MANAGING THE FUTURE:
A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL
EXAMINATION OF CONTINUITY
AND FRAGMENTATION PUZZLES

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Sedigheh Sharifi

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To my mother and my late father

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SEDIGHEH SHARIFI
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SUMMARY

This thesis studies how managers and their role-set develop internal languages (or configurations) which differentiates their external environments, and structures their actions. Development of the cognitive configurations is crucial to planning future courses of action and thus the recognition of the organisation's survival paths. These configurations, which are the result of managers' cognitive practices, are situated within a multi-dimensional perspective, i.e. they include the organisation's prospectus of action, paradigms and temporal rules as identified by its members and therefore are organisation specific. It is thus argued that theorising about managerial work should include theorising about the way such prospectus and rules are identified and established by managers and their role-set.

The argument of the thesis commences with an analysis and re-interpretation of "orthodox" management theories and concepts which are widely considered as central to an understanding of managerial work. It is argued that theories which consider the cognitive activities of managers have adopted a single dimension in their descriptions of managerial work, and hence have expounded inadequate models of the work of managers and their decision-making activities. Utilising the concept of "contingent periodicities" it is then illustrated that theories about managerial sense-making activities and political processes in managing have presented static accounts of managerial practices and so have neglected the temporal embeddedness of these practices. However, the argument on continuity in managerial work is challenged for its disregard of the intentional dimension of managerial work.

It is also argued that the "real" image of managerial work, i.e. fragmented, brief and varied; according to "activity" school, presents an incomplete description of what managers are doing. Thus it is shown that this a-temporal and a-political, yet popular, approach to studying the work of managers, because of its naive epistemological stance, fails to grasp the way managers develop cognitive and habitual practices. Furthermore, their portrayal of managerial work as non-routine is an unsubstantiated counter-claim against classical management theorising since their classification of managerial roles cannot be differentiated from the classicist's prescriptive functions of management. The thesis has consequently developed its theoretical stance upon the assumptions that managers are involved in searching and identifying theoretical niches and survival paths. These theoretical activities of managers are based upon their cognitive and habitual models and simultaneously constitute the very basis of these models.

The empirical work of this thesis is presented in the form of case studies which report the application of the working assumptions in four different organisations. The data are gathered in a triangulation of study methods; that is, focused and recorded interviews which are unstructured dialogues with four role-sets of managers around a set of topics; unstructured observation of these managers activites and a review of documents, reports and correspondence. The data are analysed with reference to these assumptions, and in relation to the conceptual

framework of the thesis. The findings of the thesis are in alignment with its theoretical assumptions. The concluding notes examine the implications of the continuity-fragmentation debate and suggest that future research into managerial work must be concerned with temporal rules which structure managerial actions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies managerial practices in the context of four different organisational settings focussing upon the structural-regulative aspects of these practices. The study has been approached in three overlapping strands of inquiry into managerial/organisational practices; that is, the classical perspective, the "activity" school and the "cognition" school. The conceptual framework of the thesis is basically located within the theorising of the "cognition" school, and accordingly refutes the empirical generalisation of the "activity" school that the managerial work is fragmented and prosaic, and hence that the classical theories of management are redudant. It is shown that the classical management theorising cannot be dismissed on the basis of the generalisations and consequently that they must be re-considered. Through interpretation and re-working of these perspectives, a multi-faceted foucs has been adopted in order to illustrate the dynamics of managerial practices and the managers' role in managing the organisational events which have been disregarded by the popular studies of managerial work.

The thesis hence comprises a critique of the dominant account of managerial work and a theoretical model for understanding managerial work. The critique includes a variety of case studies in orgranisational practices in order to discuss the failure of the popular perspectives in depicting an effective model of managerial actions. Simultaneously, therefore, it sets the background for development of the perspective which centres upon the multi-dimensional character of managerial actions, but is not propounded as a system of performance appraisal.

The popular account of the work of managers as put forward by the "activity" school, e.g. Mintzberg, is an attempt which presents this phenomenon in terms of a set of observable, brief, varied and disconnected activities, hence, showing that the nature of managerial work is episodic. Managers are portrayed as puppets

whose allocation of time and attention are regulated by the demands of others. Hence, they are not seen as purposive actors and are envisaged to have no control over what they do i.e. purely reactive, not proactive.

This so claimed "real" image of the work of managers describes the extent of influence that managers can exert on their work in terms of their contact patterns, that is the amount of time that they are engaged in verbal and interpersonal interactions. This account has mainly developed as a reaction to the normative management theorisings of the early 20th century and their prescribed functions of management. According to the "activity" school, the classicists' portrayal of management as a set of methodical and coherent practices is a misconception of managerial work, and the "folklore" of management has limited implications for practicising managers. Therefore, in order to enhance the managers' performance, i.e. their rationality, the real work of managers must be observed. The "facts" which are grounded in such observation will close the gap between theory and practice of management. However, the ultimate categorisation of managerial roles and typologies presented by the "activity" school is not different from the classicists' prescribed functions of management. The "real" image of managerial work constitutes the point of departure of this thesis.

The contention of the "activity" school that managers are reactive is compatible with the work of organisational synthesisers and theorists on organisational decision-makings, e.g. March (1963) and Simon (1958). The latter have explained managerial behaviour in terms of bounded rationality and have asserted that managers' modus operandi is designated to satisfy constraints and avoid uncertainty. In other words managers are not initiators and their behaviour is constrained by their problem-solving, information processing abilities, unclear

organisational objectives, ambiguous choice situations and fluid participation. It is therefore reasonable to assert that these studies have merely conceptualised fragments of managerial work.

Other descriptive accounts of managerial behaviour (e.g. Spender, 1980; Weick, 1979) have emphasised the significant role of managers' judgement in organising processes. The judgement is part of the formula for avoiding or resolving uncertainty or reducing the equivocality in the environmental inputs. Their core argument thus presents managerial activities in terms of mastery of organisational environments (cf. organisational synthesisers). The outcomes of these activities, i.e. the enacted environments or organisational situations, are artifacts or self-fulfilling prophecies. These studies have illustrated the process by which managers' theories of action are socially constructed, and thus have concentrated on the cognitive context of managerial work.

Describing organisations as artifacts of managerial activities is also stressed in some other management studies, with respect to managerial political machination. Here managerial activities are analysed in terms of the development of languages or symbols as control mechanisms (e.g. Pettigrew, 1976). Thus it is argued that within a political perspective the continuity of managerial actions is shown in terms of conflicting interests of the actors in the organisations (e.g. Dalton, 1959). However, these writings have too frequently considered the managerial political plots as ends in themselves and have disregarded the institutional and structural implications of managerial practices.

With regard to the continuity in managerial work, there are studies of the temporal contexts in organisations (e.g. Clark, 1982) which claim that if managerial work is analysed within its time dimensions the underlying continuity

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of the fragmented episodes will be shown (cf. Mintzberg, 1973).

The prime focus of these contextual analyses of managerial actions have been to illustrate the dynamics of managerial behaviour (cf. the "activity" school). The point is that these studies have mainly concentrated on a single dimension of managerial work, i.e. political or cognitive or temporal, hence each have underplayed or disregarded the other dimensions.

It is argued herein that management is a multi-dimensional practice, therefore consideration of these dimensions will be central to the study of managerial actions. It is shown that the study of managerial work is concerned with discontinuities and disjunctures within the continuity of managers' projected acts.

This study probes into the work of managers utilising managers' accounts of their practices. The research is presented in a way which will show the development of a perspective for studying managerial practices, through its theoretical construction and potential methodological application, to its concluding remarks.

The thesis takes the following form. In CHAPTER TWO the issues concerned with the research method and analytic tools are dealt with. The process by which various conceptions of managerial work are analysed and then utilised as analytic tools for understanding the practice of management. Then the attempts which were made to win access to various organisational settings are described. An account of the rationale behind the selection of the organisations is given next. The interview situations and the observation activities are described. The final section of this chapter addresses briefly the question of validity of the research method and analysis.

In CHAPTER THREE one segment of the theoretical framework of the thesis is put forward. It examines the cognitive aspects of managerial practices. The characteristics of various models of sense-making and their consequences for the practice of management are discussed in this chapter. Hence their commonalities and differences and their inadequacies are considered in order to set out the basis for the conceptual framework of this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR introduces and demonstrates the focus and argument of the thesis. It emphasises the temporal embeddedness of managerial practices whilst considering the conception of time in certain management theories.

CHAPTER FIVE is a critique of the dominant theorisings about the nature of managerial work. It commences by considering the general drawbacks of these theorisings. Then it discusses in more detail the core points of some of these studies, i.e. those of Mintzberg, Stewart and Kotter. It will explain the implications of these studies for management research, managers and management education. This leads to an illustration of the weaknesses of their approaches within the theoretical framework of the thesis.

CHAPTERS SIX and SEVEN discuss the empirical work and present the outcome of the study of four sets of managers in four different settings, i.e. three engineering firms and a health authority, which are presented here in the form of case studies. In each case some historical accounts of the organisation and the managers' activities are given which set the scene for the noted and observed events and practices. The key concepts which have emerged during the research and which are discussed in Chapters Three and Four are taken as analytic tools for understanding the managers' accounts of their practices.

CHAPTER EIGHT polishes the core argument of the thesis, evaluates and considers the implications of its argument for management theory and research and management education. Then, sets it within the body of theorisings about the nature of managerial work.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN

PUZZLES, THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

SELECTION OF THE FIRMS FOR STUDY

PREPARATIONS AND REHEARSALS

PREPARATIONS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

RESEARCH FOCUS, METHOD AND ASSUMPTIONS

THE QUESTION OF VALIDITY

This Chapter is devoted to matters related to practical methodology. It begins with an account of the development of the research themes and concepts and then goes on to consider sample selection. The methods used in the preparation, setting-up and conducting of interviews and observations are then described, followed by an analysis of the collected data. Finally the research focus, method and assumptions are reviewed and the validity of the research is established.

PUZZLES, THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

I

The research was designed to unravel the ways managers undertake their work. From the outset it emphasised the cognitive dimension of management which was underplayed in the popular accounts of managerial work. The general empirical assumptions of the thesis grew out of a process of conceptual refinement in which the existing theorisings about the nature of managerial work were de-composed and examined afterwards in various settings. The following is an account of this development process (also see Figure 2.1)

Exploring the theoretical grounds revealed the inadequacies of the existing characterisations of managerial work which constituted the point of departure of this thesis. The empirically based generalisations of the 'activity school', e.g. Mintzberg (1973), Stewart (1967), could not provide the answer to the initial research question. According to these studies, managerial work may be characterised as brief, varied and fragmentary. Such generalisations have been the outcome of observations and diary recordings and allowed the writers to refute the managerial functions, i.e. POSDCORB, which are prescribed by the classicists.

1. PROBLEM SELECTION
2. WHAT WAS INITIALLY DONE
3. RESEARCH DESIGN
4. WHAT ASSUMPTIONS

1. INTRODUCING RESEARCH QUESTION

2. CONCEPTS, PUZZLES AND QUERIES

3. HOW TO RESEARCH THE QUESTION?

4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

PLAN, STRUCTURE, STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION EXAMINATION ANALYSIS

WHAT DO MANAGERS DO? WHAT MANAGERS ARE DOING? WHAT MANAGERS SAY THEY ARE GOING TO DO?

SELECTION OF ORGANISATION

* WHAT ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS?
* WHAT EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS?

CONCEPTUAL REFINEMENT

CONCEPTUAL REFINEMENT

NATURE OF THE FIELD WORK

*FRAGMENTATION VS CONTINUITY/PLANNING
*INACTIVE PORTFOLIOS
*PROACTIVE-REACTIVE AGENDAS
*CONTENT OF MANAGERIAL WORK

* CONTINUITY
* CONTINGENT PERIODICITIES
* CAUSE MAPS
* EVENTS (KEY DIMENSION)

- MGR'S ROLE-SET
- MGR'S LOGICS OF ACTION
- MAINTAINING A NICHE
- FUTURE/PROJECTED ACT

- INTERVIEWS
- OBSERVATIONS
- DOCUMENTS

DETECTING SITUATIONS
MAKING SENSE
MODIFYING SCENARIOS

EXPECTATIONS DEVELOPED

RIVET LTD CASE II

METAL FINISHING LTD CASE III

CROPSHIRE DHA CASE IV

WHY NOT
- QNNRE
- DAIRY

PREPARATIONS AND REHERSALS

- ROLE-SET
- SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MODELS

ENGINE LTD CASE I

* CONTINGENT PERIODICITIES AND ORGANISATION OF WORK PORTFOLIOS
*PLANNING LOGISTICS

FUTURE ORIENTATION

. RATIONALISING
. INTENDED DISCONTINUITY
. PAST LOADEDNESS
. SITUATED PRACTICES
. INDIVIDUAL/ORGANISATIONAL STOCK OF KNOWLEDGE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

TECHNOCRATS, MAINTAINING SYSTEMS OPERATIONS

MORE CONCEPTS and PUZZLES

*PORTFOLIOS CONTAIN FUTURE INTENTIONS
*ROLE-SETS
*DETECTION OF EVENTS

LANGUAGE WHICH DIFFERENTIATES ENVIRONMENTS

HOW TO UNDERSTAND?

Figure 2.1   Process of Conceptual Refinement

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The questions which were raised at this stage were as follows: firstly if managerial work is fragmentary and hence managers do not plan or organise, how do organisations survive? Secondly if the classical description of managerial work is a myth, what do managers actually do? And finally what makes the model depicted by the 'activity school' more 'real' than previous models?

The examination of other conceptions and models of the work of managers introduced another aspect, that of time, into the investigation process. There exist studies of managers' activities in different settings (see Clark, 1976 for example), which have claimed that there is an underlying continuity in what managers do, which is constituted in the temporal framework that they are using. In other words, if managerial work is analysed in its temporal context it will be characterised by continuity rather than fragmentation (see Chapter Four).

