1998; Verba et al., 1995; Ruscio, 2004). I define civic virtue here as the ability to forgo personal interests in the pursuit of collective outcomes (Starrat, 2001; Patten, 2001; Preston and 'tHart, 1999). For without civic virtue, democracy disintegrates (Renshon, 2000). As Patten points out, "one of the goals of deliberative democracy is to move beyond purely self interested adversarialism" (2001:224). If successful political leaders are those who are able to create cohesion from diversity, such leaders must demonstrate their ability to balance self-interested behaviour with broader policy goals. The ability of individuals to embrace successfully this balancing act is thus fundamental to political leadership (Ruscio, 2004) and therefore also to representative leadership (see above).

In an organizational setting, this definition can be further clarified by differentiating it from the idea of civic virtue described in the discourse on OCB . In most of the OCB literature, this construct reflects purely 'affiliative' behaviour. In so doing, it avoids discussion about the legitimacy of existing power distributions, negating the value of challenge and political action central to the traditional conception of citizenship, and thus for individuals to change the social order in which they are located (Graham, 2000).

Management Learning

Clarifying the definitions of management education, management development, organizational learning and related terms has become an endeavour in its own right. In this thesis I use the term management learning to indicate all those activities that reflect the domains of both management development and management education practice – from situated learning to formal programmes of higher education (Burgoyne and Reynolds, 1997). Adult education refers to educational activities that are (in theory at least) open to all adults, and management learning is one subset of these. This definition also reflects the *management* of learning (Watson, 2001a) and thus its politicised nature as well as the process of how managers learn.

Organizational Politics

Politics have traditionally been viewed with some ambivalence by managers (see Buchanan and Badham 1999, for a comprehensive literature review of this issue). For example, organizational politics has attracted widely divergent opinions, ranging from its description as “game playing, snide, them and us, aggressive, sabotaging, negative, blaming, win-lose, withholding, non-co-operative behaviour” (Stone, 1997:1) to “a disarmingly charming and engaging manner that inspires confidence, trust, sincerity and genuineness” (Perrewe et al., 2000:117).

I define political behaviour here as “those deliberate efforts made by individuals and groups in organizations to use power in the pursuit of their own particular interests” (Butcher and Clarke, 2001:18). Power in this regard is viewed as situational and relational, derived from a plurality of sources and widely distributed, rather than simply a commodity possessed by a small number of individuals or groups (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997, Butcher and Clarke, 2001; Swan et al., 2002).

In practice, constructive politics, as with its counterpart in an institutional setting, is a necessary and logical process by which diverse interests and stakeholders are reconciled (Butcher and Clarke, 2002; Held, 1987). Indeed, as with a political institutional model, in an organizational setting, significant interest groups serve to check the power invested in formal hierarchy. Therefore, far from politics being an irrational organizational response (Stone, 1997), such activity becomes a judicious way of managing inevitable differences (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000). Following Novicevic and Harvey (2004), I view political activity as a ‘democratic asset’, which reflects the varying capacity of employees to influence the way they are governed. Political activity such as internal and external networking, positioning causes, lobbying, and alliance building (Butcher and Clarke, 2001; Denis et al., 2001) are all therefore considered as potentially constructive RL behaviours.

Rational Mindset

Mindsets are the particular ways that individuals come to think about everyday experience, saturating attention to the exclusion of alternatives. They are driven by values that are created and reinforced at an institutional level, and define what is appropriate and inappropriate in specific contexts (Giddens, 1984;

Hales, 1999). Based on notions of rational economic man (Cludts, 1999) the rational mindset (Butcher and Atkinson, 2001) or rational myth (Czarniawska, 2003) is governed by values about rationality, creating a deeply held belief system that then governs what is assumed about organizations as they are worked in each and every day. Thus, despite their self-evident diversity of goals and need for dispersed power, organizations implicitly remain places of unity (Huzzard and Östergren, 2002) where employees work with consistent strategies towards clear corporate goals (Brunson, 2002). Top management continue to provide direction through vision and value statements that reflect prescriptions about desired behaviours. Key to these behaviours is still the need for employees to appreciate the logic of working collaboratively in order to share effort and knowledge in the wider interests of the enterprise (Butcher and Atkinson, 2001; Cludts, 1999).

Pluralistic Work Settings

There are now several substantial bodies of work that highlight the increasing plurality of interests at play in organizational working; these include stakeholder theory and complexity theory both of which are discussed in more detail in this thesis. The degree to which these interests are genuinely taken account of is still a matter for considerable debate, (see for example in Thompson and Davidson, 1995; Willmott, 2003); indeed a starting point for this thesis is the premise that the rational mindset undermines many attempts to leverage plurality for organizational benefit. Nevertheless, it is my contention here that organizations have always been pluralistic inasmuch as partisan interests are always a feature of organizing and managing.

However, given the dominance of the rational mindset in contemporary work, it is evident that plurality of interest receives more legitimacy in some settings than others. For example knowledge-intensive industries often reflect decentralised working, self determination, self organization and networked structures in which diverse views and interests are encouraged (Cunha, 2002). As Child and Rodrigues point out “it is very unlikely that new organizational forms simply represent a passing fashion. They are being adopted in the light of contextual developments that have profound and lasting significance...” (2003:343). The use of the term ‘pluralistic work settings’ in this thesis is therefore used to reflect this transition towards organizational forms where it becomes increasingly legitimate for stakeholders to hold a diversity of conceptions about organizational purpose, organising and intended outcomes (Huzzard and Östergren, 2002). It is important to reiterate, however, that I see rationality and the legitimacy of plural perspective as always being in tension; they are at one level dialectically opposed, and at another, both essential aspects of organizing (Brunson, 2002).

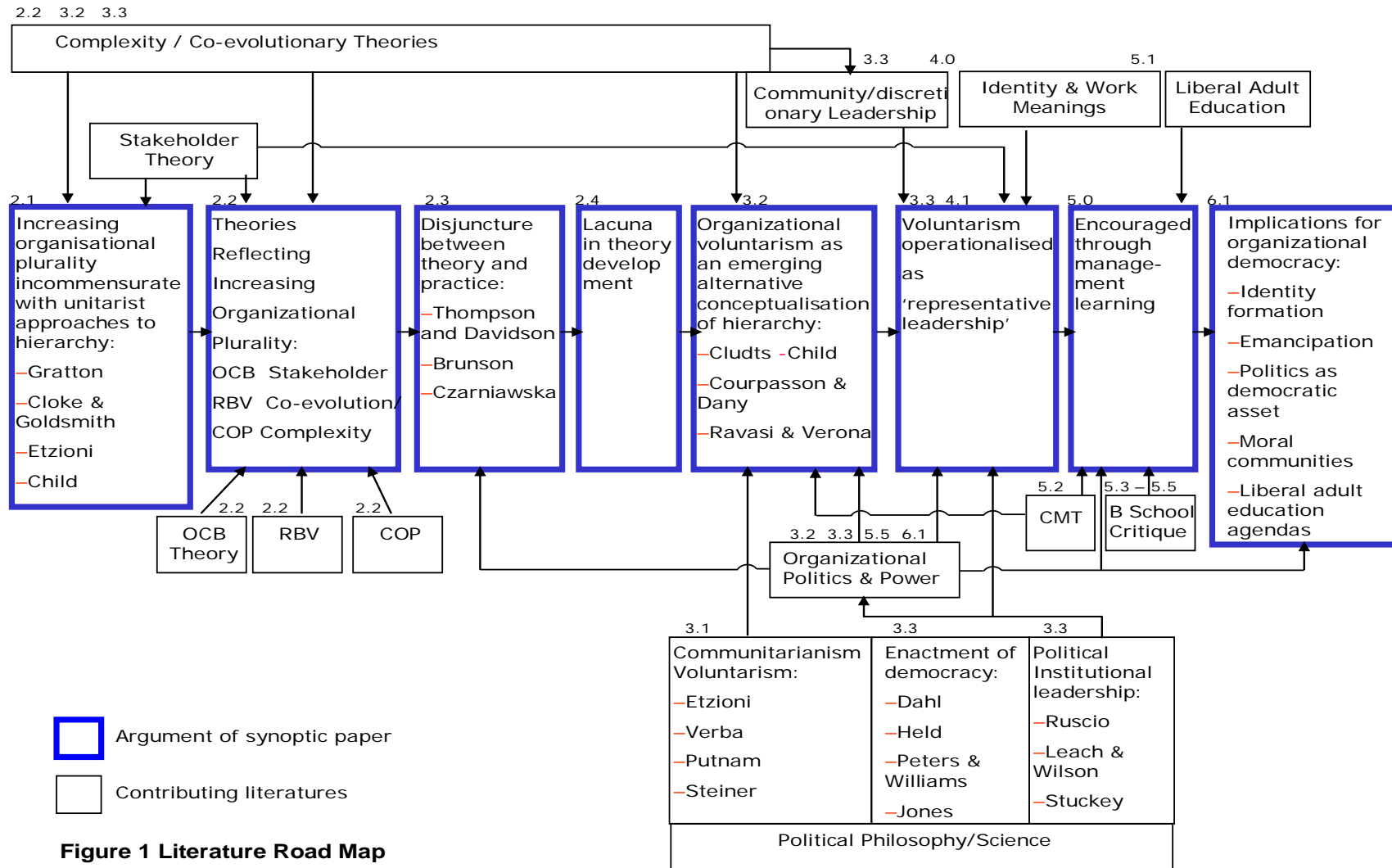
1.7 Literature Road Map

Given the wide variety of literature from which this synoptic paper is derived, the following section provides a brief ‘road map’ of the *main* sources used, and

where appropriate, also accounts for literatures not directly included. A fuller debate about the relative value of alternative literatures is obviously detailed in the following sections but is summarised here to help the reader gain an overview from which to navigate the multiple sources discussed. An outline of this map is provided in figure 1. On this figure, authors' names are detailed where I consider the literature to be less well defined from an organizational/behavioural studies perspective. Numbers (2.1, 2.2 and so on) link the map to the sections in this thesis in which they are discussed.

The starting point for the thesis rests on a substantial body of writing that notes the increasing plurality of organizational life. Some of this might be described as 'New Economy' literature that locates organizational plurality as a reflection of wider societal trends (Cohen, 1999). Other material is derived from stakeholder and co-evolutionary theory. The contrary view that these discourses are merely the product of an anti bureaucratic rhetoric and bear little resemblance to the reality of organizational life, are also explored. The resulting disjuncture between theory development and practice is briefly considered from a structuralist (e.g. Thompson and Davidson, 1995) and post modernist perspective (e.g. Brunson, 2002; Czarniawska, 2003). The view that this plurality is not experienced in reality by organization members, and how to address this in terms of reconfiguring the role of hierarchy, forms the 'problem' around which the thesis is constructed.

Several major literatures that illuminate the problem of reshaping hierarchy are reviewed and their limitations discussed. These are stakeholder theory, OCB, COP, RBV and Complexity/co-evolutionary theories. Detailed reviews of other discourses such as jazz improvisation, ambidextrous organizations, organizational hypocrisy and Theory Z were not undertaken as they were considered to be largely peripheral to the direction of most current contributions on the topic of hierarchy. For example, jazz metaphors for organization design could be viewed as a subset of complexity theory, and Theory Z, is now a little discussed approach.



Voluntarism, derived from communitarian political philosophy provides a model for an alternative conceptualisation of hierarchy. Its appropriateness to an organizational setting is developed with reference to co-evolutionary theory and literature on emerging organizational forms (e.g. Courpasson and Dany, 2003; Child and Rodrigues, 2003). Brief critiques of communitarianism from liberal and particularly CMT (Critical Management Theory) perspectives are provided in order to highlight the role of power and politics in the conceptualisation of voluntarism.

In seeking to operationalise voluntarism in behavioural terms, the political science literature that explores the enactment of political institutions through processes of leadership was considered instructive as, here too, leaders are concerned with balancing a plurality of interests. The majority of the material examined here is limited to studies of representative democracy in the US and Europe in both local and national government, as the vast majority of the literature lies within this area. The limitations of this comparison are noted but are considered to be largely the product of rationalist and positivist perspectives on leadership, and thus at odds with the interpretivist orientation employed here. My intention in this analysis is not to suggest that political intuitional leadership reflects all aspects of its business counterpart but that it is useful as a basis for exploring managing and organizing in contemporary settings (Peele, 2005; Hendry, 2006) and, in particular, how this might illuminate an alternative approach to managing competing agendas in a business context.

The resulting concept of representative leadership (RL) draws upon the emerging literature on community leadership (e.g. Barker 1997, 2001) and discretionary leadership (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005) which fits well with an interpretivist view in which leadership is conceptualised as a socially constructed and multi level activity that both shapes and is shaped by its context (Giddens, 1984). Processes of leadership are thus explored as being at the centre of a complex pattern of contextual relationships. Trait, contingency and situational approaches were viewed as reflecting an unduly essentialist perspective rather than as a 'meaning-making' process (Storey, 2004) and most recently, overly preoccupied with dichotomous distinctions between transactional and transformational characteristics (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005). This orientation was considered largely incommensurate with my ontological starting point.

My approach to community/discretionary leadership is informed by a co-evolutionary view but one in which organizational power and politics are central. This position is both consistent with political institutional theory and overcomes criticisms of co-evolutionary and collective leadership theories' tendency to reflect inadequately the criticality of power (Ray et al., 2004). In this thesis therefore, leadership essentially involves the exercise of power; "the means of getting things done" (Giddens, 1984:283) and is viewed, not simply as a commodity possessed by one group over another, but as a relational characteristic implicit in all social practices.

The exploration of the antecedents of RL has been informed by the discourse on identity and work meanings (e.g. Knights and McCabe, 2003; Lindgren and Wåhlin, 1999; Robertson and Swan, 2003). Sensemaking (Weick, 1995) potentially provides an alternative frame of reference here, but was not pursued as it is currently considered to take insufficient account of power and politics in the identity construction process (Weick et al., 2005).

The potential role of management learning (ML) in encouraging the wider adoption of voluntaristic working was informed by an examination of the liberal adult education (AE) values underlying ML. A reformist approach to AE (Thomas, 1982) derived from a conflict model of society, where, building on the work of Paulo Friere (1972) and others, the focus for AE is to emancipate individuals (by, amongst others, causing them to question power relationships), was considered highly commensurate with my approach to voluntarism. A CMT perspective on management education was used as a starting point for considering appropriate pedagogic approaches to developing a voluntaristic orientation as this explicitly acknowledges the political agenda inherent in such an endeavour and has also been at the forefront of proposing alternative approaches to ML.

The literature on B schools was selected on the basis that these schools provide a potentially valuable arena in which to apply these development principles inasmuch that the institutional templates within which B schools operate are seen to be increasingly subject to change. B schools thus provide; an opportunity for individual experimentation; protected learning environments in which to reframe managing and organizing; and, as an embodiment of cultural transformation (Delanty, 2001), offer a symbolic signal of change beyond the establishment of differentiated development programmes. Alternative arenas for development such as professional associations, and in-company development, were not pursued in detail. Often heavily influenced by 'rational' corporate agendas the environment was not considered conducive to creating the protected spaces necessary for the reframing of unitarist thinking.

Finally, the practical conclusions are linked back to discourses on organizational democracy, organizational politics and change.

2. The Research Gap

This section details the research agenda which this thesis addresses. It places the central issue of the coherence-plurality debate in the context of broader environmental changes and identifies shortcomings in five current theoretical approaches that touch this issue. These shortcomings are related to a substantial disjuncture between the theory and practice of organization design such that many new theories fail to acknowledge the centrality of unitary thinking in organizational practice which actively rationalises attempts to rethink the role of hierarchy. On this basis, four criteria for the establishment of new theory in this area are developed.

The work here reflects a detailed literature review undertaken in 2002-3 which formed the basis for paper 6 'Voluntarism as an organizing principle in responsible organizations'.

2.1 A Changing Society

This thesis takes as its starting point the idea that we are experiencing substantial shifts in the nature of the social institutions around us (Sparrow and Cooper, 1998; Cohen, 1999). Gratton and Ghoshal (2003) describe this 'revolution' in terms of a desire for individuals to express their potential, the need for protection from the arbitrary use of power, and involvement in people determining the conditions of their association (2003:1). These types of change are consequently transforming individual relationships with institutions at all levels, but at their core reflect the primacy of individuals and their capacity to act with autonomy (Gratton and Ghoshal, 2003; Patten, 2001; Vigoda, 2002).

At the same time as demands for more participative organization forms increase, hyper competitive environments are forcing organizations to be more efficient, responsive, nimble and agile in the way they interact with customers, suppliers, and partners. In turn, this is creating many fragmented and structurally diverse organizations that reflect varied and competing interests (Butcher and Clarke, 2002; Brunson, 2002). Thus, as organizations become more complex they inevitably become more pluralist in nature. In these circumstances sustainable competitive advantage is seen to lie in "micro assets that are hard to discern and awkward to trade" (Johnson et al., 2003:4). These are most likely to lie at the edges of organizations in the hands of line managers, such that more people, more often, need to be involved in strategy than ever before (Johnson et al., 2003).

These kinds of change in society are also encouraging business leaders to reappraise basic assumptions about the nature of jobs and the design of organizations (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2002; Sparrow and Cooper, 1998). In particular, they are required to consider the costs and benefits of high trust systems in securing the commitment of such autonomous knowledge assets. To what extent can employers trust employee capabilities to exercise responsible self direction and self control and to what extent should this self direction be

guided by a dominant philosophy of shared values (Sparrow and Cooper, 1998)? The criticality of this deliberation is made ever more acute by concerns about increasing employee alienation (Bowles, 1997), and organizational cynicism (Dean et al., 1998).