The fragmentation-continuity debates thereafter were considered as 'portable probes' which were to be taken to organisational settings, as the basis of the empirical exploration. The initial intent was to analyse the 'content' of managerial work, which, despite the claims of the 'activity school', are considered to have been inadequately analysed. Most studies of managerial work have focussed on the concept of 'agenda' which contains organised/ordered items yet its potentials are limited in illustrating the dynamics of managerial behaviour. It was decided, then, that such notions as 'managerial portfolios' put forward by Marples (1967) provided a better frame of analysis. Utilising the concept of 'portfolio', thus, implied investigating managers' future intentions and the underlying motivations or explanations for such intentions.

The primary set of interviews, which were relatively structured, were carried out in Engine Ltd. (Case I). Following the analysis of the case material, however, it

was recognised that the questions posed at interviews in this case study and thus the dialogues with the managers centred upon demands and constraints imposed by their jobs, the time pressures, the imposition of tasks by superordinates etc. Therefore, initial analysis of the study notes showed that the conceptual framework of the thesis, which was developed at the time, was inadequately translated into questions.

Yet, the outcome of this set of interviews could not be easily dismissed. Further analysis of the interview notes exposed some conceptual implications. The managers (the respondants) in Engine Ltd. were located in the middle layers of the Company's hierarchy. They acted as organisational technicians since their work activities involved maintenance of the Company's operating system. Furthermore, the examination of the dialogue showed that managerial work cannot be described by presenting a set of discrete activities. There were the purpose and outcomes of these activities to be questioned and clarified, and there seem to be an underlying pattern governing managers' activities. The methods and assumptions of the 'activity school' provided only a superficial insight into the management phenomenon. From then onwards, conceptualising management as a cognitive activity was emphasised.

In the following phase, attention returned to the continuity thesis and its basic elements, in order to develop the appropriate set of interview question. The continuity thesis describes managing as a set of time-reckoning activities. It asserts that managers are engaged in identifying a set of contingent/recurrent events which they use as frameworks in their managerial decision-makings. Therefore, in order to identify these frameworks (events), the researcher ought to examine the temporal perspectives which are utilised by the managers, their

organisations and their industries. With respect to this assertion the question raised was what analytic tool could be used to identify these temporal perspectives.

The idea that managers use events as their frames of reference reinforced the initial claim of this research that managerial work includes a set of cognitive activities. There exist certain studies which have considered the managerial cognitions: for example, Weick's (1979) and Bougon's (1983) conceptions of 'cause maps' and 'schemas', and Spender's (1980) thesis on 'industry recipes'. These conceptions inspired this aspect of the thesis.

With respect to these aspects of managing - continuity and cognition - the general technical questions of the research was changed. At this stage two more or less parallel questions were raised. These were: (a) 'what are managers actually doing?' and, (b) 'what do they say they are doing?'. The addition of '-ing' to the question was to highlight the assumption about managing as an on-going process and equally to illustrate that managers think about what they are doing. This was a counter-argument with regard to Mintzberg's claim that managers spend no time reflecting upon events. It was realised at this stage that an interpretation of the nature of managerial work could be arrived at if descriptive, perspective observed accounts were considered (see Figure 2.2).

The second phase of the empirical exploration was organised on the basis of the aforementioned arguments. The work of the managers in two different industrial settings, located in the engineering industry, provided the grounds for examination of the arguments. In 'Rivet Ltd.' (Case II) various questions were discussed with the managers and their everyday activities were observed in order to unravel the temporal dimensions which belonged to their organisation. This Company at the

Figure 2.2   Arriving at an interpretation
              of managerial work
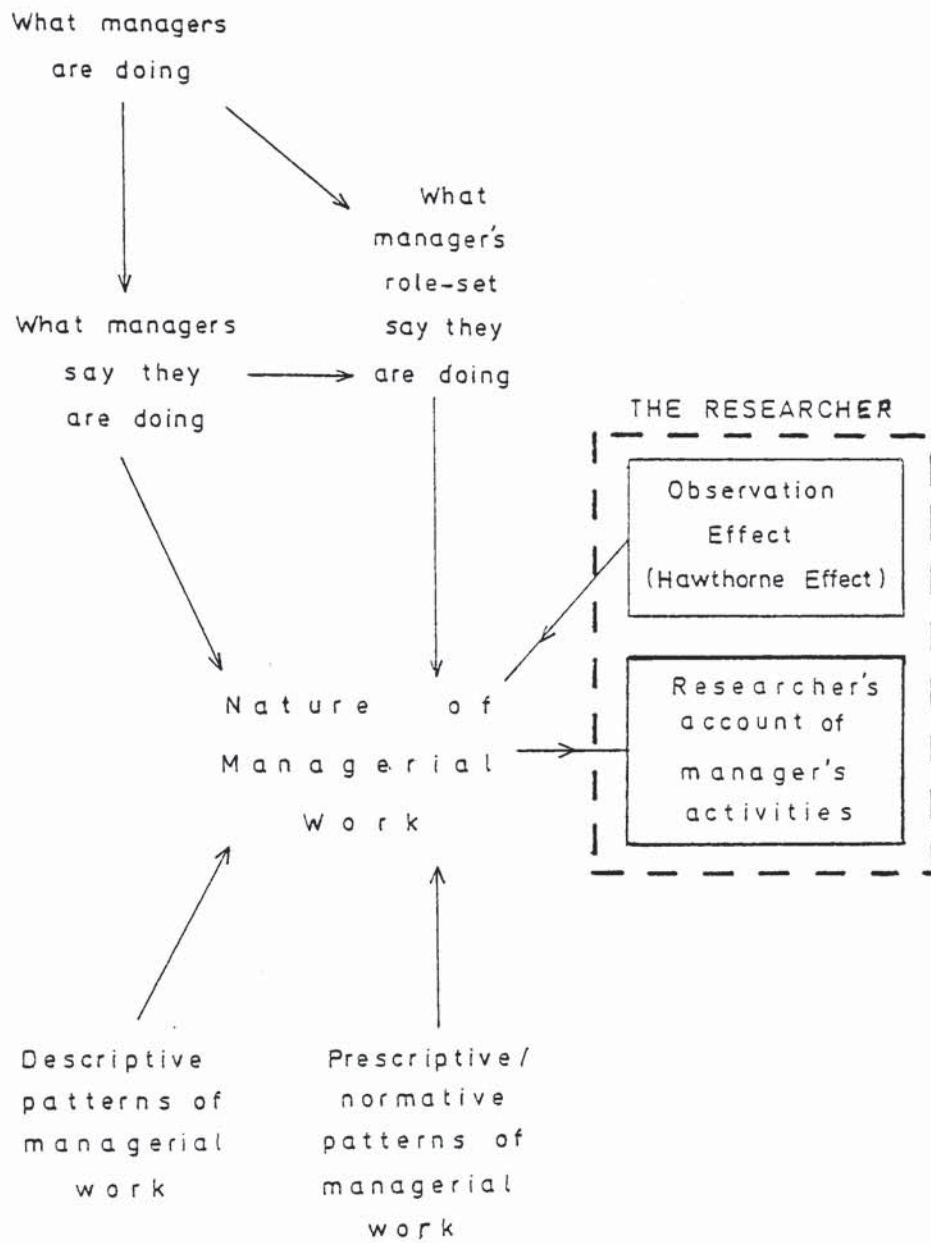
time of the study was operating within certain financial constraints. Some of the managers had also experienced this situation in the previous years. Thus, they frequently anticipated future events on the bases of these experiences, and took action accordingly. Similarly, in 'Metal Finishing Ltd.' (Case III), the managers' 'projected acts' were implied in their definitions of 'there and then' situations and what they thought was going to be the future situations.

The analysis and interpretation of the activities of the managers in these industrial organisations showed that managers' portfolios contained their future intentions. It was thus highlighted that certain theoretical concepts ought to be considered in theorising about managerial work. Then it was realised that the claim of the 'activity school' about managers' preference for the use of verbal media and live action could be replicated in these cases, but, it would provide a nonsensical picture of what managers do. This kind of interaction seemed one way of keeping up-to-date with the events and things. Therefore the addition of the concept of 'role-set' (as Merton, 1954) seemed focal to the conceptual framework of the thesis. The concept of role-set was initially considered in the research proposal with the intent to illustrate that managers keep abreast of events whilst attending to a variety of issues and people. It was thought that this aspect of managerial work is misinterpreted as 'fragmentation'.

This thought was basically developed on the description of managers' portfolios as put forward by Marples (1967), yet it has evolved in the process of research. According to Marples, managers keep various issues with different time spans afloat in their portfolios. These issues are frequently initiated by the managers' superordinates or subordinates, i.e. their role-set. However, the notion of role-set remains unfolded in Marples' analysis of the work of managers. This is because he views managers' portfolios as a 'stranded rope' according to which, he emphasises

that issues have different time spans but this analogy underplays the significance of managers' role relationships. These relationships, however, are clearly analysed in Merton's conception of social structures and mechanisms. The notion of role-set has thus been used in this thesis with reference to Merton's conceptualisation in order to demonstrate the varying degree of involvement and power of the actors in the managerial processes in various settings.

A further query which was raised on a similar note, concerned the managerial decision-making arenas. The observation of the managers' activities and the interviews with them and the people on their role-set showed that managerial work to a great extent included detailed discussions and the exchange of thoughts and information in informal and formal meetings. These arenas hence provided managers with the opportunities to sort out their surroundings and make sense of their activities. Thereafter the search for concepts and settings which would clarify these puzzles continued.

Hence, another concept, which was introduced into this process of conceptual refinement and in attempts to clarify the puzzles, was the notion of 'logics of action' put forward by Karpik (1978, 1981). This concept was considered to be central to the analysis of 'rationalities' and cognitive activities of managers and their role-set. The concept of 'logics of action' emphasises the goal-directed nature of activities of the actors in an organisation which develop in a set of contexts: historical, environmental and political. It includes actors' objectives, strategies and 'principles of actions' around which they organise their behaviour. This was a revealing notion with respect to the activities of the managers in the industrial settings already investigated. The adaptive behaviours of these managers and their organisations had developed as a response to the changes in their business environments such as increase in inflation rate, reduction in demand

for their products, and so on. Karpik's perspective emphasises multi-contextual consideration of organisational actions, yet it underplays the temporal dimension of such actions. For instance, the aforementioned managers were frequently using their past experiences of certain events in their anticipation of future changes or stability.

A further question was raised in relation to the nature and the type of choices, which were available to the managers under such situations; whether they could design their choices or modify the existing ones. In other words what could be the extent of bargaining power that the managers seek to have. Karpik's concept of 'logics of actions' includes the process by which the actors develop their choices. This argument portrays actors in the organisation as powerful individuals who can impose their ends upon the activities of their organisations and thus will have some impact upon the strategies. The question, hence, is about the ways managers exercise such powers.

The goal-directed actions of the actors as implied in the concept of 'logics of action', emphasises the 'intentionality' in the conduct of the actors, which is also considered in Giddens' and Schutz's theorisings. Giddens (1979) has taken this argument further stressing that actors' intentional practices are situated temporally and paradigmatically. This contention therefore illustrates the structuring effects of these situations.

These theorisings about the actors' behaviour initiated other questions such as: how the paradigmatic conduct of managers is identified and shown how managerial activities are structured; the extent to which identifying these practices, their temporal context and underlying paradigms may explain what it is that managers manage; and finally the extent that one could claim there is convergence in

theorisings about managerial actions, if the 'structuration' argument (as Giddens, 1979) is used as the basis for the analysis of methods and assumptions.

The underlying assumptions of the theorisings which were considered were interpreted in terms of the involvement of the organisational members in the development of some coping strategies and response mechanisms to environmental stimuli. This interpretation also meant that the actors' 'situated practices' (as Giddens, 1979) might be located across a 'reactive-proactive' continuum (as Lawrence and Kotter 1974; Miles and Snow 1978).

Other conceptualisations about adaptive behaviour of organisations have considered other aspects of the situation under which the behaviour evolves. For instance, March (1963) and Simon (1958) have described the main function of management as decision-making under uncertain situations. Simon, thus, has emphasised the human cognitive and problem-solving abilities and illustrated the actors' 'calculated-rationalities' in the decision-making situations. March (1980) has described managerial actions as 'ordinary hypocrisy', i.e. he suggests that what the managers say may be different from how they act. The 'Carnegie school' in general have argued that in uncertain situations actors in organisation learn by trial and error; they learn about the technology and objectives of their organisation whilst in the process of doing their work. Therefore organisational activities are not as tidy as they may appear to be. People develop their coping strategies whilst operating within 'organised anarchies'. This conceptualisation of adaptive behaviour, conversely, implies 'bounded rationality'.

The question hence raised, was related to the extent to which the so-called 'anarchies' structure members' activities. If in such situations, 'solutions are chasing problems', how and what kinds of planning and organising take place?

A further theoretical development of the debate on members' learning by trial and error took place with reference to Argyris & Schon's (1978) thesis on actors' 'theories of action'; that is, espoused theory and theory-in-use. This thesis postulates that learning takes place as the result of the actors' testing and re-structuring of the theory-in-use. It equally confirms the 'ordinary hypocrisy' in organisation life.

Thus, analysis of actors' intentional and adaptive behaviour re-directed the research question towards the socio-evolutionary models of organisational behaviour and accordingly towards a search for some linkages.