Taken together, these changes suggest that increasingly, talented and specialised knowledge workers will gain market power and choose to associate with those organizations whose values and cultures are congruent with their own (Rajagopalan et al., 2003). Such employees thus become organizational volunteers responsible for their own development, career and destinies, and who manage the deployment of their own resources (Gratton and Ghoshal, 2003; Handy, 1997). For an increasing number of commentators, the need to positively respond to this plurality of legitimate employee interests substantially changes the role and function of organizational hierarchy to a degree that executives cannot ignore (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2002; Handy, 1997; Gratton, 2004). This task marks the starting point for this thesis. Managing these power shifts and plurality of interests therefore reflects a potentially natural evolution in organizational form that many consider to be more democratic in nature (Rousseau and Rivero, 2003). If this transition is inevitable, then what are the markers of organizational form that will facilitate this change in practice? The significance of this question has stimulated rich research and debate about future organizational forms. Five perspectives in particular have made a significant contribution to this debate: Stakeholder Theory, Organization Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), Communities of Practice (COP), Resource Based Theory (RBV) and co-evolution/complexity theory. The contributions and shortcomings of these perspectives are briefly explicated below.

2.2 Theories of organizing that reflect increasing plurality

Stakeholder Theory

In stakeholder theory, a firm's survival is seen as being dependent upon its ability to create sufficient wealth, value or satisfaction for all its interested parties, including employees (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson, 1999; Jones, 1999; Friedman and Miles, 2002). At its most fundamental, stakeholder theory questions the primary purpose of corporations as the pursuit of shareholder return. This unitary approach to ownership is increasingly seen as unsustainable in a society where multiple stakeholders, in effect, 'invest' in the corporation. Authors such as Etzioni (1998) claim that all such interests should have the opportunity to participate in organizational governance. However, aside from high profile debate as a theory of social renewal (Giddens, 1998), stakeholder theorists, as John Hendry points out, "have either restricted themselves to very modest claims as to the respect to be afforded to stakeholders within the existing legal and institutional structure, or, more commonly, pitched their claims so high as to sacrifice any practical credibility" (2001:223). Others argue that a more in-depth appreciation of the power and identity of different types of stakeholder (including employees) and how they change over time is required (Friedman and Miles, 2002; Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001; Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003).

Much debate in the stakeholder field reflects a central issue of this thesis; how best to resolve the problems of a normative (ethical) response to a plurality of interests, or an instrumental (economic performance) response to stakeholder theory (Donaldson, 1999). Yet this dialogue has for the most part, been conducted in the arcane language of academia and had little practical impact on the thinking of senior management (Halal, 2000). In this regard, Hendry (2001), Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003), and to an extent Donaldson (1999), suggest that more progress might be made if stakeholder theory gives greater weight to the idea of the organization as a complex system of social relationships, an area of 'huge importance' in understanding emerging organization forms (Child and McGrath, 2001). In this way, the ethical and economic conflicts of stakeholder theory can be understood as being resolved in the same way as the moral conflicts of individual managers facing the practical dilemmas of everyday life.

OCB Theory

Another approach to the problem has been to encourage the development of Organization Citizenship Behaviours (Organ, 1988; Podaskoff and MacKenzie, 1997; Bolino, 1999; Turnipseed and Murkison, 2000; Ryan, 2001). These are described as individual behaviours that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by formal reward systems and that in aggregate promote the effective functioning of an organization (Organ, 1988). This concept therefore implicitly acknowledges the value of individual contributions. However, despite many years of theoretical development, critics contend that the refinement of OCB as a concept has been constrained by the reliability and validity of the measurement systems employed (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Allen et al., 2000) and is merely "old wine in new bottles" and indistinguishable from constructs such as commitment and altruism that have been subject to more rigorous research (Latham et al, 1997). "OCB is currently in danger of degenerating into a contentless construct to the extent it defines everything and anything and hence cannot advance our understanding of employee behaviour" (Latham et al., 1997:207).

Nor is there any evident agreement as to the motives for employees to adopt OCB without which operationalising the concept at work remains difficult. Wide differences of opinion seem to exist as to the importance of context (Karambayya, 1990; Turnipseed and Murkison, 2000), protestant work ethic, (Ryan, 2002), moral reasoning (Ryan, 2001) and impression management (Bolino, 1999). Most importantly, Graham (2000) draws attention to the inherently unitary conception of the central OCB tenet of 'civic virtue'. In most of the OCB literature, this construct reflects purely 'affiliative' and conformist (Speier and Frese, 1997) behaviour. In doing so, it avoids discussion about the legitimacy of existing power distributions and negates the value of challenge and political action central to the traditional conception of citizenship, and thus for citizens to change the social order in which they are located.

COP Theory

A further avenue of research is to be found in the development of communities of practice theory (COP) (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991, 2001). From a COP perspective, the plurality of organizational life is reflected in the conception of organizations as dynamic communities of communities (Brown and Duguid, 1991). In these communities learning, innovation and their dissemination take place in both formal and informal groups. The COP literature sheds light on how knowledge and innovation is freely shared or restricted by structure and potentially provides insight into how senior managers might address some of the tensions of coherence and plurality in hierarchy.

However, there has been a growing trend in the COP literature to emphasise the idea of communities as a managed rather than spontaneous process, one that gives preference to a discourse that omits the role of organizational power and politics (Fox, 2000; Swan et al., 2002; Contu and Willmott, 2003). Again, this observation reinforces the problem facing senior management: how can they encourage informal groups without recourse to diktat yet still create levels of organizational coherence? Some light is shed on the issue by Swan et al. (2002) in their study of networked innovation within the health care sector. The authors note how a group of senior managers were able to address this issue by “sublimating their business motivations in the cause of community building” (2002: 494). However, COP theory is essentially concerned with the relationship between work, learning and innovation (Brown and Duguid, 1991, 2001) not explicitly with the reconfiguration of hierarchy.

RBV Theory (omitted from publication 5 in order to meet journal page limits)

The RBV view of the firm focuses on internal organization as a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 2001; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Dierickx and Cool, 1989). In particular, it conceptualises the firm as a bundle of resources that are distributed across organizations which reflect differences that persist over time (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). This view places emphasis on the “heterogeneity” (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000:1105) of resources, particularly, human resources, as a source of inimitable advantage (Colbert, 2004). However, this focus on heterogeneity has been largely lost in much of the RBV research. “The large scale statistical studies preferred in the literature impose upon the discipline a flat, featureless characterization of resources...” (Johnson et al., 2003:6). In consequence the questions of how valuable resources are built, managed over time and how they generate improved performance are under researched (Johnson et al., 2003; Priem and Butler, 2001).

In practice, this indiscriminating view can serve to diminish the uniqueness of resources that it seeks to promote. For example, Bowman and Ambrosini (2003) note that where organizations seek competitive advantage through the ruthless elimination of non essential resources, activities that promote difference and creativity may well be lost, amounting to an ‘incoherent strategy’. As Child and McGrath (2001) highlight, one consequence of the need for continual innovation may be the acceptance of resource inefficiencies. In response to these criticisms of the RBV, more recent treatments have focussed on the dynamic

nature of organizational resources (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000) in terms of organizational routines that are the product of complex social structures (Colbert, 2004). This focus has served to inform two other complementary fields of study, complex systems and co-evolutionary theories, which also illuminate the coherence–plurality dilemma.

Complexity/Co-evolutionary Theories

The nascent complex systems and co-evolutionary movements (Lewin and Volberda, 1999), both take as their point of departure the idea that organization change and evolution are reflections of multi level and multi directional causalities in both inter and intra firm dependencies. They thus also play close attention to the plurality of interests at play in organizations. Taken from these perspectives, organizations are viewed as complex adaptive systems that are continually self organizing and co-evolving (Ashmos et al., 2002). In particular, in contrast to some of the research agenda discussed above, research into the micro-processes of evolution emphasises the influence of social connectivity (Ashmos et al., 2002) in mediating plurality and coherence.

For example, research by Schilling and Steensma (2001) suggests that firms that experience complexity in terms of high levels of demand and input heterogeneity, place great value on modular organization forms. That is, firms need internal structural divergence in order to work with growing variations in strategic opportunities and industry sub environments (Malnight, 2001). The structural fluidity reflected by these modular forms emphasises the importance of social capital and diverse relationships as a significant process for mobilising coherent activity rather than merely hierarchical position (Denis et al., 2001; Butcher and Clarke, 2002). Indeed, research by Ashmos et al. (2002) suggests that increasing participation in decision making increases this social connectivity, which in turn gives the organization the opportunity to self-organise and co-evolve in more effective ways. In this way, levels of coherence are produced from a plurality of interests.

Nevertheless, these theories also leave considerable questions unanswered about mediating coherence and plurality. For example, whilst some insight into the effect of institutionalised power relationships is provided by Pettigrew (1995) and Child and McGrath (2001), this issue warrants further attention. For example, Ashmos et al. (2002) provide little information as to exactly what form participation should take; in what way is it constrained or enabled by hierarchy? In a similar vein, Levinthal and Warglien (1999) note, with some irony, that while ideas of self-organization have captured enormous attention, practitioners and academics have been left with a puzzle, how are such self-organizing systems to be controlled and directed? The point is reinforced by Malnight (2001) in his study of structural diversity in MNC's when he highlights that the challenge facing managers in such complex organizations is how to develop and integrate these multiple networks. Furthermore, what might be the motivation of individual managers to work in this way? Brown and Eisenhardt (1997), in highlighting the role of 'semi structures' in complex environments that help create a balance between chaos and inertia, focus on the motives of autonomy, choice and an

opportunity for improvisation. However, there is no rigorous framework that seeks to map out the cognitions of managers working in these ways. Thus Denis et al. stress that “the question of how pluralistic organizations develop enough coherence among their parts to allow deliberate strategic change remains unanswered” (2001:809).

2.3 The disjuncture between organizational theory and practice

The difficulty in addressing this question is a reflection of a substantial disjuncture between the theory and practice of organization design. This is apparent in two quite different ways. Firstly, for some organizations there is a lag between the rapid development of new organization forms in practice and the capacity of existing perspectives to account for them in theory (Child and McGrath, 2001). Secondly, I suggest, probably for the majority of organizations, there is a gap between much of the theorising about how organizations should be and how they work in practice (Butcher and Clarke, 2002; Brunson, 2002). Despite the increasing plurality of the workplace noted by commentators such as Gratton and Ghoshal (2003) and Cloke and Goldsmith (2002), in practice, the organizing principles (outlined in 2.1) required to effect this theorising remain in their infancy (Heller, 1998; Manville and Ober, 2003) and organizational democracy limited (Rousseau and Rivero, 2003). One explanation for this state of affairs is that the emerging managerial logic of self organization and its concomitant requirements for community and distributed power appear to be fundamentally at odds with the existing dominant bureaucratic and unitary model of organizational management (Child and McGrath 2001; Thompson and Davidson 1995).

This unitary model has been described as a ‘rational mindset’ (Butcher and Atkinson, 2001) or ‘rational myth’ (Czarniawska, 2003). This type of mental model or schema is developed through experience of the wider institutions of organizational and social life and acts as a deep influence on action (Giddens, 1984). In this dominant rational mindset, priority is given to the enactment of a hierarchy that reflects technical and economic values, power focussed at the corporate centre, top down decision making and organizational structures and systems that encourage unitary working (Butcher and Atkinson, 2001; Cludts, 1999; Brunson, 2002).

Such is the influence of this mindset, that attempts to empower employees and to create less authoritarian organization cultures only tend to reinforce levels of normative control and unitary approaches to managing (Cludts, 1999; Willmott, 1993; Robertson and Swan, 2003). This has the effect of creating a gap between the rhetoric of employee participation and the reality of organizational control (Legge, 1995). In turn, this encourages cynicism (Dean et al., 1998) and a calculative approach to participation (Cludts, 1999). The pre-eminence of this schema also has the effect of diminishing the legitimacy of alternative models of organizing and thus the opportunity for radically reframing the role of participation and its role in hierarchy remains under-explored by senior managers (Cludts, 1999). Therefore, not only is there a substantial lacuna in

organizational theory as to how executives should seek to ‘reconceptualise the role of bureaucracy’ as Adler (1999) describes, but this gap is exacerbated by a managerial mindset that actively ‘rationalises’ attempts to address the issue.

2.4 The Priority for New Theory

Based on this review, I argue that any new theory of hierarchy that seeks to address the increasing plurality of organizational life must be comprehensive enough to make good the shortfalls identified in the existing discourses we have discussed. I believe that there are at least four different criteria that any such new theory in this area must adequately reflect. (i) Axiomatic to the debate, is the need to reflect the increasing trend toward plural organization settings (Denis et al., 2001) in which the need to respond to individual autonomy and independence, particularly amongst critical knowledge workers and managers is central to organizational success. (ii) Any new theory must be able to surface the influences of dense and interrelated social relationships and community norms on participatory behaviour. Managers negotiate these relationships both as part of what they do and to establish what they should do (Hales, 1999) and this process is therefore critical in understanding how systemic structural characteristics (Giddens, 1984) both influence and are influenced by an alternative conceptualisation of hierarchy. (iii) In order for such an approach to gain legitimacy with senior managers working with a rational mindset, any new theory must be able to make strong linkages to improved organizational performance if it is to have resonance with senior managers. (iv) Finally, against a backdrop of partisan interest, new theory must also be able to explain why managers might want to adopt a different approach to hierarchy and participation. What are the interpretative schemas that managers use to make meaningful, actions that apparently challenge existing conventions of management?

The extent to which each of the five perspectives discussed here reflect these criteria is discussed in section 2.2, but are summarised in figure 2. However, in brief, whilst each approach provides a useful contribution to the issue of coherence and plurality, there is no one approach that satisfactorily accounts for all four of the criteria. Stakeholder theory has given insufficient focus to the requirements of employees – and other stakeholders – (Friedman and Miles, 2002), and OCB has neglected the issue of power and politics in the conceptualisation of citizenship (Graham, 2000). This has also largely been an omission in COP theory (Fox, 2000), albeit that more recent treatments are seeking to redress this position. RBV often underestimates the influence of individual actions and can marginalise the impact of managerial activity (Johnson et al., 2003). The Complexity and Co-evolutionary theories reflect well the issues of social connectivity but provide insufficient insight into the motivations of individual actors to work with or encourage greater levels of participation and how these cognitions are influenced by dominant power relationships. Nor do any of these approaches (nor are they really intended to) provide senior leaders with clear and practical principles about reconfiguring the role of hierarchy – especially without resorting to unitary and rational values that implicitly undermine the value of the plurality they seek to establish.

Figure 2. Comparison of Theories Addressing Organizational Plurality

	Stakeholder Theory	OCB Theory	COP Theory	Resource Based Theory	Complexity and Co-evolutionary Theories
Increasing plurality & need for individual autonomy	Plurality and success central but tended to under emphasize range and nature of certain stakeholders (Friedman and Miles, 2002)	Plurality implicit, but greater emphasis on subordinating individual interests to corporate good (Graham, 2000; Speier and Frese, 1997)	Organizations as community of communities of interdependent learners critical for competitive advantage (Brown and Duguid, 2001)	Resources, (especially human), heterogeneously distributed across firms, (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000) but takes little account of individual actions (Johnson et al., 2003)	Plurality of interests central to multi directional causality of action (Lewin and Volberda, 1999)
Embeddedness of social relationships and power	More emphasis needed on organization as a dynamic system of social relationships (Hendry, 2001; Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003) and on the relative power of different stakeholders (Friedman and Miles, 2002)	Under-emphasises issue of challenge and political action central to citizenship (Graham, 2000)	Learning as a socially situated process but role of power underdeveloped (Fox, 2000)	Marginalizes managerial activities (Johnson et al., 2003), conceptually vague (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000)	Social connectivity central to co evolution (Ashmos et al., 2002; Frank and Fahrback, 1999) but role of power and politics underexplored
Links to organization performance	Inconsistent results (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2000; Halal, 2000)	Correlation between some dimensions of OCB and organization success but what is direction of causality? (Podaskoff and MacKenzie, 1997)	Strong links to innovation (Swan et al., 2002; Brown and Duguid, 2001)	No firm conclusions about relationship to performance on macro approach to RBV (Johnson et al., 2003)	Includes links between participation, goal plurality and performance (Ashmos et al, 2002), semi structures and product innovation (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
Practical Implications for managers &	More research required (Donaldson, 1999; Hendry,	Varied and inconclusive explanations- impression	Learning communities are a forum in which	Definitions of resource all-inclusive: which can managers	Action guided by desire for autonomy, choice, freedom

motivators for action	2001), managers not yet grasped profound [practical] implications of collaborative stakeholder relationships (Halal, 2000)	management (Bolino, 1999), context (Karambayya, 1990), moral reasoning (Ryan, 2001).	individuals create and sustain identity (Brown and Duguid, 2001)	control? (Priem and Butler, 2001). Offers little prescription (Colbert, 2004)	to improvise (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997) but little detailed research on individual cognitions.
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Having established the extent of the lacuna in this issue and the priorities that new theory must reflect, I turn to an alternative approach for mediating coherence and plurality – organizational voluntarism.

3. Voluntarism

This section firstly explains the nature of societal voluntarism and its potential as an organizing principle that can inform the debate on reconfiguring organizational hierarchy to take greater account of a plurality of organizational interests. Secondly, by undertaking a comparison between the political institutional and organizational contexts for leading, organizational voluntarism is conceptualised in behavioural terms as form of 'representative' leadership. Examples of nascent voluntarism are described from the literature and the priorities for the development of new theory (see 2.4) are applied to the concept of organizational voluntarism.

This section reflects initial theorising about the potential of organizational voluntarism contained in paper 4 ('Reconciling hierarchy and democracy: the value of management learning') and the development of representative leadership in paper 5 ('Political leadership in democracies, some lessons for business'). This approach was substantially influenced by the work undertaken with David Butcher on organizational politics (paper 3 'Organizational Politics, the cornerstone of organization democracy?'). It was as a result of this analysis that the potential of voluntarism to inform the discourse on organization democracy began to take shape.

3.1 Voluntarism in Society

In attempting to address the central issue of how to mediate between the need for organizational coherence and plurality, I have found in the arena of political philosophy a parallel debate that is instructive to consider. In the political discourse surrounding the basis for a 'good' democratic society, the same polarised tension between coherence and plurality can be identified. Should society rely on the state to shape good citizens, as social conservatives would have it, or should good citizens be the product of a liberal moral pluralism? Writers such as Etzioni (1993, 1995, and 1999), Box (1998), Verba et al. (1995) and Putnam (2000) promote a third, communitarian approach to tackling this issue that has many parallels for the debate about the role of organizational hierarchy. From a (particularly Etzionian) communitarian perspective, in the good society the moral voice that determines the nature of good citizenship is the product of a diversity of voluntary associations. These associations range from membership of local community action groups to membership of political parties and serve to mediate between the private world of individuals and the large institutions of society. The opportunity to selectively participate in associations, free from state influence, is fundamental to the creation and preservation of liberty. However, most importantly, a good society is determined by such voluntary associations implicitly inculcating a level of self-control in their members by introducing them to particular values that reinforce individuals' normative commitments to that society. In other words, it is the opportunity to choose the psychological communities to which one is committed and the ability to cultivate a limited set of core values within a framework as free from coercion as possible, that is the hallmark of a mature democratic society.

Whilst I acknowledge that organizations only broadly mirror society, there are increasing similarities between the two contexts to justify the value of a theory of social participation in an organizational setting (see Manville and Ober, 2003 for one such treatment). In both organizational and political institutional settings the issue is the same, how best to encourage collective commitment toward superordinate goals without recourse to sanctions (Brightman and Moran, 1999). In both settings power is increasingly distributed across different institutions, interest groups and stakeholders (Etzioni, 1998) and there is continual competition between groups for support of worthy causes (Denis et al., 2001; McPherson and Rotolo, 1996; Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003). In this context, organizational leadership, like its political institutional counterpart, is implicitly concerned with how to coalesce support for action whilst valuing difference and conflict (Peters and Williams, 2002; Leach and Wilson, 2000, Barker; 1997).

On this basis, voluntarism has the potential for illuminating organization theory and offers two particular benefits. Firstly, at a time of increasing concern over the role of organizations in society, and the attendant consequences for corporate governance and social responsibility (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2001) the issue of who determines the moral voice in organizations is of growing interest (Courpasson and Dany, 2003). As democratic systems of governance ensure and protect the right to voluntary association, so organizational hierarchy may serve to legitimise this same principle (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000; Courpasson and Dany, 2003). In doing so, such voluntary association may serve to mediate between individuals and their work organization in a way that enables participation in the establishment of organizational values and which builds commitment to the establishment of moral communities (d'Iribarne, 2003; Courpasson and Dany, 2003). Secondly, the application of voluntarism in a pluralistic organization setting may provide an alternative conception of hierarchy inasmuch as voluntarism encourages a level of democratic self-organization that can facilitate organizational coherence irrespective of bureaucratic order. This self-organization is increasingly viewed as critical for encouraging the necessary levels of innovation and continual reconfiguration of strategic capabilities necessary for sustained competitive advantage in dynamic markets (Child and MacGrath, 2001; Rindova and Kotha, 2001; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). This conception of organizational democracy has been criticised by Ferdinand (2004) as being idealistic and taking insufficient account of institutionalised power relations. However, as this section will demonstrate, voluntarism directly reflects the centrality of social relationships, community and power in the structuration of action and thus provides a basis for understanding how institutional power distributions both influence and are influenced by the enactment of self-organization.

3.2 Organizational Voluntarism

At this point in time, when set against the dominance of the rational mindset and the illegitimacy of alternative approaches, voluntaristic behaviour in organizations can be best understood as an expression of individual agency.

Over time, its wider adoption as a managerial approach to assist in balancing plurality and efficiency will depend upon its legitimisation as a useful organizing principle. For example, it is likely that such an approach may be viewed as particularly valuable in an environment where complexity and change are dominant features, as in hi-tech industries. It is important to note however, that hierarchy and plurality, and diversity and efficiency are seen as being in continual tension in all organizational settings; they are at one level dialectically opposed, and at another, both essential aspects of organizing (Brunson, 2002). In mature societies, once levels of democracy have been attained, the focus for political discourse is one of expressing preferences about its enactment. Similarly, once a basic level of organization involvement has been attained (briefings, development discussions, involvement in change, cross-functional working and so on) the focus for political discourse is also one of expressing preferences, in this case preferences very much concerned with the principles of voluntarism such as levels of autonomy, decentralisation, debate and access to information. I do not suggest therefore that voluntarism will resolve this tension in plurality and coherence, but instead that it provides a “relational synthesis” (Clegg, 2003:378) of both in which progress toward more democratic organizational forms may be made by going beyond the notion that more of one necessitates less of the other. On this basis, degrees of voluntarism are likely to be considered valuable in many settings, not just those where it is legitimate to hold competing conceptions about organizational purpose.

In this context organizational voluntarism is defined as *a stage of organizational evolution, or a marker of pluralistic organizational form in which managers recognise the need to engage in debate and action to pursue matters of individual and organization concern irrespective of hierarchical position or explicit authority*. This definition is premised on the idea that unofficially constituted groups in organizational settings are able to provide the level of self-control necessary for the maintenance of organizational congruence (Ashmos et al., 2002); a multiplicity of stakeholder agendas does not necessarily create organizational incoherence (Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003; Thietart and Forgues, 1997). Further, that these groups are more likely to do so when they can express voice and contest views about which organization values are important to them (Cludts, 1999; Rousseau and Shperling, 2003) without the intervention of formal authority. As with voluntary associations, such organizational arrangements would bring people together to pursue interests through collective action, serve to distribute power, and mediate between individuals and the organization, thereby creating a sense of involvement (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002). It is in the nature of voluntarism that some groups may be focussed on issues of critical organizational concern, others may be more parochial in outlook. Crucially however, they would collectively and voluntarily facilitate the flow of information between different groups (Brown and Duguid, 1991) and the organizational connectivity required to stimulate innovation (Ashmos et al., 2002).

The concepts of voluntarism and communitarianism are not without their detractors. For example, from a liberal viewpoint, Steiner (1999) sees an

incompatibility between the “endorsement of a plurality of legitimate value rankings and its rejection of any uniquely valid set of fundamental moral standards” (1999:109). However, in pursuing interpretivist ontology we can view contemporary organizations as places where managers are exposed to a multiplicity of conflicting human values and ethical principles. This can create an ‘ethically irrational’ social world (Watson citing Weber, 2003) in which managers are not able to access a single set of moral principles to solve their moral dilemmas. Nevertheless, individual managers “faced with the ethical challenges arising from having to deal with the ethical ambiguity of the social world....will necessarily become a moral actor in their job” (Watson 2003:173).

Undervaluing such individuality has also been viewed as a criticism of communitarian thinking, but most recently, Etzioni (whose ‘brand’ of communitarian thinking is mostly followed here) stresses the need to seek a carefully crafted balance between both community and individualism (2005). In a similar vein, communitarianism has also often been seen as taking insufficient account of institutionalised power relationships (Reynolds, 2000; Giddens, 1984). Critical theorists have been keen to highlight the dark side of communities that tend to imply or assume consensus at the expense of individual difference (Contu and Willmott, 2003; Reynolds, 2000; Reedy; 2003). Thus, it is important to stress here that the conception of voluntarism discussed in this thesis is very much concerned with the “politics of difference” (Reynolds, 2000:71) where individual conflicts and differences are accepted as being inevitable and not always resolvable. This orientation is similar to the notion of an ‘arena’ described by Burgoyne and Jackson (1997) in the context of management learning in which “differences ‘meet’, are fought over and reconciled and reconfigured into new groupings, factions and alliances” (1997:61).

The difference between one system of democratic governance and another is the degree of autonomy that individuals have to both deliberate and make decisions (March and Olsen, 1995; Courpasson and Dany, 2003). Thus, organizational voluntarism redefines hierarchy as a process to encourage voluntary groups and individuals to deliberate *and* decide upon their own identity minimising regulation through institutional control. This may still take the form of praise, reward or support, but avoiding coercion towards unitary priorities, in order that these groups themselves in turn influence the establishment of organizational core values. Extending the parallel with democratic governance, the role of hierarchy would also be to mediate between deserving causes, challenging constituents to justify the significance of their agendas and their demands for resource. The role of top management would remain to provide fundamental organizational framing, but that this would take into consideration different voices, and by satisfactorily justifying their conclusions and actions to their constituents. In this way, voluntarism can be viewed as a synthesis of both a ‘managed’ and a non coercive process of participation.

As with a COP perspective, organizations therefore come to reflect a collection of diverse communities that are composed of both voluntary and non voluntary associations (such as class, gender, race and age) and thus individuals inevitably become members of multiple communities. As I shall explore in section 4, this highlights the possibility for individuals to pursue multiple identity projects linked to the membership of different collectivities (Reedy, 2003; Handley et al., 2006).

However, in summary, it is important to stress that I do not believe voluntarism will be considered universally beneficial to all, in all circumstances. For example, might not a positive orientation to plurality be counter-productive from a corporate centre perspective where business leaders might be more focussed on shareholder return or quick turnarounds? Certainly, the answer for some actors may well be 'yes'. However, what is considered counter-productive and by whom, is itself subject to negotiation. Thus at one extreme voluntarism may reflect highly covert behaviour, merely small pockets of activity, or sporadic 'irreverent' action. In the middle ground it might constitute both illegitimate activity; and limited legitimate behaviour - such as local value setting, town hall debates on key issues or annual plan negotiations. At the other extreme, voluntarism becomes embedded as a way of working where employees are given many formal opportunities to negotiate and debate organizational values and voluntaristic behaviour encouraged through formal development processes. The recursive nature of voluntarism is such that the degree of voluntaristic working which might come to be considered as appropriate will itself be the outcome of voluntaristic processes; it cannot be forced on an unwilling organization and, given the political nature of organizations, neither can it be easily suppressed.

3.3 Voluntaristic Leadership

In practice then, what does this voluntaristic approach mean for business leaders faced with the task of mediating the need for strategic coherence and the need to be responsive to organizational plurality? In seeking to understand how to conceptualise voluntaristic leadership in an organizational context, my work has been further informed by the parallel between institutional and organizational governance. The leadership of political institutions provides an obvious yet surprisingly under-explored starting point for understanding the orientation required for working with a plurality of interests. This view has recently been supported by John Hendry who views the traditions of responsible political leadership and governance as ideal for enabling managers to develop an identity that "empowers them to exercise judgement, to reconcile interests, and to build and lead communities of trust" (2006:278). My focus on the role of leadership *per se*, as opposed to the structures and mechanisms of democracy, is premised on the view that governance is viewed as legitimate when it allows people to exercise degrees of influence over their collective destiny and leadership is implicit in this endeavour (Ruscio, 2004). As Ruscio confirms from a liberal political institutional standpoint, "it is impossible to imagine a strong healthy democracy without leaders" (2004:ix).

Notwithstanding the centrality of this argument, the question of whether governance of democratic institutions can provide a legitimate and credible template for business leaders requires further justification. Although there are many different conceptions of democracy (Dahl, 1998; Lijphart, 1984; Held, 1987; March and Olsen, 1995; Kaiser et al., 2002), and its enactment differs across cultures (Kim et al., 2002), time (Skowronek, 1993) and regimes (Wildavski, 1989; John and Cole, 1999), at the heart of the democratic ideal lies the notion of equal freedom for all to deliberate the aims of society. Our understanding of how this works in practice in Western democracies is dominated by our experience of modern representative democracy. However, representative democracy is mostly linked to the governance of nations (Dahl, 1998) rather than organizations.

Thus, at face value, the validity of political institutional leadership as a basis for considering organizational leadership appears dubious. As many commentators note, there are significant distinctions between institutional and organizational contexts (Armbruster and Gebert, 2002; Peters and Williams, 2002; Etzioni, 1998; Kerr, 2004). Organizations do not reflect the structural characteristics of modern democracies; representation, accountability and inclusion (participation) are not intrinsic to the governance of work organizations. Yet it is arguable from an interpretivist perspective that the enactment of these structures in democracies also lacks empirical validity. For example, representation does not provide a direct and actionable link with the electorate (Müller and Strøm, 1999). Representatives are caught between party, constitutional and individual interests and thus in reality politicians experience a range of influences that mediate their representational role.

Similar issues arise with accountability and inclusion when the rationality underlying their enactment is examined from an interpretivist perspective. Stuckey (1999) points out that accountability is an unreliable mechanism at best, as elections are becoming ever more subject to media influence, and the distinctions between governing and campaigning becoming more blurred. This 'noise' serves to weaken the processes of direct accountability. Inclusion of the electorate's views is similarly mediated by a number of factors. Policy decisions may not reflect electoral preferences for reasons such as tactical and strategic decisions by politicians, self interested behaviour, context changes, compromises and broken promises (Kaiser et al., 2002; Preston and 'tHart, 1999). The electoral system, too, may impair this process. For example, in 'first past the post' systems, the winning party may not enjoy genuinely wide support, as evidenced in the UK by New Labour's 2001 re-election. Again, when politicians are required to vote in accordance with party executive policy, "at the limit, democracy can mask rule by a small elite or even an elected dictator" (Nagel cited in Kaiser et al, 2002:313).

Political Institutional Leadership

Thus, from an interpretivist perspective, the mechanisms of democracy are not rationally enacted and do not necessarily enrich or preclude a comparison with

an organizational setting. In order to understand better the process of institutional leadership, I have found it more instructive to examine the value premises underlying these structures. If the democratic ideal rests on the notion of equal freedom for all to deliberate the aims of society, the value premises that underpin this ideal embrace, are threefold. Firstly, democracy is designed to realise the desire of individuals for meaningful control over their lives (Patten, 2001; Held, 1987; Starrat, 2001). Secondly, as a consequence of the desire for individual autonomy, competing interests, conflict and competition for scarce resources are also central to the enactment of democracy (Barry, 2002; Müller and Strøm 1999; Jones, 1989). Lastly, reasoned debate over alternatives is an integral and essential value for the resolution of these differences (Held, 1987; Stuckey, 1999).

From a pan historical viewpoint, the stewardship of these value premises has become central to the role of democratic government. Thus over time, societies have enshrined them in roles, rules and procedures that provide the practical frameworks for the mechanisms of representation, inclusion and accountability. It is therefore the interaction and application of these roles, rules and procedures that, for practical purposes, forms the context for political leadership (Elgie, 1995; March and Olsen, 1995). In this context, studies of political leadership have explored the impact of a wide variety of influences such as style (Simonton, 1988), psychological disposition (Preston and 'tHart, 1999), and in different settings such as party leadership (Müller and Strøm, 1999), lobbying (DeGregorio, 1997), local authorities (Leach and Wilson, 2000), and the public sector organizations (Vigoda, 2002).

However, this work indicates that generic issues are recognisable across different democratic systems (Elgie, 1995), and therefore that similar types of leadership behaviour are observable. Here, too, an interpretivist orientation proves instructive (Jones, 1989; Starrat, 2001). Specifically, it suggests that in stewarding the value premises of democracy, the enactment of institutional leadership is characterised by the need to resolve two distinct sources of stress: firstly, between the drive for cohesion and the productive exploitation of differences; secondly, between the exercise of bureaucratic politics and civic virtue. In effect, the manner in which leaders address these tensions amounts to processes-in-use that are in practice the mechanisms for enacting democratic value premises. Thus the mechanisms of representation, accountability and inclusion provide a formal expression of what, in actuality, are elaborate social processes.

Political institutional leadership is thus characterised by a continual process of securing cohesion amongst inevitably diverse interest groups, lobbies and electorates (Leach and Wilson, 2000). Yet these differences are also often seen as a healthy stimulus that can make a positive contribution. In order to maintain enthusiasm amongst immediate followers, leaders need to be able to encourage such differences (Leach and Wilson, 2000). Approaches to managing this diversity in cabinet settings include developing relationships with key factions, encouraging interdependence and empowerment amongst cabinet colleagues,

preparing the ground before meetings, and rewarding allies (Kaarbo and Herman, 1998).

This tension between the drive for cohesion and the productive exploitation of differences also serves to emphasise the pervasive existence of micro politics in the leadership process. Actors with mutual and competing interests are continually bargaining, coalition building, pulling and hauling (DeGregorio, 1997; Held, 1987; Preston and 'tHart, 1999). Such activity can of course be destructive (Nice 1998), but is nevertheless endemic to leadership in an institutional context and a potentially valuable source of pluralist checks and balances (Preston and 'tHart, 1999). However, such behaviour can only be predicated on the assumption that political leaders possess "civic virtue" (Starrat, 2001:337), the ability to forego, at least on some occasions, self interest on behalf of others or on behalf a wider common good. For without civic virtue, democracy disintegrates (Renshon, 2000). As Steve Patten points out, "one of the goals of [deliberative] democracy is to move beyond purely self-interested adversarialism" (2001:224). If successful political leaders are those who are able to create cohesion from diversity, such leaders must demonstrate their ability to balance self interested behaviour with broader policy goals.

Whilst not attempting to suggest that political institutional leadership might mirror all aspects of its business counterpart, I argue that this perspective offers a basis from which to consider how managers might work more effectively with complex and varied competing interests. If, the modern corporation is also increasingly characterised by similar tensions (Peele, 2005; Pfeffer, 1992; Rousseau and Rivero, 2003), an appreciation of how to manage the conflicts between cohesion and productive differences, and between self-interest and 'civic virtue,' potentially offers a useful parallel to consider.