In the beginning, whilst searching for direction and in constructing the empirical question of the thesis, managers' adaptive behaviour was considered, regarding concepts such as 'organisational momentum' (as Miller, 1981, 1982). This concept implies that organisational activities are directed towards maintaining the existing established patterns of thought and activity. However, after some further explorations, the arguments of socio-evolutionary theorists such as Aldrich (1979), McKelvey (1980) were also considered. These theorists emphasise the external influences upon the adaptive postures of organisations. They assert that organisational members are involved in the process of carving and protecting their identified niches. This assertion was thus incorporated in the process of describing what it is that managers are managing. In other words, with reference to Aldrich and McKelvey's arguments, managers are managing the survival paths of organisations. The next phase of the empirical exploration was, hence, carried out with respect to key themes such as 'CONTINUITY', 'INTENTIONALITY', 'CHOICE SITUATIONS' and 'LEARNING'.

The set of actors whose activities were investigated, were involved in planning and design of a district general hospital for a new town in England (Case IV). The questions which were put to these people in a number of dialogues were aimed at unfolding their theorisings about the process of planning, about their conceptions of the events and situations related to the design and building of the hospital and their understanding of the decision-making processes in their situations. The same questions were considered during the observation of their interactions, their periodic and/or informal meetings.

The analysis of the collected data and materials revived some of the initial queries. For instance, these actors' 'past-loaded-ness' played a major part in their anticipation of the future events, as regards the hospital building project. The future events included their anticipation of the reaction of their role-sets, of the possible changes of government policies, etc. The 'load' implied their previous experiences with the same set of actors, the maps they had developed over the time they had worked within the same institution or in other types of organisation. However, the actors claimed that they had challenged the institutionalised 'load' which seemed predominant in their cognitive activities. Thus, they considered that their approach to the planning and design of a hospital was a departure from the normative/prescribed approach. This challenge of the 'established pattern of thoughts' in the NHS was considered as a break in the 'continuity'. But this somehow 'INTENDED' discontinuity was to take place within the continuity which characterised the survival pattern of the System. It nevertheless raised the puzzle about the extent of choice that existed for these actors, i.e. the difference between what they claimed to have as against what they actually had. These actors seemed to be involved in re-moulding and re-producing the normal practices in the NHS.

The continuity-intended discontinuity debate was, thus, used to reveal these actors' 'politickings'. At a later stage their activities were interpreted according to Crozier's conceptualisation of games in organisation and they way the rules of the game develop (Crozier, 1964; Crozier and Friedberg, 1980). It was then argued that the actors' 'cause maps' and their loadedness are expressions of these games and rules. This debate highlighted the significance of multi-contextual analysis of managerial work as regards Karpik's argument. One of the complexities which was involved with a multi-contextual analysis therefore, was the number of approaches which could be utilised in the interpretation of the case study data.

Thus, the analysis, comparing and contrasting of the case materials developed the focal point, which in the earlier stages of the research had been bracketed. As a result of the initial analysis it was, therefore, asserted that managers are involved in the development of analytic tools (grammar), which differentiate their environments (and hence are contextual) and their mode of organising and thus structure their activities. Figure 2.3 shows the major elements in managing with respect to the theoretical framework of the thesis.

II

As was shown in the previous Section, this thesis started with a set of theoretically-driven puzzles about the nature of managerial work. A variety of concepts and interpretations were constantly and frequently considered as the result of the theoretical and empirical explorations. There was no pre-determined structure for the development of its theoretical stance. This unbounded yet untidy process provided a challenging opportunity for massaging the existing theorisings about management and managerial work. Nevertheless, the process of shaping the core theoretical questions of the thesis has not been straightforward.

Figure 23   Managing: An illustration of some of the major elements
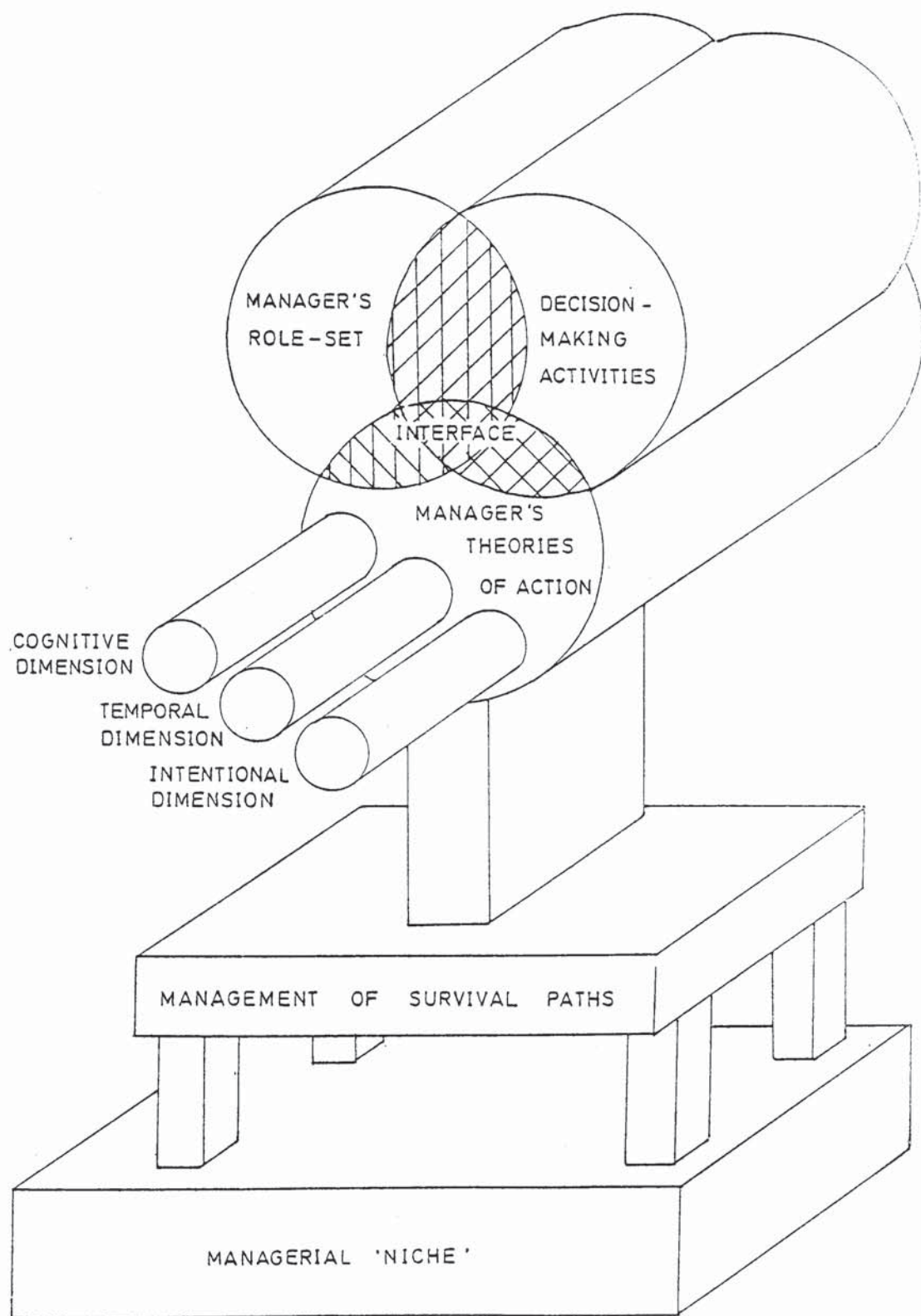
This investigation into the field of managerial work began with a set of puzzles whilst the proposal of the thesis was written. It was recognised that examination of the nature of managerial work required prior theorisings. The structure of the thesis, thus, emerged and evolved throughout the process of clarifying the puzzles. Various themes and concepts were considered in juxtaposition, in an attempt to establish the theoretical stance of the thesis and to resolve the puzzles. Hence the stance represents an interpretation of the underlying analytical and methodological assumptions.

The research strategy, thereafter, included the methods for gathering and analysis of the data. A blend of research techniques such as interviewing, observation and document reviewing were used for collecting the data. The analysis and interpretation of the content of the interviews, minutes of the meetings and partly the observation notes, has therefore been commonsensical; based on an understanding of the 'whats' and 'hows' of managerial activities, with regard to the juxtaposed themes, i.e. the 'portable probes'.

The following section offers a description of the nature of the fieldwork. It commences with an account of the process of selecting the firms and will continue with the details of preparations and rehearsals for the encounters with four sets of managers in four different organisations. Finally, the research techniques and their strength, the approach to the analysis and presentation of the data are examined.

SELECTION OF THE FIRMS FOR STUDY

1.   The search for the managers began with the aim of finding a 'representative' sample of their population. This meant the development of some kind of criteria for the selection procedure.   This idea was considered following a study of research methods and discussion with researchers whose 'logics of inquiry' required control of some variables, e.g. size, industry, etc.   This method was considered logical and could provide safeguards against 'abnormalities' in the outcome of the research. But this consideration was secondary to the process of this research and with respect to the aim of the thesis.   Therefore, this thesis did not set out to measure variables or test a set of hypotheses about the causal relationships among these variables.

The primary criteria which were used for selecting the target organisation reflected the concern of this work for particular environmental and/or industrial characteristics which would provide the grounds for presenting an actual image of managerial activities.   Therefore it was decided to search for industries which were going through some kind of change or transition. The firms in the furniture industry were primarily considered as appropriate targets.   There were signs of stagnation in this industry, as well as developments such as D.I.Y. furniture.

Various directories such as Kompas and Yellow Pages were used, in order to choose a sample of 20 furniture manufacturers and retailers. Letters were sent to 10 of these firms explaining the aims of the research as the examination of the effects of environmental changes on managerial activities.   This implied identifying factors which were located and interpreted by managers and the course of action they took accordingly. This theme was adopted because (a) the bulk of empirical studies of managerial work seemed to have characterised managerial

activities without their contexts, and (b) the research question emphasised the aspect of cognition in managerial work. It was considered therefore that the context of managerial activities in the furniture industry could provide the grounds for scrutiny.

Unfortunately only two companies replied, and both stated that they were unable to co-operate, because their managers and executives at the time were engaged in preparing projects for coping with economic recession. The file on this industry was therefore closed and it was decided that 'cold letters' were an ineffective means of approaching firms and getting interviews.

Thereafter, various people who could provide contacts with 'gatekeepers' in various firms were approached. No deliberation, in terms of the size of the firms or the type of industry could therefore be exercised.

One promising contact with an investment company fell through as a result of one of the company's directors misunderstanding of the aims of the research. Hence, the research proposal was put under scrutiny and re-defined as a kind of performance appraisal programme intending to show the inefficiencies and inadequacies of the managers in that company.

The initial attempts at getting access to the managers therefore proved to be less straightforward than expected. Use of other means such as the telephone also proved to be problematic, since there was the need for verbal legitimacy and justification of the research aims. This often reduced the chances of entering any firm to a minimum. It was a matter of marketing for the research proposal, so that it was attractive to the managers and did not pose any threat to their status. Thus, a flexible definition of the aim of the research was produced and

used in verbal/written contacts with potential gatekeepers. For example, 'management of time' was put as the focal question of the research and the interpretation of it was left to those who were contacted. This bohemian approach was imposed yet preferred because it did not lock the process of selection of the firms in a square of conventional consideration of variables; it left some room for manoeuvring the research direction.

The background to the first set of interviews was set at one of the Annual Doctoral Programme Conferences. One of the participants in the Conference was the Personnel Manager of Engine Ltd. (Case I), a manufacturing company, who offered the opportunity for a limited set of interviews with the other managers in the Company headquarters. A further telephone call was made to ensure that the interview timetables were set. An outline was sent in which the research genre was described in terms of examination of 'managers' theories of action and organisation of work'. It also contained some queries about time and how it was allocated to different tasks. The outline was distributed among the managers in the Company by the Personnel Manager prior to the interviews. The managers regarded the interviews as an examination of their abilities in using their time effectively. The discussions were directed towards the deficiencies that they attributed to the management system, operating system, etc. The use of some theoretical jargon in some of the trigger questions seemed rather obtrusive in the process of these interviews.

The interviews with 5 managers in Engine Ltd. were carried out in a day. The outcome of these interviews are presented in case I.

2.   The opportunity for interviewing another set of managers emerged through contacts with academic staff who were involved in management consultancy activities.

A brief encounter with the Director of Rivet Ltd. (Case II), who was collaborating with Aston Management Centre on a training course, set the background for the second set of interviews. Initially the request for interviews with the Director and other Heads of Departments of the Company had been refused.

This time in contacting the 'gate-keeper' (the Director), a different tactic was adopted which proved to be effective. Accordingly,

- the main focus of the research was hardly emphasised;
- simple, comprehensive statements were used to describe the research genre;
- the solely academic interest of the research was stressed;
- the confidentiality of the content of the discussions was guaranteed;
- the timetabling of the interviews was left the managers themselves.

The entry was granted on the grounds that some investigations into the activities and performance levels of the middle managers in the Company were carried out. In the later stages of the research, the opportunity for discussing the research question with more senior managers was provided by the Director. The interviews with the managers in Rivet Ltd. and observation of their activities were carried out over an 8-week period.

Whilst exploring the nature of the managerial work in Rivet Ltd. (Case II), the search for other firms which could provide the relevant set-up continued. (At that time just a few miles away from the centre of Birmingham a campaign was

launched to revive industry in the Midlands). This was an opportunity for encounters with industrialists who might be prepared to discuss their managerial theories and experiences regarding the research probes.

Initial contact with the Managing Director of Metal Finishing Ltd. (Case III) took place at a one-day seminar, which was held during the campaign. He had been selected to deliver a talk to the other businessmen on 'survival tactics' and was judged to be shrewd in the way he discussed and analysed his ways of running the business. The opportunity was taken and the research question was put to him briefly, using the same approach as was adopted for the previous case. The managers in Metal Finishing Ltd. were interviewed and their activities were observed for 3 weeks.