Representative Leadership in Organizations

As previously highlighted, there are clearly inherent limits to which representation, accountability and inclusion are appropriate to the business context. Despite the increasing interest in stakeholder theory, the idea of business leaders representing the interests of a constituency, other than that of shareholder, seems as yet embryonic (Cragg, 2000). Furthermore, insofar as the faithful representation of constituent interests is apparent in business, accountability is not subject to the same high degree of public scrutiny required of political leaders. Similarly, the inclusion of constituent views in business decision making processes remains limited, despite significant and widespread effort to introduce formal participatory mechanisms (Thompson and Davidson, 1995; Heller, 1998). And most fundamentally, whilst protecting the rights of democratic participation is an immutable aspect of political leadership, it is not reflected in a business context (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000). The stewardship role of business leaders has become institutionalised as a concern for organizational wealth and shareholder return, rather than democratic principles of governance (Cragg, 2000).

However, these are mostly differences of degree rather than substance. Thus, on the one hand, political leaders within the institutions of democracy make considerable use of formal authority in such roles as party officials or committee members. Political parties and the executive institutions of government are organizations with hierarchies, and formal authority has a role in enabling political leaders to create coherence. Yet such formal authority must be balanced fundamentally with the legitimacy of representation and accountability for the inclusion of pluralist electorate views. On the other hand, from a stakeholder theory perspective, the formal authority of business leaders co-exists with their role as *de facto* representatives of constituent interests. As organizations become more complex and fragmented, the role of informal power derived from relationships and networks across the organization increases in importance (Atkinson and Butcher, 2003; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998) and leadership thus becomes evermore the product of an informal social process (Barker, 1997; Ray et al., 2004; Bennett et al., 2003). The appointment of leaders to senior positions is therefore dependent upon representing the interests of a whole range of relationships, which if not recognised can lead to political turnover (Denis et al., 2001; Comtois et al., 2004; Grit, 2004). Business leaders are therefore required to become *representative* in their approach, a process further reinforced by increasing public scrutiny of corporate affairs.

As it is for political leaders in democratic institutions, this requirement both to coalesce and distribute power can only be achieved on the assumption that the leadership of organizations is intrinsically a micro-political process. Since there is ample evidence that this is the case (Pfeffer, 1992; Barker, 1997; Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000; Butcher and Clarke, 2002), it follows that business leaders need to and, indeed, appear to embrace behaviours that not only include debate, lobbying and coalition building, but also more contentious activities such as information management, covert action and an ability to “trick, woo and cajole support” (DeGregorio, 1997:2). In other words, if some level of cohesion around core organizational values is to be achieved, these behaviours need to become as integral to business leadership as open dialogue and debate about differences. As has increasingly been recognised (Pfeffer, 1992; Buchanan, 1999; Vigoda, 2003), micro-political behaviour in organizations, far from being dysfunctional, is central to the achievement of managerial goals. Moreover, it may well constitute a vehicle to strengthen the social responsibility of managers (Grit, 2004).

In this respect, the negative connotation associated with ‘organizational politics’ is a residue of rational bureaucratic values and an impediment to effective management of the stakeholder organization. In this thesis, political capital is viewed more as a democratic asset (Novicevic and Harvey, 2004; Butcher and Clarke, 2002; Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000) which reflects the varying capacity of individuals to influence the way they are governed. Coopey and Burgoyne (2000) also argue that the legitimacy of political action may be accelerated through statutory rights that guarantee participation in debate, freedom of speech and protection from illegal coercion. However, as Heller (1998) observes, over the last 50 years the many attempts to introduce greater levels

of democracy into the workplace have met with limited success, and formal participation in decision making can be slow and messy, leading to unwarranted levels of conflict (Duchon et al. 1998, cited in Ashmos et al., 2002). And as Stuckey (1999) highlights in the context of political institutions, tightening formal accountability may only force leaders to resort to less acceptable means of micro-political behaviour. As with the leadership of political institutions, responsible micro-political behaviour can only be predicated on the assumption that business leaders possess civic virtue. There is no evidence to suggest that managers are any less motivated by just causes, any less willing to forego self-serving ends, or any less prepared to distinguish between ethical and unethical means, than elected politicians (Michalos, 2001).

Thus in summary, this comparison between institutional and organizational leadership highlights the way in which individual leadership is central to the development of democratic governance in both contexts; formal processes are simply insufficient to guarantee its enactment. Whilst the fear of leadership power being used for coercion will always be in tension with democratic principles, leadership is central to the democratic process in which individuals exercise influence over their collective autonomy (Ruscio, 2004). Furthermore, I argue that in work settings where organizing is dominated by a unitary and bureaucratic mindset, progress may best be made by such leadership action. The coherence of action offered by unitarism will always be in conflict with pressure for local autonomy and, as in political institutions, balancing the needs of both is a process of political leadership (Patten, 2001; Ruscio, 2004). In both work and institutional contexts, leadership is central to the effective governance of local communities (John and Cole, 1999; Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001; Caldart and Ricart, 2004).

On this basis, Representative Leadership (RL) behaviour is seen as the product of a voluntaristic mindset in which managers recognise the need to engage in debate and action to represent matters of individual and organization concern irrespective of hierarchical position or explicit authority. Notwithstanding the analysis of representative democracy above, the term 'representative' leadership is used here primarily to emphasise the micro-political dimension of this behaviour rather than a formal process of representation. In reality, the behaviour described is more akin to principles of participative democracy, that is, encouraging difference, voice, self-organization and decision making (Patten, 2001), than to those of formal representation. As in civic and public affairs, these discursive practices are predicated on the basis that they help to form local identities and influence organizational values.

3.4 Organization voluntarism as emerging practice

At this stage, this view of voluntarism and RL represents an exploratory contribution to theory (Boisot and Child, 1999), but one that reflects emerging organizational practice in pluralist organizational settings, and for that reason alone warrants further academic attention. For example, a recent co-evolutionary study by Galunic and Eisenhardt (2001) reveals how senior

managers have crafted an organizational form where diversity and autonomy of action is greatly encouraged, but an appropriate degree of alignment is still achieved. This culture and architecture are the result of a decentralised and self-organized behaviour. Business units are free to shape their own portfolios, including the warrant to contest other divisions for control of different products and markets. In response, senior managers reward winners and good 'corporate citizenship' but also help losers to improve. Most importantly, such decisions are guided by social considerations about fairness as well as economic imperatives for profit and growth. However, in this study, as with much of the discourse on co-evolution, the role of power remains under-explored.

In contrast, Denis et al. (2001), in their study of leadership and strategic change in the pluralistic setting of hospital administration, note, in line with our observations of voluntarism, how leadership is necessarily a political process. In a situation where power is diffuse and objectives divergent, levels of coherence are achieved by constellations of leaders who are sensitive to the needs of different constituencies in order to gain credibility and support. Constructive political activity, in terms of compromise, lobbying, alliances and collaborative solutions are central to how support is mobilised. In particular, Denis et al. note the role of "creative individuals and committed unified groups in proactively moving to make change happen" (2001:834) in situations where the legitimacy of change initiatives cannot be taken for granted. Comtois et al. (2004) also highlights the role of politics in the process of health care innovation. The same conclusions about the centrality of power and politics in voluntaristic activity are reached by Clarke and Meldrum (1999) and Clarke et al., (2002) in their studies of bottom up change. Lipman-Blumen and Leavitt's (1999) exploration of 'hot groups' reflects similar aspects of unofficial behaviour.

Evidence of the way in which such communities can stimulate change and innovation is provided by Swan et al. (2002) who demonstrate how radical innovation in the health care sector was achieved against a backdrop of diverse professional interests and uneven power relations. Coherence in approach was achieved through a discursive strategy, reflective of Reynolds "politics of difference" (2000:71), that sought to align the competing interests and agendas in the innovation process through the rhetoric of community *and* engagement with the diverse interests that constituted that community. Also, similar to the Galunic and Eisenhardt case, the management team were able to balance commercial interests with the broader values of other groups by sublimating purely economic considerations in the cause of community building. Research by Ashmos et al. (2002) suggests that this type of engagement helps to generate multiple perspectives of the environment. In turn, this alters an organization's predisposition to new challenges and opportunities, thus stimulating innovation and continual adaptation. Similar conclusions are reached by Ravasi and Verona (2001) and Foss (2003) in their analyses of the Danish company Oticon. In Oticon, innovation is sustained by structural ambiguity and voluntary project initiatives, and strategic coherence the product of continual negotiation amongst a plurality of coordinating groups and roles.

Colbert (2004) provides thirteen HRM principles, in use today, which can be used to nurture such innovation by balancing both coherence and complexity. These include tolerating multiple aims, embracing debate, and creating space for experimentation.

My own research (Clarke, 2006, - explored in detail in the next section) with 31 managers in five organizations characterised by varying attitudes towards plurality is also supportive of the notion of organizational voluntarism and RL. The research identified a range of individual approaches to working with plurality of interests. These behaviours are represented on a continuum ranging from 'rational' to 'representative' (see figure 3). At one end, leadership behaviour reflects the use of formal processes such as meetings and senior management presentations to position causes and influence colleagues. This was also characterised by a tendency to limit debate and challenge to a small coterie of senior managers and to prescribe delegation and empowerment within well controlled guidelines. At the other end of the range six managers employed behaviours consistent with the conceptualisation of voluntarism and RL. These included working with individual agendas, the use of covert activity and representing the interests of quasi legitimate constituencies.

Figure 3 Leadership Behaviours

From (Rational Leadership)	To (Representative Leadership)
Preference for formal meetings and processes	Extensive use of informal processes, e.g. covert activity, corridor meetings
Focus on senior management approval/buy-in	Focus on working with personal agendas
Relationship building focussed at senior levels	Relationship building and networking at all levels
Debating and challenging amongst small coterie	Encouraging debate and challenge at all levels
Carefully prescribed delegation and empowerment	Providing others with space and autonomy to experiment, stimulating bottom up change
Tendency to influence through operational control	Influencing by focussing on broad direction
Working on formally agreed priorities/issues	Working outside of agreed responsibilities, often on unofficial initiatives
Challenging through established processes	Challenging the status quo, irreverent and subversive
Exclusive and Involving of few	Inclusive and involving of many
Representing legitimate organization interests e.g. own department, customers	Representing the interests of quasi legitimate constituencies, often external to own responsibilities, e.g. other functions, unofficial issues

3.5 Organizational voluntarism as emerging theory

However, notwithstanding these examples, central to this thesis is the desire to stimulate broader debate and theory building about the reconfiguration of organizational plurality and coherence. So, to what extent might the concept of voluntarism make good the shortfalls in existing theory building by meeting the four criteria identified in section 2; (i) the centrality of organizational plurality, (ii) the embeddedness of social relations and power in organizational working, (iii) accounting for the motivations of managers to pursue actions in contravention of traditional approaches, and (iv) the need for clear organizational benefits?

(i) Firstly, at a time when organization plurality is only likely to increase (Denis et al. 2001), the concept of voluntarism clearly assumes the inevitability and value of plurality, greater autonomy and choice as being central to organizational success. Diversity of interest and autonomy of individual action are prerequisites for voluntarism. Reflecting as they do, broader changes in society, ultimately, these factors may well be the most significant drivers for the adoption of voluntaristic principles. In this way I view voluntarism as a natural stage in the evolution of organizational form.

(ii) Voluntarism directly reflects the centrality of social relationships, community and power in the structuration of action and thus provides a basis for understanding how institutional power distributions both influence and are influenced by the enactment of these voluntaristic principles. The centrality of power reflected in the dualism of hierarchy and participation, competition and collaboration, local autonomy and strategic coherence, embodies the structuration of resources, and cognitive and moral rules upon which managers draw that both constrain and enable what they do (Hales, 1999; Giddens, 1984). With organizational voluntarism, power and its negotiation through political discourse is positioned as an explicit leadership activity; “power is the means of getting things done” (Giddens, 1984:283). For example, Denis et al. (2001) highlight how leaders in pluralistic settings mobilise a range of symbolic and material resources to create influence and “strategic couplings” which include; aligning with widely held perceptions about organizational issues and environmental constraints, the use of positional authority, secrecy, leveraging the credibility of acknowledged performance, maintaining appropriateness of behaviour in the eyes of significant support groups etc. Through such practices, over time, managers are able to constitute and reconstitute what they do and who they are as contextual forces evolve (Denis et al., 2001).

(iii) The third criterion by which new theory must be judged is that of providing strong linkages to improved organizational performance, for without which there is little incentive for senior management to adopt such principles. In this regard, we see the idea of voluntarism fitting well within the co-evolutionary discourse in which the need for organizational flexibility and the continual reconfiguration of strategic capabilities is viewed as critical to sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001; Rindova and Kotha, 2001). The concept of voluntarism and its themes of local autonomy and

diversity reflect well emerging views as to the importance of self-organization in allowing for a dynamic feedback between the organization and its environment in order to co-evolve (Lewin and Volberda, 1999; Ashmos et al, 2002). The self-organization inherent within the voluntaristic form clearly facilitates the process of rapid reconfiguration to respond to different market circumstances (Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001; Child and McGrath, 2001; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Perhaps, most acutely for senior managers, the concept of voluntarism also provides a framework for capitalising on diversity in the pursuit of innovation. Local communities, being at the interface of the organization and its environment are seen to be a rich source of innovation (Brown and Duguid, 1991, 2001). Scarborough et al. (2004) note how local autonomy in project groups can help to overcome the barriers to the flow and transfer of knowledge. In their study this knowledge integration was exemplified by developing local rules, openness and greater exchange of information. More fundamentally, research by Ashmos et al. (2002) and Ravasi and Verona (2001) highlight how participation helps to generate multiple perspectives which in turn alters an organization's predisposition to new challenges and opportunities and thus potentially stimulates innovation. In effect, these ideas reflect further schemas about the structural characteristics of institutions that will serve to legitimate voluntarism in the eyes of senior management.

However, above all else, I believe that the concept of voluntarism potentially provides senior managers with a model for merging hierarchical structure with greater egalitarian practice. Whilst cooperation declines as organization size increases, voluntary group discussion in value setting leads to increased commitment (Cludts, 1999) and contribution (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002). Such communication also enhances group identity and personal responsibility, which are powerful mechanisms of self-control (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002; Cludts, 1999). Indeed, paradoxically, managers are seen to enhance their authority by participating in this debate (Cludts, 1999). By acknowledging the tension between, for example, the seemingly contradictory relationships of hierarchy and participation, or local autonomy and strategic coherence, the resulting 'organized dissonance'; - the "strategic union of forms presumed to be hostile" - can produce critical levels of organizational resonance (Ashcraft, 2001:1304). Indeed, voluntarism may come to be considered as one of the few simple but often contradictory rules (Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001) that are believed to guide the development of successful co-evolution.

(iv) Finally, of particular significance to the concept of voluntarism is the question as to why individuals might wish to engage with ideas that, at least in the short term, are at odds with the dominant rational approach to organising. What are the interpretive schemata (Hales, 1999; Giddens, 1984) that manager's draw upon to make their work meaningful in pluralistic settings? This question reflects the fourth criterion by which new theory might be evaluated and has been the subject of a substantial research project and is discussed in detail in the next section.

4. The Voluntaristic Mindset: Representative Leadership

This section explores the antecedents of RL behaviour and details an empirical study designed for this purpose. This study is reported in paper 7; 'A study of representative leadership in stimulating organization democracy'. The section concludes by drawing together the different strands of the research into a conceptual framework for organizational voluntarism.

Initial theorising about the possible motivations to work from a voluntaristic perspective suggested that my research could be usefully informed by the discourse on identity and work meanings (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003; Knights and McCabe, 2003; Ford and Harding, 2003). From this perspective all managers are continuously engaged in forming and repairing a sense of self-identity that is coherent and distinctive (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000). Self-identity is thus a complex mixture of conscious and subconscious elements, an interpretative and reflexive grid of schemas shaped by experience of endless interactions with individuals and societal institutions (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Danieli and Thomas, 1999; Giddens, 1984). I argue that an orientation towards voluntarism and RL, reflects a bundle of such schemas or cognitions about organizational working that enable some managers to create and sustain viable definitions of who they are and what they do. This process may be in contravention of institutionalised definitions of self, but can still enhance affirmation of self (Hales, 1999; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Weeks and Galunic, 2003).

4.1 Conceptualising Representative Leadership

The earlier comparison between the institutional and organizational contexts (section 3.2) suggested that, in an environment where plurality of interest was evident, leadership was likely to be characterised by motivations that sought to work with the tensions this plurality created; working with cohesion and difference, and self-interest and civic virtue. In order to explore both the behaviours and the antecedents of this behaviour in a corporate setting, an initial conceptual framework for RL was developed from the literature discussed here.

Four behaviour sets were hypothesised as being central to balancing diversity and cohesion of agenda, and self-interest and civic virtue. (1) Representing the interests of constituencies not immediately connected with a leader's own formal responsibilities - leaders who value diversity of view are hypothesised as being concerned to bring together a wide variety of constituencies to pursue interests through collective action, thereby creating a sense of involvement (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005). (2) In turn this requires leaders to provide such constituencies with space, autonomy and power to act and experiment. This behaviour is premised on the idea that, in practice, the participation of unofficially constituted groups in organizational settings can provide the level of

self-control necessary for the maintenance of organizational congruence (Ashmos et al., 2002; Caldart and Ricart, 2004). (3) In order to encourage cohesion, RL's need to facilitate debate and challenge. This orientation is similar to the notion of an 'arena' (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997) in which "differences meet, are fought over, reconciled and reconfigured into new groupings factions and alliances" (1997:61). (4) In practice, this means that organizational politics, - defined here as "those deliberate efforts made by individuals or groups in organizations to use power in pursuit of their own interests" (Butcher and Clarke, 2001:19), - as with its counterpart in an institutional setting, is a necessary and logical process by which diverse interests are resolved (Butcher and Clarke, 2002; Held, 1987). Political behaviours such as networking, positioning causes, lobbying, and coalition building (Denis et al., 2001; Ammeter et al, 2002) constitute a significant subset of RL behaviours. These four behaviour sets were viewed as recursive, both shaped by, and shaping, social structures.

4.2 Researching Representative Leadership

In order to understand the influence of context/structure on the enactment of such behaviours, five commercial organizations were selected from different industries using data from publicly available sources such as annual reports and websites. The concepts of complexity absorption and complexity reduction (Boisot and Child, 1999) were used as a template for this selection. That is, organizations that reflected public statements of intent concerning levels of complexity absorption (local autonomy, diversity of strategic activity and more informal and decentralised structures) were deemed to reflect a willingness to embrace pluralism. Organizations that reflected public statements of intent concerning complexity reduction (fewer goals and strategic activities and which tended to formalise and centralise structures and decision making) were considered to reflect a level of intolerance toward plurality. The extent to which this link between complexity, structure and plurality was actually reflected in managerial behaviour and cognition formed part of the analysis, and was used here only as a theoretical starting point from which to create the organizational sample.

The sample thus reflected a continuum of public responses to pluralism ranging from "democratic ownership" by a diverse array of members, to one company describing its leadership as the product of the CEO and the leadership team operating as one in making decisions for the "entire [company name] group". These were as follows; a conglomerate from the co-operative movement (Congco), a food manufacturing business (Foodco), a building supplies organization (Buildco), a publishing company (Bookco), and a financial services organization (Finco).

Case studies were selected as the most appropriate methodology as they are of particular value where the theory base is comparatively weak and because they are particularly suited to an environment where theory building and testing are feasible and where a level of triangulation is possible (Harrison, 2002). On this

basis, multiple case studies were selected from this sample to assess the validity of the initial conceptual framework and to generate data that would enable the exploration of the potential antecedents of these behaviours. Thirty-one cases were eventually selected for interview using three criteria: firstly, that they were senior managers who in theory would have the potential autonomy to exercise representative behaviours; secondly that they had around ten years service, which, when combined with their seniority, would suggest a level of knowledge about how to work effectively within their organization's culture; and thirdly, that they were familiar with each other so as to permit a level of triangulation in their reported behaviours. (Bacharach and Bamberger, 1996). The resulting sample contained 7 women and 24 men of which 17 held line responsibilities and 14 functional or corporate responsibilities.

Data were collected via semi structured interviews; questions being loosely designed around 10 broad themes (Laukkanen, 1994), such as 'role', 'change', and 'influence'. Derived from the initial conceptual framework, these themes were designed to surface the constructs that each manager used to make sense of and negotiate their environment. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes: all were recorded and transcribed. In order to minimise the tendency for socially desirable responses, confidentiality and anonymity were assured (Johnson and Johnson, 2002).

The interview was divided into two parts. The first part focussed on ascertaining each manager's perception about the enactment of key organizational activities such as change management and strategy development. Such issues can be contentious and thus responses would be indicative of perceptions of plurality and political activity (Pettigrew, 1995). Intra-organizational descriptions were analysed and mapped onto Boisot and Child's (1999) complexity reduction/absorption model to reflect a continuum of tolerance toward plurality.

The second part focussed on surfacing how each manager went about his or her work within this context; what behaviour did they use to negotiate this environment? For example, questions included "How would you describe your role?", "To whom do you see yourself responsible and for what?" to surface thinking patterns about perceptions of personal autonomy. Using a laddering technique (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002), 'How?' questions were used to surface behaviour, followed by questions such as "What causes you to work in this way?" or "Why?" (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2002) to surface a logic of action (Bacharach and Bamberger, 1996; Buchanan, 1999), that is, to illuminate linkages between "if I do this then.... X will result". The answers given in the first section, which focussed on perceptions of organizational issues, also served to ensure that the analysis of this second set of responses could be understood in context, and thus reduce any tendency to make simplistic cross case generalisations (Johnson and Johnson, 2002).

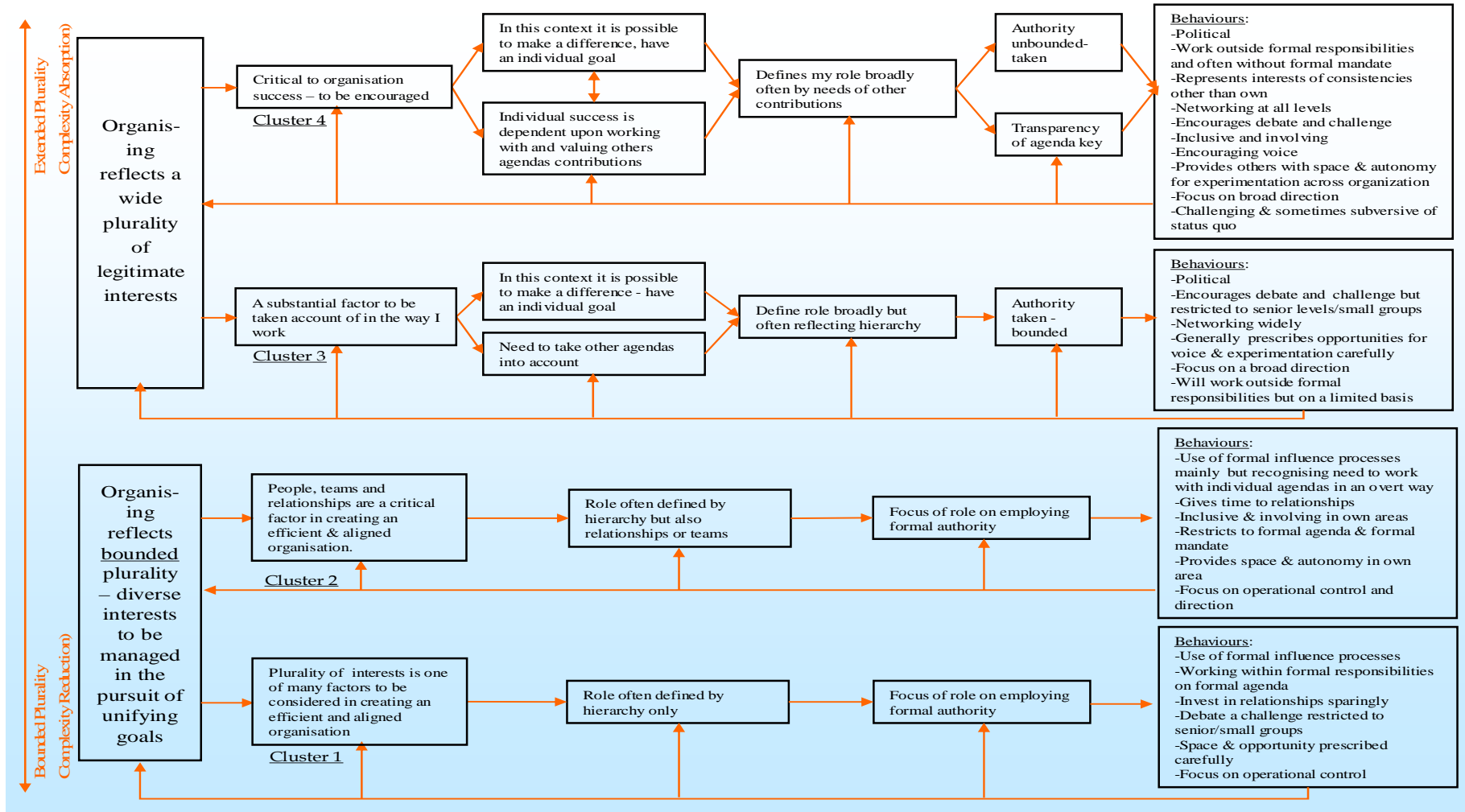
Validity was further enhanced through interviewees being encouraged to illustrate responses with anecdotes, as these can reveal tacit thinking and organizational routines not easily surfaced through other methods (Ambrosini

and Bowman, 2002). In addition, each in-company case was constructed to permit a degree of triangulation of reported behaviours by other members of that sample. Using these data, a portrait of each manager was constructed for comparison with that manager's own description.

The data were analysed using standard practices for qualitative data described by Miles and Huberman (1994) (Milliken et al., 2003). Preliminary coding of behaviours was undertaken using the constructs from the initial conceptual framework. These were refined after several iterations by emerging themes that were subjected to review by others not involved in the data collection, and a list of significant variables created for each case. These were used as the basis for initial causal 'cognitive' mapping. A representative selection of these maps was turned into short profiles that were then presented to the interviewees for feedback. Comments were noted and incorporated back into the overall analysis. Cross case maps were constructed using variables estimated to be the most influential in accounting for the behaviour described by each manager and their colleagues.

The full range of leadership behaviours identified in the research (see figure 3), were related to four different 'cognitive clusters', albeit that within each there were variations in the priority given to different types of behaviour. The clusters represent "approximated displays of elements of managers' thoughts at a specific point in time, noted in particular ways, in particular environments" (Johnson and Johnson, 2002:232). These four clusters, in keeping with the proposition for the study, were readily differentiated by perceptions about the legitimacy of organizational pluralism (see figure 4). All interviewees acknowledged the legitimacy of plurality in their organizations to some degree. However, this varied from an acceptance of the inevitability of plurality in which differences should be minimised, or at least heavily aligned in the interests of organizational effectiveness, to a view where plurality of interest was viewed as a critical organizing principle, to be encouraged in order to enhance organizational effectiveness. The former view is termed 'bounded plurality' and most closely reflects an orientation toward complexity reduction and codification. The opposite end of the continuum is termed 'extended plurality' and reflects a disposition toward complexity absorption and abstraction (Boisot and Child, 1999).

Figure 4. A continuum of Perceived Plurality



4.3 Research Findings

The detailed findings are reported in Clarke (2006), but in summary serve to extend and refine the RL behaviours identified in the initial conceptual framework. In particular, although some level of political behaviour was expected, the findings emphasise how the leaders reflecting RL behaviour often used covert and irreverent approaches, and worked on unofficial initiatives in order to promote their causes. The potential for this behaviour to be interpreted negatively appeared to be minimised by a cognitive framework that legitimised individual interests when balanced with other's agendas, a willingness to take authority in the pursuit of these interests and a concern to be (selectively) transparent about this agenda with others. In this way, individuals appeared to be able to balance both the need for cohesion and diversity, and self-interest and civic virtue. The data were also indicative of a causal flow of cognition from legitimacy of plurality to transparency of motive, albeit that these links were highly recursive, emphasising their reflexive nature. But what does this tell us about why individuals in corporate settings might work in this way in contravention of dominant unitary definitions of managing?

From a structuration perspective, social action is the product of both structure and agency (Giddens, 1984; Hales, 1999; Pozzebon, 2004) and the interaction of these were evident in several ways. For example, Foodco and Congco, organizations that reflected a long tradition of local autonomy and individual independence in their cultures, employed half of the managers working with cognitions of extended plurality. This appears to have encouraged the unofficial adoption of overt political behaviours as a method of working with diverse interests.

Those working with cognitions of bounded plurality were also influenced by context through institutionalised definitions of managing and leading. In these first two clusters, cognitions embodied a sense of duty to the pursuit of collective goals. This 'obedience' was enforced by legitimate authority structures (Courpasson and Dany, 2003). The dissonance between the inevitability of individual needs and collective outcomes was assuaged by an identity formation that blurred the boundaries between manager and the organization, such that some managers came to see themselves *as the organization* (Ford and Harding, 2003). The effect is that managers both control others and themselves, restricting the opportunities they have for working with greater levels of autonomy (Ford and Harding, 2003; Hales, 1999; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Robertson and Swan, 2003).

Formal role, too, may have influenced responses, as some positions necessarily reflected greater scope for taking authority (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Nevertheless, this did not appear to be a primary determinant of behaviour. In two cases senior managers defined their roles with less discretion than their subordinates. I had also anticipated that RL behaviour would be directly influenced by senior management encouragement, although no direct support for this was obtained from those portraying RL behaviour. In two instances the

sample included the direct reports of managers within the RL cluster. The responses of their subordinates suggested that they were being encouraged to adopt RL behaviour.

RL behaviours were identified in each of the five organizations suggesting that agency played a more significant part in the evolution of RL cognitions. For example, managers reflecting RL behaviours often interpreted their priorities very differently from colleagues in the same organization. In one instance, a senior manager was pursuing an agenda of decentralisation and diversity, whilst his colleague working from the first cognitive cluster was occupied with developing a more homogenous and structurally aligned organization.

Where plurality was considered most legitimate, the cognitive clusters were delineated by the degree to which individuals perceived their own agendas as being interwoven with those of others. Where this did not occur, cognitions still reflected a priority for autonomy and taking authority, political activity, debate and challenge. However, these aspirations were still constrained by institutional interpretations of unity. This was particularly marked in one Foodco director, who was clearly committed to extending plurality through values and structures that encouraged senior management ownership. Yet he felt equally strongly that “there can’t be a load of different visions of where the group’s going, you’ve got to lead with one vision”, and “they [line managers] can decide not to comply, they can decide not to take the synergy that’s available, they can decide to be parochial.....” where ‘parochial’ and ‘synergy’ were used in a pejorative sense to reflect concerns of control and unity. This orientation is suggestive of Robertson and Swan’s (2003) notion of ‘dependable autonomy’ and Clegg and Courpasson’s (2004) ‘soft despotism’ where identity control is exercised through a form of enforced democracy in which managers adopt apparently independent behaviours but which ultimately align with the firm.

Nevertheless, managers do not always accept the organizational identity provided without also finding culturally legitimate ways to distance themselves from it (Weeks and Galunic, 2003; Knights and McCabe, 2003). In this way RL was formed in contravention of institutionalised interpretations, but still enhanced affirmation of self (Hales, 1999; Knights and McCabe, 2003). Thus, within the fourth cluster, individual agency seems to offer the most likely explanation for the adoption of RL behaviours. Of the six managers who reflected RL, four attributed their approach to development experiences, either on formal programmes, or as the result of career experiences or job transitions that had forced new approaches to leading. In particular, these transitions enabled individuals to view their own independence as being strongly linked to those of others. This supports Knights and McCabe’s (2003) notion that individuality is a social not an individual outcome, and is reflective of the political institutional leadership notion of ‘civic virtue’. The managers who adopted RL behaviours were engaged in a process of repairing and maintaining a sense of identity by pursuing their own goals and ambitions, whilst balancing these with those of others around them. By placing aside ideals and illusions of autonomy, they created space to explore and enact opportunities for micro emancipation

(Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Those reflecting RL behaviours, tended to see themselves as independent of the goals of the organization, whilst also working within them, but equally at times undermining them by behaviours and activities that were seen as irreverent by some colleagues.

Sally, (Bookco) provides a good example of this behaviour. She was described by her colleagues as “massively democratic....and she makes it work”, “a brilliant leader, open to dialogue with whoever, and it interests her” and “the most stimulating, exciting person I could think of working for”. Sally deliberately built an ‘unofficial’ silo around her business unit in order to enable it to form its own distinctive identity and value set and to ‘protect’ it from corporate “interference”, whilst also contributing to the success of the wider group in difficult times of trading.

The eventual success of this silo approach led to its formal adoption as a new ‘business model’. In order to achieve this she had to justify its value to a broader number of constituents, “to have the [my] division seen as an example of how we might work better”. Sally modified and redefined structural resources to enable new possibilities for identity formation. This behaviour is also reflective of Watson’s notion of “ethical assertiveness” (2003:182) in which conflicting pressures are seen as opportunities for managers to fulfil elements of a personal ethical agenda.

These opportunities were extended by the very agency of representative leadership, namely, representing and working with a wide range of constituencies that offered different circumstances in which to negotiate their identity (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Perriton, 2000; Handley et al., 2006). For example a manager in Finco described himself as a “marriage guidance counsellor” working with “organizational couples” Another in Congco defined his role in terms of “a prompt to the organization to actually do something about the future, so I see my role very much as a way of challenging people about what the future’s going to be like”...and consequently involved himself in many relationships. These relationships appeared to help those embodying RL behaviour to create and sustain different notions of what their work was and also their identity in doing that work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

Defining one’s own identity and autonomy in relation to others is also suggestive of a predisposition toward social fairness. Galunic and Eisenhardt (2001) view this as a key element in the development of organizations as social communities. Courpasson and Dany, quoting Selznick, note that for a community to be strong, there must be a desire to further the interests of others, not merely to give them the consideration they deserve as moral equals (2003:1249). In effect, this distinction reflects the division between the third and fourth cognitive clusters. By working in a way that reflected the implicit mutuality of individual goals, and thus the need to further the interests of others rather than merely taking others’ views into account, the behaviour of those operating with cognitions of RL might be seen as indicative of encouraging the formation

of just such communities (Courpasson and Dany, 2003; Knights and McCabe, 2003; Barker, 1997).

However, within each cluster and across the whole sample, there was an understandable variety of behaviour. Two explanations are offered for this. Firstly, that the tensions and contradictions between individual and collective interests, and unity and plurality, create an inevitable ambivalence about the legitimacy of different behaviours. This was perhaps most evident in the responses to the legitimacy of organizational politics, which typifies much research in this area (Buchanan and Badham, 1999; Butcher and Clarke, 2001). This ambivalence was reflected in both the way politics was discussed and in the way colleagues viewed those managers employing such tactics. Secondly, the process of identity formation is itself the result of just such innumerable contradictory experiences and structures (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002), and thus variation in behaviour and cognition are only to be expected. These contradictions also create 'organised dissonance' - the "strategic union of forms presumed to be hostile" (Ashcraft, 2001:1304). In this study, legitimacy of plurality and reciprocity of success appear to be significant in enabling managers to work with these contradictions as a form of 'organised dissonance' (ibid); going beyond the notion that more of one necessitates less of the other. This suggests that, whilst the expression of RL will not resolve the tensions between plurality and coherence, the wider adoption of RL may help to make the tension more constructive.