3.   The circumstances under which the contacts with the 'gatekeepers' for the fourth set of managers were made were rather different. The 'gatekeepers' were working in a public sector setting (a health authority) and had come to Aston Management Centre to offer opportunities for some research activities. The initial research synopsis that they had suggested included studies of decision-making processes and power structures in their settings. Several meetings were arranged for a group of researchers and investigators, including the researcher, to discuss the proposed project synopsis regarding their own research interests, areas, etc. Easy access to people in the Authority and to the documents was offered to them, and the opportunity was taken up. At the beginning a few full-day induction visits to the Authority and some of the organisations under its control were arranged, which indeed set the background for the interviews and discussions. It was through these visits that the key actors were selected. The meetings paved the way and facilitated the researcher's entry into the Authority's domain of activities. However, the 'gatekeepers' who were the General

Administrator and the Personnel Officer demanded the researcher to present a brief outline of the research. This was claimed to be part of the procedure for facilitating the access to documents and for the actors to prepare for the interviews. A schedule for interviews and observations was suggested to the gatekeepers, and the essence of the research was verbally explained on the arrival of the researcher on the scene. Thereafter no other written outline was presented.

PREPARATIONS AND REHEARSALS

Having gained approval for entering the above-mentioned organisations, certain issues were considered to ascertain the continuity and quality of the study in each case. It was recognised that there was a need for some preparations and rehearsals prior to the entry. Whilst on the scene it seemed essential that the researcher built some trusting relationships with the managers.

Questions Posed to Managers

In order to maintain some harmony between various stages of the research a workable perspective was developed within which a combination of techniques were to operate. The perspective partly evolved from the conceptual refinement process and partly from the puzzles/research questions which emerged from this process. The interviews and observations and document reviews were directed towards finding the response to such queries.

The unstructured interviews circled around a number of issues. In each case the research question was simply introduced as being about what managers do, however, there were some subtle differences in the way this introduction was

presented to different managers. A personal guide containing the queries was also designed, to enable the researcher to keep the interviews in focus.

In Case I the discussions started by a number of questions about the managers' jobs, their typical day or week in their offices, how they allocated time to various activities, whether they allowed time/resources for unexpected events, and how they perceived the nature of their business environments. Some further questions arose from the discussions. Basically, as post-hoc examination showed, the dialogues in this case were influenced by 'activity school' type of questions. Ironically, the critique of their perspective constituted the point of departure for this thesis. Furthermore, the tight interview schedule reduced the opportunity for more penetrating questions.

In the Cases II and III the personal guide contained a different set of issues as the conceptual framework emphasised the 'COGNITION' and 'CONTINUITY' in managerial work. In these cases, the discussions commenced by questions about what managers thought would be happening in the future regarding their business and managerial activities. Similarly, they were asked to talk about some major events which they thought had changed the nature of their work, and what course of action they would take or avoid taking if the event recurred. Furthermore there were questions about the outcome of the day (the one which was observed) etc. These items were used as the starting points, but if the managers' interests in other issues were detected and perceived to be relevant to the research question, they were taken up and the discussion would continue accordingly.

A different set of issues set the background for dialogues with the administrator in Case IV. These were related to the dimensions in managerial conduct, i.e. temporal, intentional and paradigmatic. In the previous cases these issues were

touched upon - the temporal context of managerial work and the development of manager's maps accordingly, were examined. The focal theme in Case IV was the 'INTENDED DISCONTINUITY' - an attempt to unravel the administrators' ways of reproduction of maps and strategies to challenge institutionalised practices. Therefore, the questions were put to these planners in a straightforward manner, revealing these assumptions. The extent that the previous experiences of the actors influenced their approach was considered in the discussions.

The important task in some of the interviews, however, was to maintain control over the direction of the discussion. Often the dialogues changed to monologues in which the 'managers' tried to clarify some points and thus moved away from the main track of the thesis. At other times the discussions led to some conceptual analysis and debates on management theorisings. The experience of the interviews with the managers in Engine L.td. (Case I) showed that the opening questions play a significant part in the direction of the discussions. The questions used in Case I were leading and contained some inappropriate wording.

In Cases II and III, the questions about the nature of past events triggered experiences and complaints about the system, the superiors' lack of understanding of the nature of their business, imposition of 'illegitimate' demands, etc. However, some of their tensions were released as they talked to the researcher, who listened attentively and offered some theoretical resolutions. She was then offered the job of 'company psychologist'! These occasions were frequently utilised for obtaining a better understanding of the background issues and perhaps reducing the equivocality in the information given on the events.

When the managers continued talking about those problems which seemed clearly irrelevant to the research themes, some non-verbal cues were to show the

disinterest in the topic, yet this had to be done with caution to avoid any changes in their positive attitudes towards the interviews.

Discussion with the managers were also carried out in the form of 'chats' outside their familiar contexts and when they were out of their managerial roles.

Methods Used to Record Information

In the interviews with managers in Engine Ltd. (Case I) attempts were made to make detailed notes of the content of the discussions. This created an uneasy atmosphere. The managers frequently glanced at the written points. The discussion came to a halt each time the reseacher started taking notes since the extent of eye contact was reduced. This disrupted the momentum of the discussions. The written notes, when considered afterwards, were mainly interpretations of what was said on the basis of Mintzberg's and Stewart's ideas, rather than the actual account of the discussion.

For the other set of interviews a tape-recorder was used. This seemed to be a more effective means. The agreement of the managers on the use of a tape-recorder was not sought, due to the fear that the reply could be negative. The element of surprise helped. The tape-recorder was displayed in the first moments of the interview, and then it was placed in a suitable corner where it could cause minimum distraction. It was explained to the managers that the use of tape-recorder was mainly to reduce the burden of intensive note-taking and thus concentrating on their views and descriptions of their work activities. The assurance was given accordingly that the recorded interviews would be considered as confidential and thus inaccessible to others. Only in Case III did one manager (the marketing manager) seem uneasy and reluctant to speak when the recorder

was switched on, yet as the time passed he relaxed in the presence of the recording machine.

It must be mentioned that during the informal interview the recorder was not used and the notes were taken when it seemed appropriate. This was essential methodologically since they set the background for the next set of questions.

Initial Contacts with Managers

As the formal entry was approved, in addition to preparation, rehearsals and reconstruction of sentences, attempts had to be made to mould the field, i.e. the set-up of the study. Basically, to gain unlimited co-operation of the managers, a low profile was presented, one which was academically shaped and showed naive understanding of the organisational relationships.

At the beginning of each set of interviews the terms of trade were set. These were concerned with the disruption of the flow of managers' organisational activities which could be caused by the researcher's presence. Assurances were given that attempts would be made to minimise the disruptions and adjust the timetables. The formal introduction of the researcher by the gatekeepers in some cases produced a variety of reactions and consequences.

There were mixed reactions among the managers in Engine Ltd. Some showed interest, some were indifferent. However, none considered the researcher as the agent of the gatekeeper or the Board of Directors.

The managers in Rivet Ltd. were approached on the assumption that the Director had already introduced the research purpose. However, the introduction seemed

to have aroused the suspicion of the members of the management team. The Production Manager, who was the first person on the interview schedule, answered the starting queries about what he was doing, reluctantly and with caution. On other occasions he expressed some concern about how the recorded interviews and consequent findings would be used. He demanded that a copy of the researcher's feedback report to be sent to him directly.

Whilst interviewing the managers in Rivet Ltd. the stated aim of the research was defined and re-defined to alleviate the difficulties caused by the Director's description of the research in terms of the question of the effective use of time by managers.

The Marketing Manager also expressed his mistrust at the first encounter. Although at later stages he confessed that the discussions had some therapeutic effects for him, it took some time before the managers in Rivet Ltd. showed any trust in the genuine academic interest of the researcher.

In Metal Finishing Ltd. the interviews with the Marketing Manager, who was incidentally the Managing Director's brother-in-law, became insipid, formal exchanges of straightforward questions and answers. Because of the way the offices were laid out and lack of space, the first set of interviews with him took place in the Managing Director's office. On this occasion a set of ambiguous general replies were provided and the main issues were avoided. The problem seemed to be the location of the interviews. A better rapport was developed at later stages and some time was spent with the Marketing Manager outside the Company.

The set-up for interviews in 'Cropshire' District Health Authority (DHA) was different. There were induction visits to the Health Authority, and the members

of various management teams, i.e. District Management Team, Manpower and Commissioning Team occasionally were present to provide the necessary background information about the Authority's activities, the nature of their on-going project, etc. The key informants were identified and selected on these occasions. The schedule for interviews was organised mutually. Hardly any disinterest or reluctance among the administrators was detected. Some of the administrators willingly took part in some conceptual arguments. However, on one or two occasions there were some comments made by the District Personnel Officer which implicitly questioned the genuine motives underlying the research question which was interpreted as 'discovering the politics' of their organisation. They provided an 'office corner' for the researcher (on her request) which was used in intervals and for sorting out notes and documents. In Rivet Ltd., one corner of the production staff lounge was used during the intervals. The lounge was located outside the production manager's office. It was referred to as the workers' canteen, although no food was served there. The lounge was also used by another researcher from another academic institution who had been there for a year. The place was used by the shop floor employees during their breaks. Occasionally, in the absence of the Marketing Manager his office was used as the working place.

In Metal Finishing Ltd., the committee room which was linked to the MD's office was used. The other person who would be using the office was the Chairman of the Board. There was a limited chance of meeting the other members of the management team.

In the earlier stages of the inquiry into the Health Administrators, activities, the office of the personnel officer, one of the gatekeepers, was used. However, in the absence of the District Personnel Officer his office and its communication facilities were used. These arrangements were made by the General

Administrator. The researcher was confined to the use of these offices and indirectly prohibited from entering the others. Conforming to the rules of the Authority, however, was essential and actually safeguarded free access to the documents and people in the Authority. The people who were in the lower echelons seemed more disturbed as the researcher toured around the offices.

Other Research Activities

In addition to conducting semi-structured interviews, some rigorous non-participant observation of the managers' activities in different time periods and a review of relevant documents were carried out. The latter included minutes of various meetings held by the management teams, various correspondence, newspaper cuttings kept by the organisation. Several regular and informal meetings were also attended which provided some additional information about managerial processes. The only exception was Engine Ltd. where no time was spent on passive observation, due to the fact that there was time allowed only for short interviews and no other research activity.

In the other cases the observational activities were spread over various hours of the day, and days of the week. In Rivet Ltd. and Metal Finishing Ltd. the managers were observed whilst working in their offices. Thus some days were mainly spent on taking notes of what the managers did, who they contacted, or who contacted them, how many phone calls they made, how many meetings (formal, informal, brief or long) they attended, etc. Also in Rivet Ltd. the Production Manager was followed to the shop floor and each time he contacted the foreman and the chargehand, notes were taken of their exchanges of ideas and dialogues, etc.

The meetings were used to observe the managers in action and in the presence of their role-set. The marketing man in Rivet Ltd. provided the researcher with some rare opportunities for taking part in promotional sales and meetings with his peers in other companies. When the appropriate time arose some queries were put forward to these people. Notes were taken accordingly and when it seemed appropriate.

Outside the office hours and lunch times, some time was spent socialising with the managers in Rivet Ltd. and their colleagues, during which some informal exchanges of information occurred and were noted.

The observation of the managers in Metal Finishing Ltd., however, took place on an ad hoc basis. The Managing Director suggested several accompanied trips to the shop floor. The people on the shop floor were not informed of the researcher's limited stay in the Company. He had arranged for lunches to be served formally in his dining room for the researcher and the management team throughout the time of the study.

In the District Health Authority, meetings seemed to be the appropriate set-up for observing the administrators in action. There was no chance of any other passive observations. However the tea breaks and lunch hours which were spent in the Authority's small canteen provided the opportunity to observe these actors in the presence of their role-set, on an informal basis and to consider some of their claims accordingly.

Throughout the field study, notes were taken of the temporal rhythm of these managers activities. The organisational timetables and diaries were also noted. The diaries of managers were reviewed in attempts to identify patterns of their

activities which could be influenced by the pre-determined, scheduled regulatory events. For example, the strategic planning in Rivet Ltd. was scheduled for a particular part of the year. This review was also designed to find out about certain events at which the researcher could be present. In Rivet Ltd., a member of the Fastener Group, the request for attending the Group's review meeting was refused because of the confidential nature of the information which would be disseminated in those meetings. In the DHA, in the beginning the attendance of some special meetings, e.g. Resource Allocation Working Party seemed less problematic and the opportunities were even offered. However, the situation changed in the later stages and the officers seemed reluctant in providing such opportunities.

In all cases, the minutes of the meetings which were held prior to the time of the research were studied and analysed. The prime objects of reviewing and analysing the content of the minutes of various meetings were:-

(a)   To establish an account of certain events which were referred to in the minutes. This meant re-construction of some of the events through a set of 'chronological codes' which could be detected;

(b)   To examine the content of the minutes of the meetings which were attended by the researcher against the observed discussions;

(c)   To identify the key actors for future observations or interviews.

Furthermore, the correspondence between the managers and the individuals in their role-set were reviewed. The object of reviewing documents of this nature was (a) to examine the ways managers articulated their relationship with others in

writing and (b) to what extent these activities influenced the content of their portfolios and the agendas of their meetings.

Notes were taken, throughout the fieldwork, on the theoretical issues 'on puzzles' on the method and questions as they evolved and whilst the researcher was on the premises. The non-verbal cues of the actors was also noted in the interviews and meetings. The actors used the non-verbals either to emphasise a point or show its significance to their colleagues or the researcher. The conversations which occurred between the managers and the members of their organisations, other than the key actors, were also noted.

Briefly, this work has involved meeting managers in their work environments and talking with them about their experiences, about what they were doing and were going to do, regarding their surroundings, other people and events. In this way the managers responded to temporary stimuli which were initiated by the researcher and the research puzzles. The impact of the investigation, the questions, the effect of the researchers' presence upon the situation, the actors and their reactions and responses were taken into account in analysis of the data.