4.3 A conceptual framework of voluntarism

The foregoing theorising, research and analysis in this and the last section are encapsulated in figure 5, A Model of Voluntarism. The structure of the model is broadly derived from work by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) which, in investigating the propensity of blue-collar workers to craft their own roles, has resonance with managerial voluntarism. This work also contributes to the discourse on work identity and meanings, and similarly considers the influence of structural, relational and organizational influences on individual agency. However, in using broad descriptors of work orientation such as intrinsic or extrinsic motivations, the study provides only a generalised insight into the individual orientations towards job crafting. This problem is exacerbated by the authors supporting their hypothesis with secondary research designed for other purposes. One effect of this approach is to provide insufficient analysis of institutionalised power relations and their effect on individual cognitions.

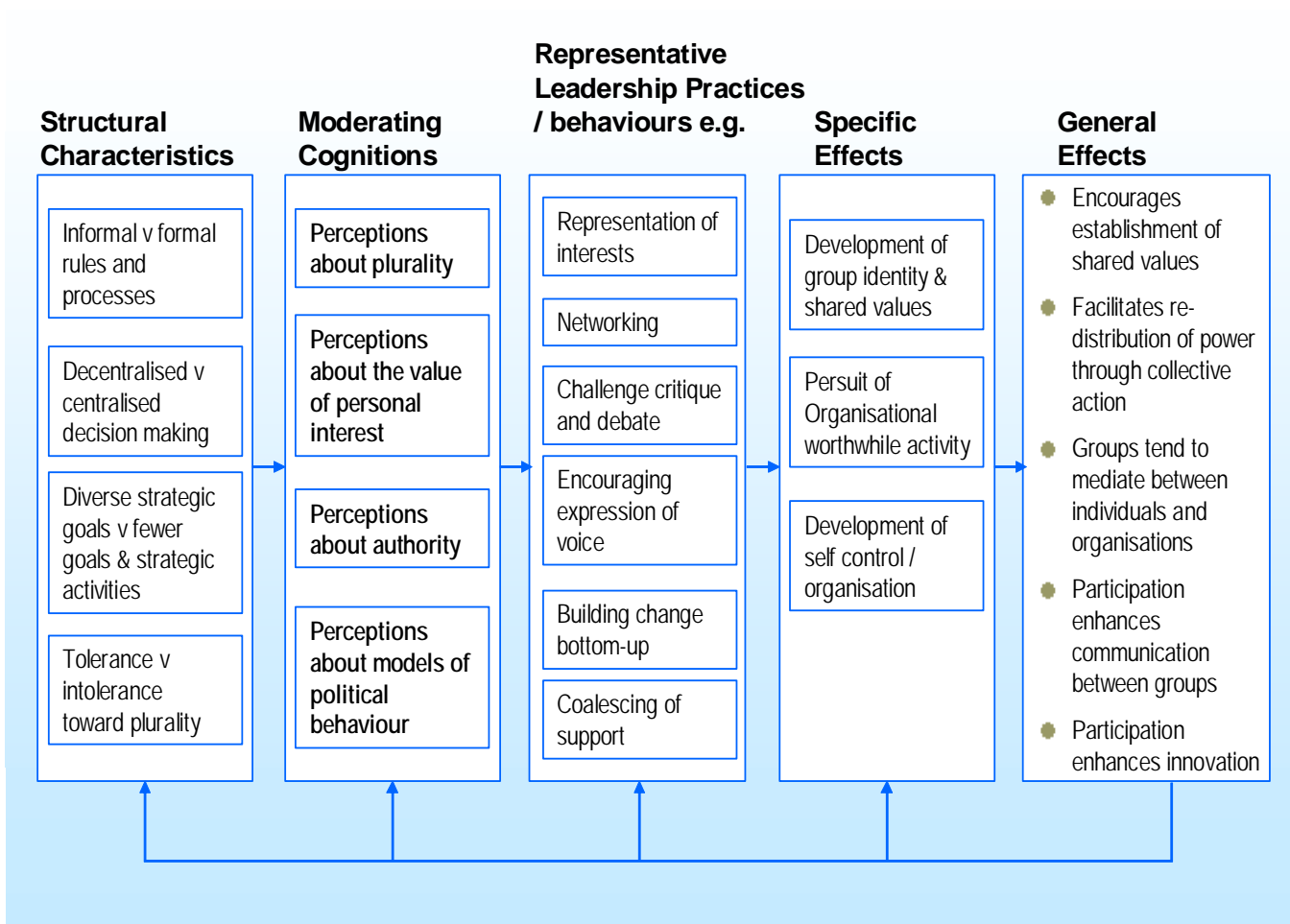
The model below positions the politics of individual autonomy as central to managerial work. Institutionalised power relations, reflected in the socially constructed characteristics of organization, provide the context in which managers define their work and identities. These are moderated by cognitions that can either confirm or disconfirm the legitimacy of these dominant definitions of organizing. Cognitive clusters that promote a positive orientation toward plurality, personal interest, assuming authority and models of political behaviour are likely to encourage RL behaviours.

This list of clusters should not be seen as exhaustive but indicative of the key cognitions that appear to legitimise RL. Specifically, as suggested by the empirical research this behaviour leads to voluntaristic outcomes: local identity and autonomy, self-organization and the pursuit of organizationally worthwhile activity. In turn, this behaviour is considered to have a general effect of promoting more democratic organizational working that reflects wider participation, distribution of power and the basis for improved organizational innovation. However, the empirical research has been primarily concerned with exploring the idea and antecedents of RL, and has not analysed its links to the general effects detailed in the model or to wider organizational outcomes. This weakness is discussed in section 6.2.

Ferdinand (2004) has criticised earlier conceptions of RL and voluntarism (Butcher and Clarke, 2002) as being insufficiently plural and too centred on a managerial elite. Indeed, in the RL study the different constituencies with which these managers defined their identities were predominately managerial in status. The findings in the research study are based on the analysis of a relatively homogenous sample of managers and restricted to senior hierarchical levels. In largely defining their identities in relation to other managerial groups it might be argued that this process was merely reinforcing a managerial hegemony. However, some commentators (see Clegg et al., 2006) note that this delineation between managers and non managers is unduly dichotomous in the face of increasing organizational polyphony. If we accept that organizations are flattening and thus enabling *some* degree of power and knowledge distribution, Ferdinand's observations may be overly critical. If, having accepted the value of a plurality of interests, it is arguable that a manager would not then limit the enactment of this value to those in formal management positions. Indeed, the managers working with an RL disposition appeared to make no differentiation between managers and non managers, and at least two were actively engaged in processes of wider employee participation.

From the perspective of Structuration Theory, this framework reflects highly recursive thinking and behaviour; the arrowed lines indicate how context and action each influence, and are influenced by, the other. In consequence, there lies the possibility of intervening in this process, of furthering the adoption of voluntaristic behaviour in the pursuit of both organizational innovation and greater organizational democracy. This possibility is discussed in the next section.

Figure 5. A Model of Voluntarism



5 Developing Voluntarism through Management Learning

On the basis that RL offers the opportunity for creating a “relational synthesis” (Clegg, 2003: 378) between the need for organizational plurality and coherence, and in doing so has the potential for promoting more democratic working, in what ways then, might this voluntaristic mindset be encouraged? Organizational redesign, influenced by a rational mindset, on its own is only likely to reinforce unitary approaches to managing. An obvious additional vehicle is through management education, but then, this too is subject to the rationalising effects of unitarism. However, I argue that there is a particular and elemental relationship between voluntarism and ML that confers a unique opportunity for ML, to effect the development of voluntaristic working. This final section firstly explores this relationship and then gives consideration to what sort of educational principles might be required to develop RL in practising managers. Finally, the likelihood of such principles being implemented is assessed in the context of a business school setting.

This section therefore reflects my original thinking in this area as to the potential for ML to make a difference in society (paper 1, ‘Management Development: A New Role in Social Change’); criticisms of contemporary approaches to ML (paper 2, ‘Management Development as a Game of Meaningless Outcomes’) and more recent treatments of these issues from a specifically articulated voluntaristic viewpoint (paper 4, ‘Reconciling hierarchy and democracy: the value of ML’).

5.1 The Synergy between ML and Voluntarism

A Resonance between the Tenets of ML and Voluntarism

The first reason for perceiving an elemental relationship between ML and voluntarism lies in the idea that the principles of voluntaristic working/RL reflect a high degree of congruence with liberal adult educational (AE) values and it is within this field that much of the discourse on Management Learning has become situated (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997; Clarke and Butcher, 2006a). From a liberal reformist perspective, AE, in the western world is a tradition that depends on faith in informed free choice, self-awareness, emancipation through self-understanding, and a capacity for self-reflection through rational discourse (Mezirow, 2000). Over time much ML activity has come to embody many of these tenets of liberal AE philosophy. Three AE tenets in particular have resonance with a voluntaristic approach: challenge and critique, plurality of interest and the need for protected learning environments (Clarke and Butcher, 2006a).

Firstly, a key product of AE/ML is the value of critique, especially of power relationships and their impact on how individuals frame and resolve issues (Brookfield, 2001). In an organizational setting, encouraging a heightened awareness of the impact of institutionalised power provides the possibility for revealing how a unitary frame of reference constrains more democratic

organizational forms and the possibilities for micro emancipation that a voluntaristic mindset can facilitate (Clarke and Butcher, 2006a).

The second area in which AE and voluntaristic principles converge is the value attached to polyphony – the value of a multiplicity of voices and interests (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005; Clegg, et al., 2006). Central to both liberal AE and ML is the need for adults to “critically reflect on, appropriately validate, and effectively act on their (and others’) beliefs, interpretations, values, feelings and ways of thinking (Mezirow, 2000:26). In an ML setting Burgoyne and Jackson (1997) operationalise this value in their thesis of ML as a ‘pluralist arena’ where spaces need to be created and protected to encourage debate about organizational purpose and values. As organizations fragment into smaller, devolved operating units, effective organizational governance becomes more dependent on satisfying these diverse interests and claims to (partial) independence. Voluntarism, like ML takes the reconciliation of this polyphony of interests as key to collective organizational endeavour being sustained. These sectional interests need to have a ‘voice’, the autonomy and the independence of mind to participate in debate about contested views (Cludts, 1999). The presence of AE values of challenge and critique, open discourse, and a willingness to seek voluntary agreement, strengthen the political processes required for reconciling competing interests inherent in a voluntaristic approach. In this way, Coopey and Burgoyne describe politics as “the midwife to flexible organizational forms” (2000:881)

Finally, implicit in the notion of liberal AE is its subversive and irreverent nature, such that “when AE has a purpose to ‘change’ society in either radical or reformative respects, authority is likely to curb it” (Thomas, 1982:57). Consequently, as Mezirow points out, adult educators often create “protected environments” in which to foster learning insights, as free as possible from the influence of unequal power relationships (2000:31). Whilst Mezirow’s point is predominantly made to highlight the importance of collaborative learning relationships in AE, the idea is picked up by other authors. For example, Yorks and Marsick (2000) recognise that the questioning and voluntary nature of AE may well be considered threatening by senior management. They argue that organizations need to create space for learning to take place, but point out that because of the unpredictable outcomes from such activities, senior management may be apprehensive about doing so.

The possibility of creating protected environments to foster emancipation from hierarchical thinking is similarly central to the tenets of voluntarism described here and reflected in the research described in this thesis. Importantly, it embodies the reflexivity inherent in liberal AE practice in that it explicitly acknowledges voluntarisms’ subversive tendencies.

In essence, as described in section 4, a voluntaristic mindset potentially represents an organising principle that enables greater levels of personal autonomy. At the individual level, liberal adult education is also fundamentally concerned with this goal (Mezirow, 2000). On this basis voluntarism provides a

practical vehicle for the implementation of the ML agenda and should resonate with liberal adult educators seeking to encourage the wider adoption of the emancipatory project.

Ends and Means for Management Educators

The second reason for synergy between ML and voluntarism lies in the idea that voluntarism potentially provides the end and the means for management educators. That is, in an environment where the aspirational aims of AE/ML have been largely unfulfilled (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997), the goal of creating more choice for individuals can be accelerated by corporate ML professionals, adopting voluntaristic/RL behaviours themselves in their own organizations. (RL behaviours may be especially salient for those working in a Business school setting and this idea will be explored in more detail in section 5.5.)

ML as an Agent of Change

The final source of ML-voluntarism synergy reflects the accepted role of ML as an organizational change agent. Business is increasingly viewed as a complex activity and success is dependent upon an ability to create sufficient wealth, value or satisfaction for all stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995). In turn then, managers need to embrace this plurality in order to ensure organizational survival. In order to effect this transition business leaders will themselves therefore need to encourage ML activity that is responsive to a polyphony of voices. Indeed, at this point in time, if this sort of role does not come from ML, where else will it come from?

Having established, at least in theory, the elemental relationship between ML and voluntarism, I now turn to consider two key questions. Firstly, what sort of pedagogic principles are required to encourage voluntarism in a development setting, and secondly, given the fact that, as yet AE/ML goals remain largely unfulfilled, what factors might encourage the adoption of these principles as educational practice?

5.2 Educational Principles Required to Develop RL

I have defined a voluntaristic mindset as one in which managers recognise the need to engage in debate and action to represent matters of individual and organizational concern irrespective of hierarchical position or explicit authority. Given the asymmetric power distributions at work in organizations, any development activity designed to encourage this orientation must therefore reflect the need to disrupt the dominant narrative of unitarism. This requires individuals to be more self-reflective - to deliberate, judge, choose and act upon courses of action. This next section considers what sort of learning/development principles might facilitate such an approach.

The earlier analysis of RL was informed by the discourse on identity and work meanings and this field of study too has contributed to recent research on learning as a process of identity construction (Lave and Wenger 1991, Huzzard and Östergren, 2002). A person's identity resides in his or her capacity to

maintain a particular personal 'narrative' but when institutional conditions in which viable narratives are constructed change, individuals may find opportunities for reformulating these identities (Danieli and Thomas, 1999). The increasing complexity, uncertainty and contradictory nature of contemporary managerial life represents one such opportunity, and ML a vehicle for both revealing this possibility and for facilitating the process of identity reformulation (Perriton, 2000). The following analysis approaches the development of a voluntaristic mindset from this perspective: of disrupting dominant narratives of unitary and rational management and encouraging individuals to voluntarily reformulate their identities with reference to a plurality of organizational interests and communities.

The Value of Critical Management Theory in ML

This does of course reflect a highly politicised agenda, but then management education is implicitly political (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000; Reynolds, 1999) and many of the shortcomings of ML can be attributed to a failure to acknowledge the restricted set of values at play in much of its execution (Clarke, 1999a; Grey, 2004). Indeed, this viewpoint is central to Critical Management Theory (CMT) the development of which has been at the forefront of proposing alternative approaches to management education that explicitly seek to challenge existing management practice rather than sustain it (Grey and Mitev, 1995; Reynolds, 1998, 1999; Dehler et al, 2001). As such, a critical pedagogy has much to contribute to the design of development processes that seek to dislocate and reposition managerial identities. For example, such an approach directly addresses issues of vested power and politics in both an organizational and educational context.

However, the CMT pedagogy has attracted criticisms from both inside and outside of its own tradition that question the practicality of its application. For example, CMT has been taken to task for neglecting workable proposals in favour of "grand utopian utterances" (Gibson cited in Reynolds, 1999:177); for promulgating its ideas with such authority that it silences the dialogue it seeks to promote (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996; Reynolds, 1999); and for cutting the world into simplistic positions of oppressed and oppressors (Fenwick, 2005; Clegg et al., 2006). Perhaps, as a result, Reynolds notes that a critical perspective has yet to make significant inroads into business school curricula (1999:174).

In response to this problem, a more pragmatic theme has emerged in the development of critical thinking in ML (Watson, 2001b; Fenwick, 2005; Clegg et al., 2006). In essence, this approach still seeks to reject the view of management as a morally and politically neutral technical activity but also takes account of the basic logic of the management educator's role to improve the quality of managerial activity (Watson, 2001b). Perriton and Reynolds (2004) describe this as a fourth wave of educational practice in which the aim is to encourage emancipation through a *refusal* to accept a managerialist standpoint. For Watson, the value of this position lies in both being able to question the notion of absolute truth reflected in rational and unitary thinking but also one

which remains open to the idea that some theories may be truer than others. In practice therefore some guides to action may be more effective in certain circumstances (2001b:387).

On this basis, and building upon the emerging spirit of pragmatism in the CMT literature, I provide below an overview of the basic pedagogic principles required to develop a voluntaristic mindset. Other than where a voluntaristic approach may differ from existing approaches, it is not the intention in this thesis to describe these in detail. Fuller descriptions, from which these principles are drawn can be found in Grey, 2004; Watson, 2001b; Lewis and Dehler, 2000, Clarke, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Bowman et al., 2004; Dehler et al., 2001; Dehler, 1998; Reynolds, 1998; Mintzberg and Gosling, 2002; Atkinson, 1999; Brewis, 1996; and Densten and Gray, 2001.