At times, in the interviews and observations, whilst the researcher was active on the premises, there were some changes in the patterns of the activities of the managers and their colleagues. There were fewer interruptions in the managers' day. Some actors mentioned that the questions which were raised in the interviews influenced their approaches to their work, their understanding of what they were doing and their relationships with their colleagues. They admitted that their focus of attention was directed to issues which they felt could partly explain the changes in their surroundings. Furthermore, the presence of the researcher raised the curiosity of those people in the organisation who were not informed of

the purpose of her presence. They used various means such as preparing cups of tea or following the researcher to the photocopying room, to approach the researcher and to question the purpose of her presence.

Triangulation

A set of research tools have been used in this study in an attempt to present an accurate account of managerial work. The principle of triangulation (Denzin, 1978) has been followed in order to enhance the validity of the collected data. The semi-structured interviews created interactions and allowed the process of inquiry to flourish by verbal exchanges of experiences, without any interference or participation of the researcher in the actual managing of the situation. The key actors' accounts of their situations, of what they thought they were doing and their anticipation of the future events were compared and contrasted with those of their role-sets. The informal discussions with the non-key informants who were working in the specialised areas, were used for further cross-checkings. In addition at different times during the interviews, a set of questions were put to the managers about the events in certain times in their company's life, in an attempt to detect inconsistencies in the given accounts.

The object of this 'semi-active' observation was: (a) to see these people in action, (b) to develop a better understanding of what they were doing and (c) learn about how they did it. The examination of other sources of information was carried out since they might provide clarifications and checking points, for the accounts given by the interviewees.

Indeed, this work has greatly relied on the ability of the managers to relay their activities and perspectives to the observer. Therefore, the analytic task has been

transferred to the actors, i.e. those who were involved in the process of managing.

However, the advocates of the 'activity school' (e.g. Mintzberg) have rejected interviewing techniques because the managers are 'expected to translate reality into meaningful abstraction' (1973:222), despite its aforementioned potentials. This claim is by no means a description of what has been done in the course of this study. Here, the triangulation is meant to reduce the uncertainty of interpretation, i.e. the gap between the observer's and the manager's account of the events. It must be noted that Mintzberg through his passive observation has attempted to answer the question of 'what do managers really do?'. His observation of the activities of 5 Chief-executive officers, within his predetermined categories (also within a perspective which is influenced by certain institutional factors) is used as the criterion for the "real".

Other studies of managerial work have used the 'diary method' in which the time distribution of managerial activities and job factors are determined by the manager or the observer, on a pre-coded pad. This approach might be appropriate if the research question was about the amount of time that managers spend on various tasks, in which case the details of each task and task categories must be known. Such a time-study approach to managerial work, however, was considered as inadequate regarding the conceptual framework of the thesis. It is, hence, argued that the temporal context of managerial work may not be adequately illustrated by the static records of pads, in which the motivational behaviour of the actors are disregarded. Moreover, the key episodes that structure the manager's working day cannot be unfolded by a set of pre-determined categories.

Questionnaire

In the early stages of the research the possibility of using the questionnaire method, as an additional tool, was considered. This idea was dismissed regarding the interpretative aspect of the thesis. Thus, any categorisation or clustering of managers and their work which would be produced by the questionnaire method, seemed irrelevant to the core question of the research. Thereafter, the appeal of the questionnaire as a research technique diminished further, as its drawbacks were taken into account. These drawbacks include the boundaries that the set, structured questions put around the respondant's mode of thinking. In addition, questionnaires block interaction between the respondant and the researcher, which may trigger off alternative responses, and limit the opportunity for clarifying the vague questions. Also, the questionnaire often provides the ideal responses and not the actual ones, because the respondant may attempt to put forward the response which they assume as 'ought to be' rather than 'is'. Regarding the core questions of this thesis, the emphasis is put on understanding what managers are actually doing, rather than what they think they should be doing.

It must be noted that the findings of the empirical work of this thesis would be different if a different research technique such as questionnaire were used. For instance, considering the events in Metal Finishing Ltd., if the researcher had not been present at the Company at the time, it would have been impossible to notice the recurrent quality control problem which was occurring. This incident was documented under a different category in the Company. So, such an event as an indication of the company's way of handling an internal recurrent problem, could be disregarded in a review of the documents. Or, regarding the events in Rivet Ltd., through frequent visits and interviews at different intervals, the reseacher found that the production manager was demoted and thus the Director was

'wearing two hats'. This incident changed the pattern of the Director's activities, hence, further interviews and observations had to be carried out.

PREPARATION, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

The recorded interviews and discussions were transcribed verbatim. The irrelevant occurrences such as 'would you like a cup of tea?' were omitted and the remainder were noted and categorised as observation data. No editing of the data was carried out during the transcribing and thus there was no interpretation or analysis at that stage.

The interview transcripts* were arranged in order of dates, managers and firms. Similarly the observational notes were filed by dates, the individual actor and the meetings. These notes included the researcher's personal impressions of the respondants, her perception of what they did and observations of their non-verbal cues, about the layout of the offices, and the places of interviews. The notes were taken in a narrative form and the sequence of events as regards the interviews and chats were considered.

The approach adopted for analysis of the collected data was common-sensical, just like the way managers in the interviews took the points of discussions. Their explanations of events, i.e. what they did and were going to do, were taken as 'truth'. As the trust between the parties developed, there seemed no reason to assume that what was put forward was false. Nevertheless, any distorted account was considered to be the explanation of some characteristics of managerial life.

Foot Note

* Altogether 48 hours of interviews were carried out which have produced transcripts totalling approximately 117,150 words.

Theoretically, it was thought that interpretation of the discussions and transcripts could be done by learning the jargon used by different sets of actors. Review and analysis of the secondary sources of the data established the background for such interpretations. In order to reduce the gap between the meanings, structures of the researcher and the researched (managers), attempts were made to understand their 'external objectifications'; that is, what the actors thought and explained as the happenings, their practical meanings. This was a complicated process in practice.

The 'portable probes', or the themes for discussions established further clues for understanding the recorded data. However, the use of themes in this way has been differentiated from the conventional content analysis. The main focus was to search for the meanings of the actors' statements and what was communicated thus.

The interpretations of the collected data and materials are presented in the form of case studies. The cases commence with some background information about the settings and the wider economic and political systems in which they were operating. The key events at the time of the study are reported. Then some brief descriptions of the managers' educational background and work experiences and their job characteristics are presented. The final section of the case studies are devoted to a mixture of interpretations and discussions on the bases of the theoretical probes. No attempts have been made to draw any conclusions at this stage.

RESEARCH FOCUS, METHOD AND ASSUMPTIONS

The research method, i.e., techiques for collection and analysis of data, adopted

for this thesis, has been qualitative. That is to say a set of brackets were put around the temporal and spatial domains of the managerial world. The brackets are, as previously mentioned, the probes, themes and concepts, which equally have defined the boundaries for describing what was investigated, i.e. the managerial activities. In other words they operated as maps which were used by the researcher to find her way around the manager's world. They were simultaneously the means for describing what was observed.

The brackets evolved from a theoretical exploration process by the researcher and in her attempt to present an actual account of the managers' activities. The examination of these maps in the field resulted in further puzzles and thus the need for development of further maps emerged.

Presenting an actual image of the work of managers required close contact with the managers and their domain of activities. Interviewing and observation techniques were adopted to fulfill this aim. Discussions with the managers took place in their environments where they talked about their experiences, people and events. They were observed in action, and the instances of their interactions with their role-set were noted. Therefore, as discussed before, use of distancing mechanisms such as questionnaire or pre-coded diary forms were not considered. They seemed to be inadequate means for exploring the analytic tools which were used by the managers. Moreover, using such techniques could have minimised the opportunity of noticing events and organisational incidents.

The method of this study includes interpretative tools, but it is not phenomenological, nor anthropological. No attempt was made by the researcher to emerge from her own rationality to the managers' in order to produce explanations of what they were doing. In fact, the intent was to identify the

contexts of managerial activities. The 'probes' were used for such identifications. This was in line with the basic assumption of the thesis, which considers the contextual embeddedness of the managerial analytic tools. To summarise, in this research work theoretical maps are used to identify, describe and analyse managers' empirical maps.

This approach was taken in order to illustrate the way the assumptions that the researcher held about the nature of the managerial work could be anchored to the method of investigation. For instance, a rough and ready justification for exploiting such themes as managers' 'past loaded-ness', their 'logics of action' and the notion of managerial 'role-set' has been to show that managers are engaged in production, interpretation and modification of their everyday scenarios. It is thus argued that in this process managers are not alone, scenarios are shared and intersubjectively constructed.

According to Morgan (1980) "the choice and adequacy of a research method embodies a variety of assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods through which that knowledge can be obtained, as well as a set of root assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon to be investigated." (p. 49). The point that Morgan has asserted here is that, there is 'one' appropriate paradigm for a research question, i.e. one set of ontological, epistomological and methodological assumptions (also Denzin, 1978). However, regarding the stance of this thesis this assertion becomes problematic. In other words, the absence of positivistic hypothesising and adoption of a qualitative approach implies that the stance adopted here is epistemologically anti-positivist. Yet, investigation into recurrent periodic events and logics of action implies a search for causation and regularities, which shifts the epistomological stance of the thesis towards the 'objective' end of the continuum.

The ontological assumption of the thesis is, for instance, about the social construction of managers' portfolios and analytic tools. This locates the thesis theoretically in the interpretative paradigm. Regarding the assumptions about the nature of the manager's activities, the stance of the thesis swings between the interpretative and functionalist paradigms. The thesis asserts the social construction of indicators which managers use for enactment of their environments which simultaneously become the means for modification of these indicators - thus managerial activities are described as self-fulfilling prophecies. However, the attempts to analyse the assumptions underlying the methods of this study and locate them in an appropriate paradigm have been problematic. The complexity of locating the thesis in a single paradigm may be attributed to the distinction which is drawn between the paradigms, and because of their incommensurability.

THE QUESTION OF VALIDITY

The method which was used in this work for investigating managerial work and for analysis of the data, does not possess the tidy, well-defined boundaries of a more positivistic method. In selecting the method there was the question of reducing the structured-ness of the methodology in order to make it more relevant to the research question. The understanding and interpretation of the data has developed partly on the basis of a shared commonsense, i.e., what is theoretically and practically known about the managers' jobs and partly on the managers' descriptions of their traits and experiences. One basic assumption in the process of investigation was that in order to understand what the managers were saying, one ought to have got into their meaning structures. This seemed a complex task and could not be carried out by discussions. Moreover, according to Schutz, meaning structures are incommensurable, thus emerging from one and getting into

another may not occur in practice. Regarding the aim of this work, the part that the managers played in developing such meanings, their verbal definitions of the situation could, however, provide this understanding. This is also to argue that the perspectives adopted by some studies of managerial work, in particular the 'activity school' provide an inadequate means for achieving such an understanding.

To describe the validity of the data implies a move towards a positivistic stance, i.e. production of objective knowledge. The data for this work was gathered by triangulation and interpreted according to a set of concepts and within the researcher's personal paradigm. This means, production of 'objectified' subjective understandings and interpretations of managerial activities. However, such understandings have not been used for prediction or control of management behaviour for instance. In analysis of the data the aim has been to present an account of what managing is with regard to the managers' thinking practices, and not the examination of the factors which were the cause or effects of these practices. The question of validity implies the production of a scientific explanation, which is possible if a scientific approach to the research phenomenon is adopted. However, the conceptual framework used for understanding managerial activities is verified by triangulation of techniques, which may not necessarily be considered as a scientific approach.

The validity criteria for this work are based on practical uses to which the 'knowledge' produced may be put. The arguments of this thesis provide grounds for assessment of the existing conceptions about managerial activities, and understanding of what managers are actually into. This presents rather a subjective validity.

Irrespective of the practical problems the number of managers interviewed is

considered as sufficient, since the object of the thesis, that is to present an adequate model of managing, seems to be fulfilled. Hence, the questions of size and sample population have been regarded as peripheral.

The outcome of the analysis, both theoretical and empirical are presented in the form of tentative suggestions. No generalisations are made as there were managers in a variety of settings, with whom no encounter was made.

The description of managerial activities are not cross-checked with those actors involved except for the managers in Case II who received a feedback report on the outcome of the discussions. No disagreement with the suggestions was expressed. But, according to Filmer et al (1972) any test of validity as such is open to infinite regress. The managers might have agreed simply with what was suggested to be the characteristics of managerial work, in order to avoid further contacts with the reseacher. However, this argument does not apply to this thesis, as further contacts were made, and more detailed discussions entered into.

To summarise, it may be argued that there are methodological complications concerning the inquiry into managing. Some positivist methods fail to illustrate the managers' view of what it is that they are managing. The phenomenological, anthropological approaches provide private and subjective accounts of managerial processes. In order to enhance the quality of the results obtained the method used in this study includes a blend of research tools within a paradigm which lies on the border between interpretative-functionalist paradigms.

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CHAPTER THREE

COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

MEANS FOR SENSE-MAKING

RECIPE

DISCUSSION

INDUSTRY RECIPE

SOCIO-EVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND CAUSE MAPS

    ENACTMENT PROCESS: SELECTING THE STIMULI

    SELECTION PROCESS

    RETENTION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces one segment of the theoretical framework of the thesis. The framework will address the deficiencies of the theorisings of the "activity" school by employing a set of managerial and organisational models which are considered as focal to the understanding of managerial work. The framework has thus been constructed in response to the aim of the thesis which considers a change in the foci of research into management as necessary for the presentation of a more adequate picture of managers' actions and the progress of the discipline. The Chapter includes, therefore, the critical evaluation, decomposition, re-assembling and re-interpretation of the selected models. Thus, it attempts to present a potential prospectus for studying managerial practices. The selection of the existing theoretical models of managers' action has partly been influenced by the empirical work of the thesis.