The development of a voluntaristic mindset which reflects a positive orientation toward plurality of interests, personal interest, managerial discretion and political models of behaviour might be encouraged by development activities which:

- Facilitate critical reflection: about processes of power and claims to rationality and organizational unitarism; raising questions about the interests of those who determine the production and dissemination of knowledge; questioning assumptions in theory and professional practice.
- Develop “self insight and awareness.....for keeping a clear perspective on the external world; in combination the individual becomes aware of their projections of their internal world onto the external world and how the external world activates their internal fantasies and emotions” (Bowman et al., 2004:19).
- Problematise organizations, management and leadership: incorporating critique into the analysis of managerial tools, theories and ideas from different perspectives; surface paradox and contradiction between equally well-based organizational assumptions: engaging in ‘either and thinking’ without denying the logic of at least one of the assumptions; working with ambiguity and uncertainty, multiple realities and organizational complexity; raising complexity of individual thinking.
- Considers managerial work as a social and political practice: politics as a legitimate process to protect/promote diversity and voice; politics as a means of getting things done; of promoting choice; politics as a natural consequence of plural organization forms.
- Values dialogue: conflict is inevitable and desirable; dialogue as a process for accepting and respecting different views as to how to execute one’s own; for explicating assumptions; ‘dis-census’ as a trigger for social action, learning and unlearning; and that these differences form the basis for:

- Organizations based on a community of communities which; forge links with outsiders; drive innovation; facilitate multiple identity formation; and encourage voluntarism.

Drawbacks to a CMT approach to ML

Critical management education (CME) however, also places heavy emphasis on other development principles not mentioned above. In particular, these include, collaborative learning design, reducing the relative power differences between tutor and student, collaborative assessment procedures, ensuring that the complex social processes of management are not reduced to a psychological and individualistic focus, and a reluctance to provide managers with solutions (see Grey, 2004; Reynolds, 1999; 2000). Some of these themes appear to be based on assumptions that most management education takes place on graduate and under graduate programmes and the authors are critical of the value of short executive development programmes. This position is predicated on the view that such programmes are most likely to be controlled by an organizational agenda dominated by managerialist and technicist values (Reynolds, 1999). Whilst longer term graduate programmes offer good possibilities for incorporating the above development principles, I argue that shorter term executive development activities can provide an equally effective vehicle for developing managers to work with a voluntaristic mindset.

Whilst it may be argued that in short courses, collaborative design and androgogy are difficult to implement, Tight (1996) points out that androgogy remains a largely idealist goal: hierarchy will always be present in the classroom (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004) as it is in organizations. Rather than seeking to extinguish inevitable power differences, educators should acknowledge them (Grey, 2004) and put them to more constructive use, for example, role modelling key (representative) leadership behaviours such as questioning, listening and reflecting. Also in short term open enrolment executive (OEE) programmes the issue of student assessment is largely removed as it is the tutor whose is being evaluated by the student rather than the other way around.

CM educators also express concerns about excessive 'psychologicalism' in much management education - reducing complex social processes to those of individual psychology. Yet the CMT agenda to foster new mental models of organising and managing is one that is implicitly concerned with the psychology of managers and management. As well as dismantling reductionist and managerialist mindsets, responsible management education must be concerned with providing robust alternatives - improving the quality of the practices of management students (Watson, 2001b; Fenwick, 2005). Clearly, educators must be wary of solutions that merely exacerbate unitary approaches to organizing but should not shy away from providing guidance, possibilities, frameworks, even checklists, as long as these reflect a plurality of perspectives and are not offered as *the* solution. If, as Watson (2001b) highlights, some theories of the world are better guides to effective action than others, then, in order for managers to debate and contest dominant views of organizing in the workplace, they need to develop their own well-thought through ideas.

I therefore deviate from some of the CME literature in two particular ways. Firstly, whilst firmly adopting the principle of dialogue as a process for accepting and respecting different views as to how to execute one's own (Huzzard and Östergren, 2002), I argue that it is the educator's responsibility to provide practical alternative approaches. In this way, promoting the principles of voluntarism and representational leadership as guides to local action should not be viewed as being in tension with CME, but should be seen as a potential source of micro-emancipation.

Secondly, my approach places a greater emphasis upon exploring an individual's psychological orientation to managing and organizing. A voluntaristic mindset can be accelerated by deliberately disrupting dominant narratives of unitary and rational management through a managed process of development. There are many well documented approaches to this type of dislocation (see Clarke, 1998; Quinn, 1988; Bartunek, 1988; Westenholz, 1993; Mintzberg and Gosling, 2002) and they need not be described in detail here, but in essence reflect four stages; creating a motivation towards the development of new capabilities, a period of discomfort where old behaviours are unlearned, a focussed transition which moves the individual towards the goals they have identified and an understanding of how these new capabilities can be applied in their organizational context (Atkinson, 1999). This process is not antithetical to the development principles listed above if the individual's development is always grounded in the students' lived work experience (Grey, 2004:183), personal aspirations and motivations. For example, this might involve using individual narratives that highlight organizational inequalities and which would be analysed "beyond micro terms and individual personalities or simple cause and effect relations to examine organizational structures", - rewards, knowledge and culture (Fenwick, 2005:40). "Such an approach promotes both a social awareness of work relations and, perhaps the crucial requisite of this, a self-awareness of the impact of one's own conduct upon others and upon the completion of the work task" (Grey, 2004:183).

5.3 The Adoption of these Principles in B Schools

Notwithstanding the probity of this approach, we are nevertheless left with the central question of why senior management would be willing to embrace this form of development. The evidence detailed here is hardly sufficient for corporate ML professionals to challenge deeply embedded beliefs about rational organization, whether this is on the grounds of organizational effectiveness or ethical governance (Clarke and Butcher, 2006a). Indeed, many corporate ML professionals might be viewed as further promoting the myth of rational organization (Clarke, 1999b).

In Clarke (1999b) an argument is made that much organizationally controlled ML is trapped in a game of meaningless outcomes; caught in a vicious cycle in which further investment in ML reinforces the myth of rationality. In the bid to create more competitive organisations, 'soft HRM' approaches which promote involvement, empowerment, etc. allow managers to embed a more effective

alignment of people resources. This 'truth, trust, love and collaboration' approach to change (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992) helps create the ritual and symbolism that contributes to the legitimisation of the organizational ML agenda. Yet, either because corporate ML professionals lack credibility, and/or that the rational mindset can undermine the enactment of effective people strategy, financial objectives tend to be given precedence over people development. Thus, line management receives mixed messages about what is important. Managers respond to this with public acceptance but private rejection of the messages contained within ML interventions in order to ring fence psychological needs for the preservation of self. This apparent acceptance stimulates more investment by senior management which promulgates the myth that ML works. The 'rational' game is played and the actors participate, playing the game that everyone pretends has value because it is in their interests to do so, to create promotions, obtain security, and so on.

If corporate ML professionals have been largely impotent in breaking out of this mindset or of introducing the aspirational values of AE, it seems improbable that they will be able to make a cogent argument for initiating the principle of voluntarism as an alternative means of accomplishing coherence. The same preoccupation with unitary thinking, whether organizationally or self-imposed is likely to prevail. As Reynolds (2000) notes, whilst there are some glimpses of such development principles being applied in practice, it is hard to identify management education practice that clearly reflects the 'politics of difference'.

Professional associations, however, such as the Institute of Directors or Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, which at least in theory work outside of such corporate game playing, could provide the necessary protected opportunities and diversity of approach for the dislocation and reframing of existing approaches. However, the limited empirical work on the impact of professional associations (Farndale and Brewster, 2005) suggests that activities such as training and development are mechanisms of reproduction rather than change (Greenwood et al., 2002). Whilst such associations usually have a reforming agenda, this is often, as in the study of accountancy associations by Greenwood et al. (2002), in response to change initiated by their 'corporate' members rather than as a result of their own mandate.

Perhaps the natural candidate, although by no means the only candidate, for an alternative approach is the academic community, most particularly business schools, since their intellectual sovereignty should provide not only critique, but also the protected environment necessary to consider the values of voluntarism. However, the proposition that business schools deliver such independence is a matter of considerable controversy. At the centre of this debate has been the concern that business schools have become unduly responsive to institutional pressures for greater vocationalism and for the professionalisation of management that takes insufficient account of the social, political and ethical aspects of managing (Reed and Anthony, 1992; Willmott, 1994; Holman, 2000; Reynolds, 2000). One effect of this is that managers may only 'surface learn' and be unable to engage with the deep level processing required to grasp the

significance of AE values in practice (Watson, 1996:461). As Burrell (1989) puts it, they learn with their beliefs rather than about their beliefs. Furthermore, because the intellectual heritage of many business school faculty leads them to emphasise the cerebral rather than the emotional domain of learning (Cornuel, 2005), the developmental agenda implicit in AE values is rarely part of the curriculum (Willmott, 1994).

However, the view that B schools have had such a negative impact on the development of contemporary management practices (MacDonald, 2003; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002; Mintzberg, 2004) is indicative that they can have a significant influence on future practices too. In contemporary society, the university [business school] represents a value well beyond its functional role (Delanty, 2001). University education, more than 1000 years old, is deeply embedded in society as a transformer of science and culture (Delanty, 2001) and business education is considered by some to be one of the greatest successes of the modern world (Lorenzi, 2004): a source of social prosperity (Hubbard, 2006; Bilimoria, 2000). Despite recent criticism, with such institutional status, the B school carries a symbolic value for business and holds the capacity to exert a disproportionate influence on future management behaviour. Thus, even small changes in the institutional approach of business schools may assume a significance far beyond the immediacy of a differentiated educational programme and can have the potential to exact an undue change upon business practice.

Working from this starting point, I argue that there are now several converging pressures that are likely to have a significant impact on both the demand and supply of business school education over the next decade (Hawawini, 2005). Several of these influences were explored in papers 1 and 2 (Clarke 1999a, 1999b) and for the purpose of this thesis have been updated and expanded here in the light of recent trends and changes in B school education. This analysis suggests that these changes have the potential to encourage B school faculty to adopt the development principles outlined in 5.2, either explicitly or through stealth. The final sections of this chapter consider these changes, how they will influence the B-school agenda and conclude that progress may be made in accelerating the adoption reformist AE values and organizational voluntarism by management educators pursuing, within a B school environment, the very representative leadership behaviours discussed here.

5.4 Changes in Demand

The Search for Relevance in Management Education

As part of a wider debate on the future for universities in the knowledge society (Delanty, 2001; Trowler, 2001), B schools have come under increasing critical scrutiny from the general media, business and academia itself (Bilimoria, 2000). These criticisms include amongst many; an undue focus on analysis at the expense of wisdom (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002), a superficial and narrow managerialist perspective (MacDonald, 2003), neglecting the emotional domain of learning (Watson, 1996; Willmott, 1994), the need for more external

perspective (Conger and Xin, 2000), the omission of power from the curriculum (Weick et al., 1999, cited in Martin and Butler, 2000) and the need to acknowledge the politics of management education (Grey, 2004). More specifically, Mintzberg (2004) highlights how US MBA programmes in particular are directed at the wrong people (too few practising managers), using the wrong methods (teaching disconnected theory rather than learning in context) for the wrong reasons (producing managers who believe they have the right to lead because of their credentials). Amongst other effects, this growing debate has suggested, contrary to my position in this thesis, that there is little evidence of business school research changing management practice, calling into question the professional relevance of management scholarship (Hambrick, 1993; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002).

Competitive Pressures

Against this backdrop of mounting criticism about the relevance and effectiveness of much business education, B schools also have to contend with significant changes in their markets caused by changes in global demand, technology, deregulation and demographic shifts (Clarke, 1999a; Friga et al., 2003). These changes are seen to require B schools to extend their capacity to provide education through higher volumes and geographic reach (serving clients in their home countries); providing wider access through internet based learning and through multiple (international) interconnected locations (Friga et al, 2003; Hawawini, 2005). Lorange (2005) argues that in the emerging networked society students will be more demanding of educators. Managers have less time to access learning but are more focussed on continual top-ups throughout a career so that education moves from being conceived as 'just in case' to 'just for me' (Friga et al., 2003). B schools will therefore need to become more responsive multi located businesses, effectively networked to partners, alumni, customers and government (Lorange, 2005). All of these trends provide opportunities for leading B schools to build brand differentiation (Friga et al., 2003). "The challenge for these schools is to go beyond delivering a degree. They must deliver a life changing experience...." (Hawawini, 2005:778). When set against the increasing influence of B school rankings, these pressures for differentiation and convenience suggest an increasing focus on product innovation and experimentation (Westerbeck, 2004) that can provide opportunities for developing an AE reformist agenda.

Changing Business Needs

Extensive reference has already been made to the changing nature of organizing in contemporary business (see section 2.1). In particular, arguments have been made here to highlight the fit between voluntarism, representational leadership and the need for firms in the future to be more innovative, adaptable, and devolved (sections 3.3-3.4). This requirement is also bolstered by commentators calling for more inclusive corporate governance (Child and Rodrigues, 2003; Courpasson and Dany, 2003), organizational democracy (Gratton, 2004; Harrison and Freeman, 2004), and management education that takes greater account of business ethics (Gioia, 2002; Waddock, 2004). Hawawini (2005) believes these issues can be addressed by a greater

determination to develop 'societal skills' in managers, defined as the ability to make business decisions that are ethical and which take account of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development. In reality, such an outcome can only be realised through educational activity that places an emphasis on personal development that provides an opportunity for managers to learn about their values. The publicity about corporate scandals over recent years serves to stimulate demand for business school curricula that are relevant to these business and societal needs.

A willingness to challenge in the Organizational ML Community

Research into the orientations of corporate ML professionals suggests that there may also be a growing willingness on behalf of ML managers to challenge the current orthodoxy of unitary approaches to organizing to be found in many B schools. Perriton's (2000) study of 14 management development practitioners revealed a range of heretical management behaviours that reflected a 'pedagogy of doubt'. These heretics were aware of the power inherent in their roles and encouraged a critique of the management theories they promoted. The study also identified 'management liberators' who, through their development activities sought to replace a managerialist identity with a wider conception of self not limited to occupational role. From a different perspective, but no less heretical, research by Clarke et al. (2002) identified ML professionals who were highly conscious about the centrality of power in assessing and working with a plurality of interests and who eschewed rational unitary approaches to change favouring highly political strategies that relied on, stealth, relationship management, and bottom up change. Such ML professionals are likely to use B school programmes that serve their own heretical agenda.

5.5 Changes in Supply

In this environment, progress toward a reformist AE agenda may also be accelerated by developments in the supply of ML through both top down and bottom up processes of change.

Top Down

The competitive pressures in the business education market place are forcing B-schools to consider how best to 'form the future not simply follow it' (Westerbeck, 2004). The consequent need to innovate and experiment will lead to greater market segmentation and "unique combinations" of product offerings (Friga et al., 2003:247). At a time when many business schools are devoting more and more attention toward revising MBA products (Friga et al., 2003), open enrolment executive programmes have received insufficient attention as a source of innovation in executive education. Over recent years, most university-based executive education has focussed on moving towards in-company and customized activities (Conger and Xin, 2000; Fulmer and Wagner, 1999). However, I argue that open enrolment executive (OEE) programmes offer real opportunities for innovation and experimentation and, echoing Bennis and

O'Toole (2005:103) and others, for B schools to use the sort of strategies that they promote to their business clients.

In dynamic markets, B-schools need to respond quickly to shifting and temporary demand. For governance reasons, responding to these requirements by the development of degree programmes will always be a much slower process than through executive education. Similarly, in-company development requires extensive needs analysis and customisation, whilst in contrast, OEE programmes offer business schools a vehicle to respond quickly to market changes via small, nimble, branded and flexible business units. Conger and Xin (2000) note a number of challenges for executive education in the next few years which include: the need for managers to possess wider perspectives that are external to individual industries; a focus on future orientated competencies; increased line involvement in determining development needs; and action learning involving external and diverse inputs. OEE programmes are ideally placed to meet these needs.

As governments continue to reduce subsidies to public universities, this issue of alternative financing may also encourage reform. Although some commentators (Hawawini, 2005) view the increasing focus on in-company executive education reducing the attractiveness and margins on OEE programmes, they potentially offer new income streams for B schools. With the growing sophistication of e-marketing, smaller OEE focussed business units have the opportunity to be nimble and agile, to both lead and respond to these types of requirements and changing customer demand. The Cranfield School of Management General Management Programmes constitute one such example where a small customer focussed business unit has crafted a portfolio of programmes that concentrate on developing a future orientated general management perspective at key career transitions. These combine both the acquisition of new managerial knowledge and intensive personal development that encourages an irreverent and challenging approach to rational organising. As programmes are composed of managers from diverse backgrounds and experiences, they offer participants the opportunity to work on their own organizational issues supported and challenged by a diverse range of individuals.

These types of programme can capitalise on emerging niche markets such as 'The Networked Organization' or 'Business Ethics' and very much reflect the move from 'just in case' to 'just for me' development highlighted by Friga et al., (2003). Nor do these programmes need to be many weeks in duration in order to effect the development principles outlined in section 5.2. (See Clarke, 1998; Atkinson, 1999; Western and Gosling, 2002 for some examples). Such programmes may well appeal to the heretics and irreverent corporate sponsors identified by Perriton (2000) and Clarke et al. (2002), as potential vehicles for encouraging challenge and change within their organizations.

A further factor that may influence executive action in this area is the increasing difficulty of recruiting and retaining good quality faculty (Nemetz and Cameron, 2006). Research by Verhaegan (2005) covering Deans/Directors from 69 B

schools from 18 countries indicates that Deans rank the need for innovation and progressiveness as being most important in recruiting and retaining talent. Deans also believe this factor is within their power to influence. The research also encompassed 347 faculty in 38 schools from 12 countries. Responses from faculty indicated that academic freedom was considered the most important factor in attracting and retaining talent. Willingness on behalf of Deans to respond to this key driver and to encourage such innovation further suggests the possibility of change in the institutional template (Gentile and Samuelson, 2005).

Clearly, the degree to which these trends might encourage the wider adoption of AE values will, to a significant degree, be dependent on the educational orientation of Deans and their executives but will also be influenced by the aspirations of those ML academics responsible for programme design and delivery. Without a commitment to an AE agenda, such customer responsive, branded business units may merely serve to embed a unitary approach to managing. The significance of these market changes therefore lies in the opportunity for management educators to exploit these new competitive pressures for their own goals.