The managerial models, which constitute the basis of the theoretical framework, share a basic epistomological assumption; that is, that the actors, here managers, get to know about their surroundings by transforming their experiences of their surroundings into knowledge. This assumption is in agreement with the central argument of this thesis, that managers theorise about the things and people around them. They apply their theorisings to practices which in return may/may not alter their initial theorisings.

However, there is more diversity in the jargon used in the postulation of models of managers' theorising activities than in the underlying assumptions. For instance, Weick (1977, 1979) and Bougon (1977, 1983) have examined the "schemas" and "cause maps" which are used as guidelines by individuals in their sense-making activities and include rational and experiential items. Or consider Spender's work

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(1980) which is about "industry recipes" and has been developed on the basis of Schutz's definition of "recipe" and "meaning structures" (as Schutz, 1962, 1964). According to Spender, "industry recipes" are common-sense ways of running the business which are shared (through experience, social construction) among the managers. Or Clark's work (1976, 1982) which concentrates on "time-reckoning systems". This involves a model developed on the basis of Gurvitch's time-reckoning rules and an interpretation of Giddens' concept of structuration. The model, thus, illustrates that there are socially constructed time-reckoning systems used by managers for making sense of their environments which equally structure their managerial activities. Clark's model, however, emphasises the temporal dimensions of managers' theorising activities which are disregarded in the formerly mentioned models (see Chapter Four). Some of these models, however, have emphasised the single (individual) construction of maps, e.g. Bougon, whilst others have focused on their collective (shared, social) construction, e.g. Spender, Weick and Clark.

In the following sections the characteristics of these models, the processes by which they are developed, their commonalities and differences and their inadequacies will be examined with the aim of illustrating the theoretical perspective of this thesis.

THE MEANS FOR SENSE-MAKING

The conceptual redundancy that may be found in the writings about managers' stocks of knowledge, reveals the point that there are a variety of ways that managerial "thinking practices" (as Weick, 1979a) can be studied and described. Despite this diversity of method and jargon, it is argued here that there is a convergence emerging in theorisings about managers' thinking practices which

may be attributed to their adoption of Schutz's notion of recipe and so his thesis on intersubjective understanding of actors.

The next two chapters are therefore purely attempts to introduce a prospectus for studying managers' actions. Schutz's conception of recipe as the analytic tool used by the actors in their sense-makings, sets the background for this attempt. Furthermore, it will be shown that Schutz's theorising has equally influenced conceptually, hence methodologically, the management models which are considered in the construction of the conceptual framework of the thesis.

The underlying theme of the models of managerial actions is that people in various organisational settings develop their understanding of their surrounding through interactions with the members of their role-set. Consequently, they are socialised into certain ways of carrying out their organisational activities. Hence, these understandings of or means for understanding their surroundings are shared. The implied assumption here is that this "sharedness" of understandings is extended to their definitions of situations, i.e. perceived environmental characteristics.

The notion of recipe (meaning structures) as described by Schutz is used here to dismiss certain conceptions about management and working managers. These conceptions have failed to explicate the dynamic aspects of the process in which managerial stocks of knowledge develop. It is hence claimed that a concept such as recipe provides the background for a more accurate depiction of what managers do and perhaps the response to the question: why is there a need for a model of managers' thinking?

The point is that the implications of the existing management literature for the practicising managers has been limited, and they provide no explanations for

decline or failure of organisations. It is thus argued that the selected concepts, e.g. "recipes", "cause maps", "strategic time-recokoning systems", describe the mechanisms which control the managerial process. They also show the ways such mechanisms become institutionalised.

It is asserted here that describing managerial work as prosaic and largely unplanned (as "activity" school) is therefore to disregard the structural implications of the dimensions of what managers do. This contention represents a re-working of the theorising of the organisational synthesisers, e.g. March and Simon, who have illustrated the nature of managerial sense-makings in their depictions of the organisational process. They have established that decision-making activities include the selection or elimination of certain alternatives. The implications of these activities for the process of management are with regard to the ways they are perceived and realised.

The following will include a critical review of Schutz's notion of recipe and its influence upon organisational and managerial thoughts. One central argument which is developed on the basis of this review will suggest that managers are involved in theoretical activities which have structuring influence upon their actions. Such activities have implications in terms of the managers' learning and adaptive behaviour.

RECIPE

Schutz's work has proved particularly attractive to those engaged in developing a model of managers' sense-making; for example, Spender, Weick, March, and those investigating sociological methods. His concept of "verstehen" has been utilised by researchers who have adopted a phenomenological approach or an interpretative

paradigm (e.g. Hopkins, 1982; Spencer, 1980). Within a theoretical framework based on "verstehen" the researcher (or the observer) is expected to understand meanings given by the observed actor to his/her surroundings as well as his/her own.

Chiefly, Schutz's philosophic inquiry began with his reflections and critique of Weber's concept of "social action" and "social relationships". Among the many questions that Schutz has raised are some concerned with Weber's definition of action and what he means by actors attaching a subjective meaning to their actions. Schutz also raised the question of how others can have access to such meanings. In resolving these issues Schutz has turned to Bergson (1910) and Husserl (1928) and thus has attempted to discover how the meanings of the actors' experiences are constituted in their internal time consciousness. For Schutz action is intrinsically meaningful, it is endowed with meaning by human intentionality, i.e. consciousness.

Schutz's attempts at unfolding the phenomenological foundations of the social sciences are based on his views that "empirical knowledge involves discovery through processes of controlled inference ... that it must be capable of being verified" (1967a: 52). In addition, Schutz believes that "theory" means the formulation of relationships between a set of variables and that regularities in social sciences have restricted universality.

Accordingly, Schutz has argued that the interpretative framework should consider re-construction of the ways that actors explain their actions and the theoretical framework used by the observer must not depart from those of the actors. This is based on Schutz's assertion that the actor is the only one who knows what he does, why he does it and when and where his/her action starts and ends. This argument

emphasises the subjective experience of the individual and the intersubjective interpretation of such experiences. The main concern of this section is to unravel Schutz's thesis about the observer's (researcher's) understanding of the common-sense world as experienced by the actors in order to clarify its conceptual and methodological implications for this research.

I

An appropriate starting point will be to review the main concepts in Scutz's analysis of meaning structures. Schutz's seminal definition of social reality sets the scene for his re-interpretation of Weber's notion of "subjective interpretation" and Husserl's "stream of consciousness". He has defined "social reality" as "the world of cultural objects and social institutions" into which actors are born and with which they have to come to terms. From the outset the actors on the social scene experience the world they are in not as a private world but as an "intersubjective" one, that is, as a world "common" to all, either actually given or potentially accessible to everyone; and this experiencing involves "intercommunication" and "language" (ibid: 53).

For Schtuz the most crucial issue is the ways this "reality" is constructed, maintained and interpreted by the actors/agents. The actors within their stream of lived experience try to make sense of the world. Thus, there exists the conscious and intentional activity of attributing or attaching meaning to experiences by actors. This is a retrospective activity, hence, only already experienced events are meaningful to the actor. Such retrospection continually carries the actor from one instance to the next, so creating continuity and recurrence without which the lived experience is meaningless. This time dimension is significant to Schutz's analysis.

There are two angles from which the time dimension in Schutz's argument may be approached. Firstly, he has argued that the reality an actor faces has been there before she/he was born and will be there after his/her death, and in fact it cannot be wished away. Thus social reality has historicity and becomes taken-for-granted. Schutz uses the term "epoche" (temporal implications) to draw a distinction between meaning, consciousness and experience. Secondly, there is the aspect of retrospective sense-making in Schutz's argument whereby actors turn back on themselves and look at what has been happening. Meanings originate in this kind of reflection. Thus what is passed is important to the process of meaning attribution. But what about the future? Schutz has arged that the process of attributing meaning by reflection also depends on the actors' identification of some kind of goal that they intend to seek or are seeking. This is implied in Schutz's definition of action, that action is "the execution of a projected act" (1967b: 61) and that actors are constantly anticipating what is about to happen. The projected act is thus envisaged as the outcome of their action. Schutz has argued that the simple future tense is often used by actors to explain their future intentions, which implies that an action has already taken place (thus is a certainty). Whilst, according to Schutz, the future perfect tense ought to be the way to describe the projected act and/or actors' genuine "because" motive, it is this "anticipated" and not the "happened" action with which the investigator is concerned. Furthermore, Schutz asserts that the "epoche" here diffuses the implied assumption about the objectivity and externality of the social world, i.e. that it is out there.

This debate is given to help clarify the point that meaning does not lie in the experience itself but arises out of a reflective process. An event, in actors' experience, thus becomes marked and meaningful within a spectrum of time. However, the meaningful experiences will not remain unchanged. They are

retained yet will undergo some modifications. Every action and act is different from the others and as it happens it will modify past meanings and influence the manner by which the actor will perform the next action and thus his/her projected act. Everything is done pragmatically and is thus taken-for-granted. This, yet does not imply that the bracketed parts of the actors' experiences, for instance, are disconnected. They are related to each other by the fact that they belong to the actor concerned. All of the actors' separate acts of attaching meanings and bracketing his/her experiences are unified in the actors' awareness and consciousness. Such combination or synthesis, according to Schutz, constitutes the actors' meaning context. This process is continuous, thus in their further synthetic interpretation of actors' experiences are ordered and integrated into what Schutz has called the "stock of knowledge at hand" (1967a: XXVIII).

Indeed Schutz's definition of "social reality" introduces an epistomological challenge to the origins of knowledge that actors have about the world. In his analysis of rationality, Schutz proceeds by arguing that actors, in their daily life, have their knowledge about the world "automatically" at hand (1976: 72). On the basis of such an explication, actors' knowledge about their surrounding becomes taken-for-granted. This knowledge is, however, built up from various sources, and embraces personal experiences of the individual as well as those which are shared with others. Actors learn about the world "naively", as Schutz explains. An actor's personal storage of knowledge is built up from his/her heritage, education, tradition and habits. Schutz emphasises that what is retained in an actor's stock of knowledge is clear and homogeneous. The stock also contains "suppositions, conjectures, means and ends, motives, causes and effects" (1967a: 72). All these are woven together without the actor's clear understanding of their "real connections". Irrespective of the quality and the nature of the knowledge, it is known by the individual and the individual only.

Schutz's analysis of "verstehen" as the experienced form of understanding implies that because of the subjective nature of the actor's experience he/she cannot of course understand others' actions by simply observing them.* There is a distinction drawn between the observer's understanding of the observed experiences (i.e. subjective understanding) and the actor's (the observed) understanding. At this point Schutz has tried to distinguish between subjective and objective understanding. By objective understanding he means understanding others within their meaning context. This represents the difference between analysing a painting and the meaning that it could have for the observers, within their time spectrum, trying to find out about the thoughts of the painter while painting it. The implication of such an objective understanding is that it is more publically or generally acceptable or valid account of the experience. Schutz has also referred to this as intersubjective understanding, that is to say people seeking to comprehend the subectivity which is inherent in the other people's actions.

So far, following Schutz, it has been maintained that action is intrinsically meaningful: it is endowed with meaning by human intentionality, i.e. consciousness. Thus one can speak of subjective meaning of action by reason of individuals' intentional acts, as well as objective meanings, i.e. the meaning structure that an action demonstrates. In addition it is maintained that these structures can be bracketed. Perhaps most significant aspect of Schutz's work to this thesis is his theory that actors draw upon their past experiences which are stored in their consciousness; that they are continuously modifying, ordering and

Foot Note

* Note the implications of this argument for Mintzberg's research method.

editing these experiences; and that these experiences are coded and decoded through intersubjective understanding.

There are some issues which should be raised at this stage. First Schutz has argued that in the learning process actors are socialised into habits, traditions. What are the origins of these habits? Why do actors accept their historicity? Do actors ever question their validity? Schutz claims that the origins of these habits are unknown to the person and are taken-for-granted and accepted by decendents uncritically. These "principles are only partially and randomly distilled for specific situations of our lives" (1976: 73). There is no guarantee of the reliability of these rules. Perhaps, this is because the actors find them "sufficient for mastering" of everyday life. As long as they reduce equivocality they are assumed appropriate, for Schutz believes that people "are not interested in quest for certainty". They are satisfied when their purposes are realised within the boundaries of these "mechanisms of habits" and they will carry out the same motives in the future if the same situation recurred.

Secondly, Schutz has stressed the necessity of achieving an "objective understanding" of others' actions, which implies total empathy with the subjective meanings of others. Are people able to attain the meaning which an object or experience has to someone else? How do they get to know that? Schutz contends that the actors' knowledge of everyday life is only approximate and based on likelihood. Yet "the consistency of this system of knowledge" is achieved through its typical sequences and relevances (ibid:73). Typification is significant to Schutz's thesis for allowing him to make the distinction between "sensible" and "rational" action. An action is labelled as "sensible" if the motives and the course of action is understandable to the observer. That is to say, the action is in agreement with the observer's interpretative schemes. These schemes are socially

approved. They are, thus, "a set of rules and recipes for coming to terms with typical problems by applying typical means for achieving typical ends" (1967a: 27). All that actors are doing is therefore typifying the situations by referring to their stock of typifications. Whether they try to get at subjective or objective meanings they must use recipes. Their understanding of others will take place within the boundaries of these articulated types.

On the basis of this analysis rational action can be defined as undertaking an action with "a clear insight into the ends and means" after weighing up the likely results of alternative courses of action. All these alternatives (definitions of action) are given and so based upon the actors' common-sense interpretation of other actors' actions. There are two types of stock of knowledge in this process; one which belongs to the observer and one which is the actor's (the observed) at the time when the action is carried out. Therefore there will be two definitions of the action; which one is more acceptable?

The major implication of this argument is that in the everyday life people's (actors) actions and their sense-makings do not take place in isolation or in a vacuum. The actors' projects (what they choose to do) are affected by the other actors' projects (and projected acts) as well as their own subjective interpretation of the other actors' actions. Therefore, if the observer (the researcher) is to understand the "recipes" or schemes that actors use to understand others' actions, motives, etc., he/she must consider their intersubjectivity and underlying structures which develop without the actor knowing they exist (also Allen, 1975).

Furthermore, it implies that the actors do not encounter the world from scratch. There is already a stock of recipes formed on the basis of their predecessors' and contemporaries' knowledge. Their interests, biases and their personal experiences

will be then added to this stock and constitute their stock of knowledge. Accordingly their conjecture about some state of affair and its outcome will be considered as well-founded if their anticipations prove true and in such a case, used to reaffirm their stock of recipe knowledge. If their predictions proved false modifications to the stock of recipes may take place. Yet this change does not imply inconsistency. Consistency is the main characteristic of the actors' stocks of knowledge, i.e. their stocks of knowledge are consistent with their personal interests and motives. Nor does continual change mean unstructuredness. There are gaps and discontinuities. But the knowledge and its total configuration is structured.

In his argument about typifications and recipes Schutz describes the organisation of the stock of knowledge as one similar to that of a cook book: "The cook book has recipes, list of ingredients, formula for mixing them and directions for finishing off ..." (1976: 73). This is considered by Schutz to be "all" that actors need for taking any action of any nature whether routine or non-routine. Thus if the recipe serves their purpose actors never question if there can be another way of doing things. This argument may explain the state of inertia or decline in an organisation's performance. Also it shows that the organisational members (managers) may fail to search for alternative course of action because they are unware of the existence of alternatives.

Schutz's contention refutes any state of tabula-rasa and implies that actors never encounter everyday life without any pre-conception or impressions. Rather they approach the world in their common-sense constructs. They may have never seen a polar bear but if they see one they may recognise it on the basis of given descriptions; that it is an animal which is a mammal and a carnivore and its height is x feet and its weight varies from x lb. to y lb. etc. However, the person's actual

experience will confirm or modify this description. Yet again this implies that typifications are not fixed. Recurrence of an event may increase the validity of a group of typifications since at that point in time they seem relevant as regards the actors' projects.

DISCUSSION

Schutz's conception of actors' "stock of knowledge at hand" portrays individuals as moulded by a set of rules of thumb and trying to act sensibly. As individuals brought into this world, actors are assumed to have no discretion over their understandings, their sense-makings of what is out there. Most of their actions become "automatic habits" due to the regularities of certain events in the external world, and because, in everyday life and in the constitution of their cognitive styles, past is a powerful influence. It is their retrospective reflexive thinking which makes events meaningful. The actors may know what they are doing while in the process of doing it. The common-sense constructs are built accordingly and with reference to traditions. This raises two questions. What will be the sanction for disregarding the established common-sense way of doing things? What happens when the actors' personal experiences are in contradiction with their socially constructed stock of knowledge at hand?

It seems that the understanding of one's own actions as well as those of others is a process by which one continually relates past experiences of one's own, and those assumed experiences of others, to present actions. That is to say one continually rationalises one's own actions which may also imply that actors are interested in the quest for certainty (cf. Schutz), a created certainty and thus in improving

their chances of obtaining anticipated outcomes.

Moreover, the common-sensical ground rules vary from one context to another. There are provinces of meaning. Each province demands a different cognitive style. There will be different structures, different spatio-temporal relationships, recipes, etc. The everyday world is a mosaic of separate different worlds. Thus as an actor shifts from one "province of meaning" to another, he/she brings new rules into play. Schutz has considered the analysis of these structures, i.e. the rationalities of this mosaic, yet he had not explored these multiple worlds as deeply as he has everyday life. These multiple worlds, different structures and different spatio-temporal relationships have implications for investigations into human conduct, and, with regard to organisational/management theory, for actors' (managers) role-sets and relationships.

According to Schutz, the common-sense world, the intersubjective world experienced by man is taken-for-granted. That is to say the structures of daily life are not formally recognised or appreciated by actors (i.e. common sense). That individuals can communicate meaningfully with others without questionning the apriori conditions for the means of such communication (i.e. the language). Actors can also determine which aspects of their experiences are relevant to them and which aspects are irrelevant. Yet they make no conscious effort to formulate the basic typifications. Schutz, therefore, claims that actors' knowledge of typifications is tacit. They learn through using these given (unwritten) structures or meanings. The question is to what extent is the individual actor powerless in such arenas? Is there any room for failure to use these structures? Moreover,

how can one get into the genesis of the meaning of one's actions; how can one modify the everyday life constructs, the sedimented rules, without questioning their origins?

The "automatic habits" or "unquestioned platitudes", according to Schutz, imply routinisation of actions. Routines of life are experienced as real when one is in one's normal wide-awake state of consciousness. However, it may be argued that routine action assumes certainty on the part of the individual as he/she attempts to find a recipe applicable to a present situation to produce an outcome which has been experienced before and hence is predictable. In this way there is some deliberation embedded in routine action. Yet Schutz has underplayed the existence of such deliberation and has related it to automic (perhaps mechanical) conduct.

The social construction of the common-sense world is at the core of Schutz's argument. An aspect which Schutz has not explored in depth is the distribution of this common-sense knowledge. The stock of knowledge at hand varies, in terms of its content, for different individuals and groups depending on their experiences in everyday life. Various individuals may have access to specific stocks of knowledge, such as a specialised field of knowledge. But as members of a group actors may share or have an, overlapping system of relevance, e.g. similar interests or conflicting interest.

Basically, Schutz's theorising is concerned with individual's development of a conceptual scheme for obtaining knowledge about social reality, through subjective and intersubjective interpretations. He thus considers the ways the objective knowledge is accumulated. There is, however, the concept of "structure" which remains ambiguous in Schutz's analysis and this concept is

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significant to the core argument of this thesis.

Schutz's understanding of structure originates in a critique of Husserl's work and his failure in clarifying the intersubjectivity. In Schutz's work the concept of structure is significant with regard to the life-world. It seems that Schutz searches for structures in terms of relationships and face-to-face interactions. Considering Giddens' description of structure as "a system of generative rules and resources" (1976: 127) "recursively implicated in the actors' situated practices" (1984: 25), Schutz's description is what Giddens' has referred to as "modality" and thus as a medium for communication. Anyhow, Schutz has not clarified the nature of these structures, nor how they arise, are maintained and disappear. How is the observer or investigator to distinguish between those structures which are fixed and set apriori conditions for sense-making from those which arise from specific causes, e.g. historical causes or events? How is one to characterise different groups at different points in time? There are no categories developed in Schutz's conceptualisation to facilitate such distinctions.

Another issue which seems unexplained is the concept of "constitution"; how are these sedimented rules created? How can they be traced back to their intentional foundations? To what extent are there universal modes of constitution and typifications? What are the mechanisms which operate in the selection of the interpretative schemes/recipes? To what extent do terms and concepts such as "recipe" or "common-sense world" indicate the changing or routine aspects of the life-world? If typifications are means for survival, to what extent do people's situated social practices, i.e. rehearsal of recipes help such objects? As regards managerial situations it may be argued that such rehearsal can lead to failure/decline of the system, as was the case of the "Saturday Evening Post" (as Hall, 1976), where the actors rehearsed a set of recipes and used them continually

in order to reproduce the desired outcome, i.e. increase in readership and profits. This objective was attained for a period of time, but repeated use of the same set of recipes led to the demise of the paper when the situation changed. Therefore, although recurrence of events and desired outcome validates the established recipes, it can also have pathological effects regarding the organisation's coping strategies. However, considering the intentionality in the conduct of actors' continuity can be interrupted through actors' attemtps to modify, edit or remould the established typifications.

Altogether Schutz's conceptualisation, although apolitical and open to criticism, has set the background for various investigations into the ways that actors, in the case of this thesis managers, make sense of their environments. However, his conceptualisation of recipes has been challenged here, regarding the extent of conservatism (subservience) as against subversiveness which may be assumed in human conduct and acts.

INDUSTRY RECIPE

This section is concerned with an analysis of Spender's exposition of "industry recipes". Spender's model of managerial thinking practices have been selected for analysis since:

(a) it is a specific interpretation of Schutz's notion of recipe;

(b) it has had an impact upon the recent thinking in the field of organisational knowledge; and

(c) on the theorisings about the process of strategy formulation in business.

It comprises a critical evaluation of Spender's conception of "industry recipe" and its implications for managerial practices and thus the core arguement of this

thesis.

Spender (1980) has described "industry recipe" as a common sense way of running the business which is shared by the firms in an industry. In this description the term industry implies an economic sector which comprises similar suppliers and customers. His thesis, thereafter has focused upon the question of "how practicising senior managers deal with uncertainties of the organisational situations". Spender finds resolving this question crucial and of interest to both the management theoreticians and practising managers. According to Spender the existing empirical generalisations fail to tackle the question of uncertainty adequately. The inadequacies in research about policy and strategy-making processes in business are thus attributed to the positivist methods adopted by theorists. Therefore, the result has been the accumulation of typologies which have the concept of "uncertainty" built into them and are not as coherent and prescriptive as has been thought.

Drawing on Child's notion of "strategic choice" (1972), Spender emphasises the importance of management's uncertainty-resolving enterprises, creativity and judgement. He conjectures that managers ease the burden of creativity by utilising the experiences of their relevant sectors. Upon such bases, he develops an experimental hypothesis that the "judgements managers make when resolving perceived uncertainties are to a significant extent shared within the industry". This communal element, i.e. the industry's recipe, is regarded as simple, common-sense and unremarkable. In his conceptualising the managers' uncertainty-resolving approaches and in his selection of the phenomenological interpretative method, Spender is indebted to Schutz. Accordingly Spender claims that industry recipe provides a scheme for the understanding and analysis of how managers run their business.

In pursuing his conjecture about "industry recipe", Spender has argued that "judgement" is a central concept for understanding managerial practices, yet is missing from organisational theorising. It is the epistemological and cognitive side of the judgement with which Spender is concerned. Through analysis of judgement, he asserts that it will be possible to examine the "interests" of the theorists and/or of the managers, which influence the organisational activity. Thus, Spender sympathises with practising managers since he believes they can find little use in the existing "fragmented, partial" management theorisings. Research interests are generally of those of an analyst and often therefore contradictory to management's interests. How can it be known that the tool-kit of theories seem of little use to management, and how does one find out about managers' interests? The resolution is, according to Spender, in finding out exactly what managers are doing. This can be done by considering "the empirical generalisations" which managers find meaningful in their analyses. Spender suggests that one way is to find out how four classical categories of managerial work; policy, strategy, administrative and operational activities, are distinguished. The following discussion is based on Spender's account of the ways writers on organisations, and not the managers, have differentiated these activities.

After a review and analysis of the writings on the differences between managerial typologies, Spender finds that in the literature the criteria for distinction in particular between strategic and tactical activities relies on the idea of "importance". Spender hence refutes Mintzberg's definition of "strategic" as being "important" (Mintzberg, 1976: 1) and adds that an activity only becomes important retrospectively and that because strategy is an "artifact" it cannot be defined

historically (considering the process of strategy-making).

By referring to judgement as the key concept which relates management theory to practice, Spender has argued that "strategy-making is the judgemental bridge between the political activities of administration and operations" (1980: 50). In this way management can be defined as purposive; involving planning (cf. Mintzberg, 1975) and creating organisational activities. Briefly Spender attempts to relate the fragmented organisation theories and difficulties in defining strategy-making to managerial uncertainty-resolving activity.

In unfolding the concept of managerial judgement Spender draws on Simon's concept of limited rationality. He has argued that according to Simon (1957) goal-directed rationality places some demands upon the individual occupying a role, which may be beyond his/her capabilities. Therefore, design of the organisation structure, processes and roles must be done with regard to this limited capacity. This calls for detailed, complex role specifications which makes the role of manager more demanding. Hence, in order to achieve a satisfactory organisational performance, the "individual's own response" must be considered. However, individuals have limited cognitive capacities because of their limited information processing abilities (thus limited communication network) and therefore limited retained information. The boundaries of the individual's rationality in this context will be determined by their conception of the goal of the action and its environmental conditions. But for Simon dysfunctional action rather than individual inaction seem to be the question. Here a great degree of adaptability in actors' behaviour is assumed. Spender challenges this position. He refutes Simon's conjecture that individuals will act upon their own rationality

rather than that of the organisation. For Spender "the individual value premises are the consequences of organisational authority structure ... and his factual premises are the consequences of its technological choices" (1980: 58). This is in contrast with Simon's definition of rationality in management, which suggests that it has to do with actors identifying the means-end chain by which an organisational goal can be achieved and reconciling this chain of actions with the values implicit in organisational policy. Spender's work is therefore concerned with the handling of competing rationalities: that of the organisation and that of the individual manager.

Spender rejects Simon's idea of objectivity of total rationality on epistomological grounds: that rationality is about reality and there is no clear truth, thus, no criteria against which arguments could be validated. What seems to be missing from Simon's idea, according to Spender's argument which is based on Child's concept of "strategic choice" (1972), is the intentional action of the individual and the point that management "creates activities in the physical and social reality" (Spender, 1980: 59).

So far, there are four elements which have constituted the theme of Spender's argument about managerial judgement: (a) individuals have limited rationality, which is the outcome of (b) perceiving uncertainty, thus (c) their interest rather than logical judgements will determine their actions which are directed (d) to resolving the uncertainty.