Bottom up

The discussion above (5.2) has highlighted the increasing debate within academia, particularly from within the CMT and liberal AE communities, as to the role of ML in sustaining or challenging the dominant rational paradigm in organizations (Clarke, 1999a, 1999b; Perriton, 2000; Perriton and Reynolds, 2004; Danielli and Thomas, 1999; Watson, 2001b). Watson (2001b) in particular has been vocal about the need for this community to come to terms with the logic of its role to deliver improved managerial practice whilst still being critical of its enactment. Perriton and Reynolds (2004) describe this orientation as being akin to 'colonisers', who, whilst working within the dominant rational ideology refuse to act in the spirit of managerialism and are active in debating its reform. Examples of such autonomous action within academic communities are provided by Räsänen and Mäntylä (2001) who report on a deliberate strategy to resist pressures to conform to centrally determined priorities in a Finnish university and by Gustavs and Clegg's (2005) account of the introduction of work based learning in an Australian university. Research by Danielli and Thomas (1999) highlights the degree to which the values of academic management educators should not be considered homogenous, suggesting that, at least, there are probably few normative occupational restraints to educators working in this way. The new competitive pressures in management education might thus be used by politically motivated ML academics to exploit the loopholes and contradictions (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996) of unitary education.

For example, OEE programmes offer those academics wishing to challenge rational orthodoxy, the opportunity to engage more with practising business leaders. These managers are in a position to be immediately influential on the business of business whereas degree programmes with electives in 'very

radical critical studies', are populated by students who are organizationally immature and who are unlikely to have the credibility or experience to effect substantive change. My own undergraduate exposure to this orientation by one of today's leading critical theorists made little impact on my own managerial practice. This was not because of ineffective teaching. The ideas were inspiring, but once employed in the corporate world with no influence or experience, such radical views were inoperable. In short, OEE programmes provide a vehicle for more readily raising issues of managerialism in the boardroom as well as the classroom (Fenwick, 2005).

Working on OEE programmes, which demand high 'practicality', requires management educators to find new approaches to presenting their ideas in a way which genuinely resonate with the lived experience of managing. For example, debating the value of organizational politics, an issue close to the hearts of most managers, would surface issues of institutionalised power, plurality, vested interests and choice (Fenwick 2005; Clarke 1999b). This approach reflects a view taken by Kreiner (2003) and others that educators must be able to discuss issues of rational organization using methods that make managers think in non rational ways. Working on OEE programmes in this way will require those of a CMT persuasion to be less purist in their approach to emancipation (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004) using them to explore wider developmental possibilities than those originally considered by participants (Clarke 1999b).

In order to exploit these opportunities, academic management educators may well have to become more business focussed and exercise higher levels of political savvy themselves in order to carve out independent businesses/development processes and run them successfully. Gentile and Samuelson (2005) and Hendry (2006) describe this opportunity in terms of management educators needing to become the leaders they seek to create, using small wins to create momentum. One option for educators is to see themselves as *Representative Leaders*: representing the emancipatory interests of participants, the business/education demands of their B School and the business/organizational interests of the sponsoring companies (Clarke, 1999a). In this way, voluntarism might become the end and means by which management educators can have greater impact on the lives of organizational actors. Applying the tenets of RL to management educators suggests behaviours that might reflect the following types of activity;

- Providing space and opportunities on OEE programmes for colleagues to experiment with the development principles identified in 5.2 or to use research findings that promote aspects of voluntarism.
- Promoting debate in formal and informal faculty meetings about the role of executive development in the business school, challenging existing arrangements.

- Working outside of agreed responsibilities, with a broad network of like-minded colleagues on unofficial projects and initiatives that may undermine existing approaches.
- Equipping programme participants with the political acumen to challenge rationalistic approaches to development within their own organization and to act as sponsors of further irreverent development.
- Developing relationships with heretical corporate educators, providing opportunities for voice, implementing development designs that are challenging of rational mindsets.
- Engaging in constructive political activity to secure resources, time and space to implement the above, for example positioning the value of executive income alongside that of research income.

These ideas are of course, fraught with substantial dilemmas, barriers and assumptions. Micro-processes of change are not capable of overturning institutional templates on their own (Johnson et al., 1997); they will need to be augmented by larger scale regulatory frameworks. But they can initiate a wind of change precisely because they “can have more direct relevance to the *lived experience* of people who are continually engaged in local struggles” (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996:176, their emphasis). The focus for this section has been to provide a view of how ML might be able to play a very different role in organizational change by adopting more subversive and critical values. This could provide an opportunity for B schools to fulfil a more substantial educative role in social as well as organizational change (Clarke, 1999a).

6. Conclusion

6.1 Practical Contribution: the Role of Voluntarism in Stimulating Organization Democracy

There has been a growing concern amongst some commentators about the disconnection between the apparent increase in organizational plurality, and the relatively limited facets of democracy practised in the work place (Etzioni, 1998; Rousseau and Rivero, 2003). Despite a range of forces promoting greater democratic practice such as; changes in technology; greater employee aspirations for choice and autonomy (Gratton, 2004); the increase in, and interdependence of, organizational stakeholders (Caldart and Ricart, 2004; Colbert, 2004); and the need to secure employee commitment through more distributed models of leadership (Butcher and Clarke, 2001), most western organizations still rely on traditional top down hierarchy for most of their strategic decisions (Powley et al., 2004).

Various explanations are suggested for this disconnection. Rousseau and Rivero, (2003) view the increased mobility of employees who frequently swap jobs as being less likely to engage in organizational citizenship. They also argue that the post Enron effect is reducing levels of organizational trust and thus diminishes a willingness to widen participation. Most fundamentally however, the drivers for enhanced organizational democracy appear at odds with the dominant bureaucratic and unitary model of organizing described here.

Such a focus is inevitably in tension with the apparent move toward distributed models of managing, where agents are increasingly required to work with varied and competing interests. In this model, leaders are held responsible for collective outcomes, but through individual agency (Hales, 1999; Huffington et al., 2003; Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2005). This tension heightens managerial feelings of vulnerability because protective processes and structures such as traditional lines of authority and accountability become threatened (Bennett, et al. 2003; Huffington et al. 2003; Lindgren and Wåhlin, 1999). In such situations, in order to ensure an ongoing affirmation of self-identity, managers can assuage their resulting anxieties by more closely adopting the dominant bureaucratic logic of rationality. Thus, the adoption of pluralistic models of managing can be curtailed by a logic that actively 'rationalises' attempts to address the issue (Hales, 1999; Clarke, 2006).

The evidence from some organizations that appear to work effectively with these tensions (See Gratton, 2004) underscores the question posed by Rousseau and Rivero (2003) as to what sort of behaviours and organizing principles are required to enable businesses to become more responsive to a plurality of stakeholder interests. It is this question which provides the focus for this thesis:-given the dominance of this rational mindset, in what way does hierarchy need to be redefined to enable managers to work with a complex range of competing interests; what sort of leadership behaviours might this

reconfiguration require; and how, if considered efficacious, might these behaviours be encouraged through management education? In investigating issues of unity and plurality, coherence and difference, efficiency and innovation, this research is very much concerned with issues of organizational governance. Ultimately, how these tensions are managed reflects values about democracy in the workplace.

This focus is made more acute for me inasmuch as in considering these issues over the last ten years I have worked with hundreds of managers from most parts of the world; all of them share, to some degree, a frustration about how they can make sense of an increasingly complex and demanding business world, and work effectively within these conditions in a way that enhances their individual autonomy. Thus, this body of work, at its heart, has an emancipatory agenda.

The publications detailed in this synoptic paper contribute to the development of organizing principles that business leaders might consider in working with the tensions of organizational coherence and plurality. Whilst it is not my intention here to develop yet another theory of leadership, my purpose *is* to consider the value of a voluntaristic and institutional leadership lens in understanding how to encourage the development of organizational democracy. What appears to distinguish a voluntaristic approach to leading is a disposition which combines; a facility to work with organised dissonance (Ashcraft, 2001), an irreverent or constructively deviant orientation, political acuity, and a mutuality of goals. On this basis I believe there are four ideas for managers and management educators to consider as a result of this collected work.

Firstly, the empirical study found that, despite apparent pressures to close off the contradictions between distributed power and rational organization, some managers appear able to negotiate this dissonance in a way that encourages a democratic orientation to leading. Central to this disposition is the representation of, and working with, a wide range of constituencies that offer varied opportunities by which to negotiate identity and encourage an affirmation of self. That is, these managers conceive their role not purely in terms of treating others as moral equals, but as an activity to further the interests of others, as well as themselves. Contrary to the views of authors such as Cloke and Goldsmith (2002) and Gratton (2004) who emphasise the importance of a similarity between individual and organizational values, democratic behaviour here was facilitated by a disposition in which individuals often saw themselves as being independent of the goals/values of their organization, sometimes working within them but equally at times undermining them.

Secondly, the theorizing and research findings in this study provide greater insight as to the role of organizational politics in democratic activity and lie in contrast to the idea of politics undermining workplace democracy (Rousseau and Rivero, 2003) or largely omitted from its discussion (see Gratton 2004). The orientation of RLs towards politics is supportive of Novicevic and Harvey's (2004) view of organizational politics as a "democratic asset" which represents

the varying capacity of employees to influence the way they are governed. The use of political negotiation by RLs seemed to serve as a check and balance against the undue influence of self-serving interests rather than reinforce them. In the empirical study, this was achieved by behaviours that included transparency of motive, searching for win-win solutions, and openness to dialogue.

Thirdly, the research also provides insight as to how this disposition may serve to facilitate progress towards more democratic forms in circumstances where such ambitions are far from being perceived as legitimate. For some authors, such as Coopey and Burgoyne (2000) this goal is seen as being accelerated through the establishment of formal systems of political, social and civil rights. This thesis suggests that progress towards democratized forms may also be made through voluntaristic and informal private projects and personal passions (Kreiner, 1992): actions that can create pockets of participation, which in turn may act as role models for further action. Specifically, this approach emphasises how progress can be made by encouraging voluntary processes of group formation and identity that do not create untenable chaos. Levels of control are still achievable through behaviour that seeks to balance individual and organizational agendas. This is supportive of the idea that such voluntaristic principles can enable informal groups to provide levels of self-control necessary for the maintenance of good governance (Caldart and Ricart, 2004), because these groups, by participating in decision making, express voice about the values that are important to them (Cludts, 1999). Unofficial groups enable people to pursue individual interests through collective action, thereby creating a sense of involvement. This disposition is suggestive of Alvesson and Wilmott's (1996:171) theory of "micro emancipation", in which individuals are able to exploit the "loopholes and contradictions" of rational organizations in order to secure greater personal autonomy.

Finally, whilst there are many factors that might encourage ML professionals to pursue a voluntaristic agenda within their own organization development agenda, perhaps B Schools provide the richest source of potential change. The conditions are increasingly conducive to demand relevance from business schools, and ML professionals are organizationally well placed to provide this. The majority of reformist ML research focuses on promoting AE values in management education in undergraduate and graduate settings. I argue here that progress might also be made through OEE programmes that offer opportunities for: experimentation, B school income and protected environments for development. Exploiting these opportunities may well require management educators to become the leaders they seek to create (Gentile and Samuelson, 2005); representative leadership might provide one approach to meeting this agenda.

6.2 Potential Limitations and Further Research

Clearly a work of this nature can only ever provide an incomplete picture, and especially when viewed from epistemologically different perspectives has

several potential shortcomings. These potential limitations are now considered below as areas for further research.

Organizational Benefits

The empirical research here focussed on examining the structuration of relationships between organization context, managerial cognition and RL behaviour outlined in Figure 3. The model of voluntarism constructed in this thesis concludes with some substantive ideas about the relationship between this leadership behaviour and its impact on organizational democracy. However, much of the material used to explore the organizational performance benefits accruing from a voluntaristic approach to managing draws on other research from the co-evolutionary and complexity discourse, particularly from the work of Boisot and Child (1999), Ashmos et al. (2000, 2002), Galunic and Eisenhardt (2001), Denis et al (1996, 2001) and Ravasi and Verona (2001). Whilst one can find strong linkages between RL and these studies, they obviously do not specifically deal with RL as described here.

An obvious focus for further research then is to explore the linkages between RL behaviour and organization outcomes. For example; to what extent might a voluntaristic approach enhance flexibility, and innovation? To what extent does voluntarism enhance communication between groups or create untenable silos? To what extent do individuals believe that a voluntaristic approach generates genuine commitment or reduces employee frustrations?

Finally, if the starting point for this thesis is the increasing plurality of organizational life, what might constitute the end point for organizations? The degree to which voluntaristic behaviour might become a legitimate organizing principle will always be a negotiated process. To some senior managers working in a resource constrained, hyper competitive organizational setting, the perceived need for the benefits of voluntarism such as employee participation and innovation may be lessened. Other managers in the same organization may disagree. Voluntarism is potentially both the 'means and end' for this debate: the process through which to have such discussion and a way of reconfiguring hierarchy to legitimise such discussion. Thus, whilst not suggesting that voluntarism should become an acknowledged universal principle of organizing, I do argue (in section 3.2) that given the inherent tension between organizational plurality and hierarchy, coherence and diversity, there is always likely to be some kind of voluntaristic behaviour at play that will serve to mediate between these conflicting requirements. As with the democratic context from which it is derived, voluntarism will always be a matter of degree.

Research Methodology

The multiple case methodology was chosen to permit an insight into the extent and nature of RL behaviour in different contexts. A case strategy fits well within a Giddensian approach as it allows for a focus on how individuals make sense of, and understand their environment (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). A level of triangulation, perhaps more typical to a relativist orientation was added to the research design to gain an insight as to how individual behaviour was perceived

by others. Nevertheless, it is recognised that my own knowledge and perceptions influenced the research design and framed the content and direction of the interview and analysis process. The output is therefore a joint outcome of sense making by myself and those researched (Watson, 2003). In doing so, as Giddens points out, we should not underestimate an actor's depth of understanding of and degree of fluency with their own actions: "actors are ordinarily able to discursively describe what they do and their reasons for doing it" (1984: 281). Nor is there any "mechanism of social organizationwhich actors cannot get to know about and actively incorporate into what they do" (1984: 284). The focus of the research was to surface the unconscious beliefs (motivations) guiding such action.

The use of multiple case studies at a fixed point in time, however, can only provide a snapshot of each organization and how individuals understood and reconstituted their environment. A longitudinal case in one organization would allow for a more in-depth and richer analysis of the interaction between structure and agency over time. For example, to what extent does the irreverent behaviour of RLs become reconstituted as quasi legitimate activity? At what 'tipping point', if at all, does such behaviour become recognised as acceptable?

Case studies too are limited by their dependence upon retrospective accounts and sample size, such that generalisability to other populations is restricted. Opportunities for extending this generalisability are elucidated below. Despite these potential shortcomings, a case methodology provides a well accepted approach to understanding phenomena within its context (Harrison, 2002) and has been successfully applied by others working from a Giddensian perspective (see for example, Coopey et al., 2002).

Widening the Research Base to Different Populations

The main empirical study here focussed on senior managers in UK commercial organizations. This limits the potential generalisability of the work unless replicated in other settings (Giddens, 1984:328). For example the RL behaviour described could merely be a function of experience and maturity in senior roles. The sample was restricted to UK organizations and may reflect national characteristics. It is interesting to note that RL behaviours might be considered reflective of Swedish managerial values of cooperation and interdependence but perhaps untypical of Anglo-American styles of managing (Lindkvist and Llewellyn, 2003). Does this suggest, in the face of increasing social pressure for organizational democratisation, that Scandinavian management approaches, richly informed by a tradition of social democracy, may, in the future, have more salience for UK managers? Would managers working from a collectivist orientation reflect different behaviours and cognitions of their context?

The sample was also exclusively focussed on managers in commercial corporate environments. Research in alternative contexts may produce different results. For example public sector management is increasingly characterised by the notion of community governance (Hartley, 2002) where managers are required to represent the needs of whole and diverse communities through an

open, flexible and networked pattern of decision making reflective of RL. The research by Denis et al., (2001) in the pluralist setting of health care is also supportive of the findings here. Might a greater proportion of managers reflect RL behaviours in this environment or might this group demonstrate additional/different cognitive drivers, given their public service orientation?

Additional studies might be undertaken in other industries/businesses. For example, are RL behaviours more likely in younger hi-tech industries where more devolved organizational forms tend to be prevalent? Alternatively, would more traditional mature businesses that might place greater emphasis on rational approaches to organizing, reflect less RL behaviour or different ways of managing politics?

6.3 Conclusion

From a structuration perspective, encouraging the individual and local actions discussed here may play a part in the gradual renegotiation of existing institutionalised approaches to hierarchy. Whilst individual and isolated group agendas appear insignificant, in the context of one organisation or one business school they provide a point of departure in legitimising alternatives. They can initiate change precisely because they are real and relevant to the challenges of everyday work (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996). Whilst progress towards democracy can be made by exploiting the loopholes and contradictions of the rational mindset from within, in terms of creating a wholesale shift in organizational democratisation, it is a gradual process. The rational model has proven to be relatively impervious to short term pressures to evolve and thus the modest contribution to knowledge reflected in this thesis can only be viewed as one exceedingly small part of a larger and more fundamental debate about the future of corporate governance in new organizational forms (see Child, 2005).

That said, it is important to stress that rational organizing has guided managerial values for at least two centuries, if not much longer, yet in the last 20 years there has been serious debate and experimentation with new organizing principles. As with any large scale social change, the evolution discussed here has to be seen as the beginning of a process that has the potential to accelerate. On a more optimistic note, then, genuine organisational democratisation may be closer than its painstakingly slow emergence suggests.

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