On the basis of these arguments, Spender maintains that when managers are "confronted with an undetermined (i.e. uncertain) situation they characterise it with a set of correspondence rules, interest and purposes ... which comprise a rationality. The logical structure of this rationality provides the decision-maker

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with a determinate solution", hence "enabling him to deduce the optimal solution (ibid: 65). Total rationality is dysfunctional, he argues, but because uncertainty is the aim in the process one must obtain objective knowledge. But actors compromise in everyday life, being aware of their limited information processing abilities. In this debate about rationality Spender has stressed that individuals learn from their experiences, and thus that one needs a touchstone to test the consistency of one's body of beliefs and the objectivity of one's knowledge. The role of individual judgement in an uncertain situation is therefore to supplement the incomplete and inadequately processed information and set the scene for a rational decision. So judgement is part of the individual's activities either for coping with or resolving the uncertainty in their decision-making environments. Hence, managerial characterisation of the situation is embedded in managerial experience, i.e. their empirically grounded judgements.

Spender has attempted to describe the nature of managerial judgement on the basis of Schutz's conception of objective understanding, that is, one which fits other people's experience as well as one's own. According to Spender managers in their attempts to resolve uncertainty and in the domain of their "practical intentions", may discover that they "share other decision-makers' judgements" on similar matters (ibid: 82). In this way they can attain more objective knowledge about their situations.

In his attempt to amend the conception of strategy, Spender has referred to strategy as an artifact, that is, the product of a manager's ability to bring together his own beliefs and some shared beliefs which will resolve the perceived uncertainty. Here Spender sets the background for his argument with regard to shared recipes - based on Schutz's thesis - that shared beliefs become interpretative schemes for judgements. In other words Spender suggests that

judgement can be derived from shared beliefs and explained in terms of these beliefs. However, it may be argued that regarding strategy and strategy-making as an artifact, will have self-fulfilling implications; that is to say uncertain situations can also be the outcome of managerial activities.

In order to demonstrate the significance of shared beliefs, Spender puts forward an experimental hypothesis* in which he suggests that: "if no shared belief impinge on the process of managerial judgement our (his) inquiry fails. But if they do we can move a little way towards a theory of organisational management that can deal with uncertainty..." (ibid: 87).

The next stage of this analysis of Spender's conception of "industry recipe" concerns his explanation of the reasons why shared beliefs happen and what their bases are. Drawing upon anthropological, sociological and psychological research, Spender argues that it has already been proved in these disciplines that shared patterns of judgement* happen. He thus claims that the process of acquiring shared structures is at the core of the theories of symbolic interactionists and phenomenologists. For instance, according to Berger and Luckmann (1971) everyday interactions build-up mutual expectations which are interpreted as understandings.

In general Spender's argument is in agreement with the contention of this thesis

Foot Note

* Spender tested his experimental hypothesis in 34 companies within 3 British industries: dairy, foundry and forklift trucks. He then analysed the common features of the companies within each industry and found "shared patterns of judgement". He also recognised intra-industry differences regarding the recipes.

* Note that at this point the terminology used by Spender has changed and it may be argued that "shared patterns" imply less sharedness of the actual rationality.

that predominant theorisings about management and organisational practices have failed to grasp the ways practising managers and their role-sets develop bodies of knowledge. Nevertheless it is argued here that in theorising about managerail thinking practices emphasis should be given to analysis of the ways these bodies of knowledge become institutionalised and are transformed. Therefore there are certain questions which are raised regarding Spender's approach to analysing "industry recipes".

As previously discussed, according to Schutz, the individual's common-sense knowledge is a system of its typicality. These typifications are inhabited, interrupted and taken-for-granted. Stockpiling is an on-going process. That is to say, individuals continuously refer to, add to, deduct and infer from their stock of knowledge. Equally this implies that there are feedback loops combined with the individual's generalisations about the situations which then constitute the basis for the institutionalisation of their understandings. The point is that the institutionalised forms of understanding become self-fulfilling prophecies and to a certain extent are pathological because of the process of self-reference for validation. For Spender "industry recipes" as "common sense way of doing things" develop the same way. Yet the core of Spender's argument is concerned with the issue of commonality; the "shared-ness" of recipes and not the process by which the shared recipes become institutionalised or the ways managers detect the pathological effects of the institutionalised recipes and thus, may/may not search for new recipes and what analytical tool they utilise for their searches etc. It is also argued here that selected recipes are retained and institutionalised (or abandoned) through negotiations and mutual loading among actors. Spender's theory of "industry recipe" tells us nothing about negotiations over selection of recipes and the possible rival interpretations of recipes in the institutionalisation process and thus how some recipes are retained and others are abandoned.

Spender's emphasis on the aspect of "shared-ness" exaggerates consensus and rejects conflict of interests and interpretations in organisation. It, therefore, does not elaborate on the aspect of politickings and intentionality within which such theoretical activities of managers become embedded. Spender has only referred to managerial political machination in a normative way, vis-a-vis Pettigrew's argument (1972). It is argued in this research that intentional conduct of actors sets the background for institutionalisation or transformation of some recipes. Also drawing on Cyert and March's (1963) theory of organisational actions, it may be said that coalitions are formed as part of policy choosing process where policy-making is an attempt to cope with uncertainty. This is to say, policies become manifestations of managers' characterisation of uncertain situations and politicking is thus one common-sense way of coping with such situations. Furthermore drawing on Karpik's (1981) notion of "logics of action" Spender's emphasis on "shared-ness" which is shown in his empirical hypothesis, i.e. "if no shared belief impinge upon the process of managerial judgement...", can also be challenged by arguing that in business organisations there is a sharing of means more than ends.

Another criticism which can be made of Spender's work is in his shifting the level of analysis from the individual to the group; at one point Spneder has described recipe as the industry itself, i.e. the characteristics of its activities and the ways its viability can be maintained. He believes that this is possible because such characteristics are taken-for-granted by managers. Hence an implication of Spender's theory is that the recipes will manifest themselves in the form of blind faith among managers in that industry, which can also be the explanation for decline of performance in some of these industries. Spender has not considered this implication and so has not resolved the concept of competition. His theory, in

fact emphasises conformity as necessary regarding the operations and performance of the firms and thus assumes that any deviation from the industry's recipe can deliver undesired/unanticipated outcomes. There seems little room allowed for managers' deliberations in his theory which equally underplays the part of managers' own organisational experiences, and their innovative non-recipe constrained actions.

Spender's rough and ready description of shared recipes (or rationalities) as "the common-sense way of doing things" has a similar connotation to the complex notion of culture. Culture is said to be that part of the total experience of human action which is socially transmitted (as Mitchel, 1979). Here, social transmission means that the individuals' surroundings provide the inputs for their repertoire of experiences. There are shared norms and values which shape the conduct of the actors. Concepts such as norms and culture (also recipe) have significant implications with respect to their directive roles and in influencing actors' identity. But do practising managers identify themselves with their "common-sense practices", i.e. shared recipes and to what extent are they aware of authoring such practices?

The point here is that debates on the conception of culture have often stressed a peripheral focus of investigation (as regards the argument of this thesis), i.e. that within distinctive boundaries people are expected to behave according to the rules. Such explications fail to sensitise the researcher and analyst to the structuring characteristics of such commonalities. This critique equally applies to Spender's thesis on "industry recipe" and their implied universality.

Moreover, Spender has argued that "industry recipe" can be described in terms of Kuhn's conception of "paradigm" (1962) and therefore it will be considered as

group's reality. It seems doubtful, however, whether the notion of paradigm in this respect, can illustrate the process by which events are produced (i.e. typified situations are dealt with). For example, if event A happened in time t_1, and produced or caused event B in time t_2, it may be interpreted that there are recipes either for producing or not producing event B. Describing recipe as group's paradigm cannot explain the underlying motives of actors for selection of a recipe and thus causation of an event.

Spender does not discuss the circumstances in which managers in the firms within the industries rejected the validity of the shared recipes or considered editing some of these recipes with regard to the on-going changes that these industries have been experiencing. Indeed, the changes which have occurred in the economic conditions have had a great impact upon the performance of these industries and within these industries (i.e. firm level). For instance, regarding the foundry industry, there have been significant changes in their environmental contexts within the last two decades. By 1981, the number of foundaries in Britain was down to a third of total at the beginning of the 1960's. The rate of closure at this period was one a week. The declining demand for iron-casting and increase in the price of coke aggrevated the problems of the industry. These difficulties began two decades ago when closures in those years were partly due to the growing use of other materials, e.g. plastics. Price-cutting was hence one of the measures (recipes) used by the managers for winning orders. The decline in production of cars in the UK has also affected the demand situation for iron foundaries. Hence considering the firms which have survived, the question is "did they have access to a different set of recipes from those who failed, or if they shared the same recipes, were their definitions of the situation and anticipations of the future changes different?" Spender has not taken these points into account, nor has he considered these changes in his analysis of the constructs for the foundry

industry and the implications that they have had for the management of resources in the industry and hence its performance. In addition he has not considered whether there was any editing of the more established recipes when changes were detected.

For Spender's recipe is incorporated into the formulation of the strategic plan. Thus recipes as a system of constructs are based on that part of strategic management of industry which involves its general labour and technological environments (as Spender, 1980). However, what seems missing from Spender's contextual analysis and his conception of recipe is the temporal context of strategy-making activities and organisational strategies. In this thesis it is argued that managerial actions; recipe selection and interpretation are embedded in times. There is the temporal spread of past-present-future and thus the event-spotting activites of actors, underlying the strategy-making process. Moreover considering Schutz conception of recipe reflection over past events will be focal to this process since, shared intentions will be manifested in strategies of collectivities which are reflectively critiqued on frequent basis. "Industry recipe" as an industry's "shared rationalities" or "common-sense way of doing things" may be useful as a basis for understanding what managers do, but as an atemporal and apolitical concept it fails to consider the dynamics of managerial actions.

SOCIO-EVOLUTIONARY MODEL AND CAUSE MAPS

This section is concerned with an analysis of Weick's theory about organising process. His theorising about the processes by which "thinking practices" and "bodies of thought" are developed is considered here, since it partially initiated the theoretical framework of this thesis. Moreover, the theoretical implications of the concept of "cause maps" as developed by Weick (1979) (and Bougon, 1983)

resembles Schutz's notion of recipe. Hence it illustrates an envisaged convergence in the basic assumptions of theorisings about organisational actors' cognitive practices.

Weick has utilised theories of natural selection (socio-evolutionary perspective) to describe the organising process. The main focus of his theory has been upon the ways knowledge is organised. Within a socio-evolutionary perspective, he has thus analysed organisational activities with respect to a dominant theme; that is the "instability of present order as well as the past" (Weick, 1979: 119). This theme implies that actors (organisations) are in continual interactions with their environments. The purpose of these interactions is to understand and reduce the equivocality in the inputs received from these environments. Drawing on Campbell's (1965) theorising on natural selection processes, Weick, has considered these interactions with reference to "three processes of variation, selection and retention (which) are responsible for (organisational) evolution" (Ibid: 122), and consequently for "organisational change and competition of resources" (as Aldrich, 1979: 27).

In the following, Weick's account of socio-evolutionary processes and thus the processes by which organisational cause maps and bodies of thought are developed, will be critically discussed. The implications of Weick's theory as regards the argument of this research will then be considered.

Enactment Process: Selecting the Stimuli

In his "natural selection" model of organisation, Weick has replaced the term "variation" by the term "enactment" because "it captures the more active role that organisational members play in creating the environments which then impose

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on them" (Ibid: 130). According to Weick enactment is the only process in organising which "directly engages the external environments" (Ibid). Enactment thus happens when actors experience changes in their environments and bracket them for further attention. Other forms of enactment, according to Weick, can occur when actors' intentional acts produce a change in their surroundings. This kind of activity is paralleled to variation because it can produce experiences which are familar to the actors. Nevertheless, an "enacted environment" will be a "punctuated and connected summary of previously equivocal display..." and thus "outputs to organising and not inputs to it" (Ibid: 131).

The idea of the "enactment of environment" has developed in Weick's theorising as a result of his disagreement with the "open system" type of analysis of interactions between organisations and their environment. The "open system" theory of Katz & Kahn, for instance, emphasises a close relationship between the system and its environment. An open system has a tendency to preserve equilibrium and refuse death (Katz & Kahn, 1966: 8). Unlike natural systems, the ultimate goal for an open system is to survive by importing energy from its environment and processing into outputs which are exported to the environment. These activities have a cyclical pattern, just like a structure which can "be found in interrelated events" - hence actions of the open systems are structured in order to achieve "a unity in their closure".

According to Weick's socio-evolutionary explanation of the organising process, there is less tidiness in these processes than is claimed by the open system theory, and there is more randomness than rigidity in the organisation's choice of action. Weick suggests that this choice stems from the enactment process. He, thus, contends that "organisations are more active in constructing their environment" than claimed by Katz and Kahn, and that "they impose that which subsequently

imposes upon them" (Ibid). In such processes there are experiments and detours. Weick has also questioned the basic assumption of entropy in the open system theory which considers dependence of an organisation on its environment as necessary. He believes that organisations can be self-contained and they can and do act like closed systems. Thus he suggests that through selection and retention process an organisation can bar itself from ecological changes for some time.

Weick's thesis on enactment of environment similarly exposes other claims about the role of external forces to some scrutiny. For instance, Pfeffer & Salancik (1978) have argued that organisations are inescapably bound up with the conditions of their environment to which they attempt to adjust. For Weick, organising the interaction of the organisation with its environment is a purposeful complication of affairs. This is considered as a one-way and tidy imposition.

Moreover, Weick has challenged Katz & Kahn's assertion that there are boundaries inside and outside an organisation (which distinguishes the organisation from its environment). He argues that the boundaries can only be built in the heads of the members of the organisation, and that Katz & Kahn in discussing the articulation of relationships between organisation and its environment miss out on this point (1979b: 47). Also, Weick suggests that these boundaries may shift or disappear throughout the enactment process.

Focal to Weick's analysis of the enactment process is the cognitive activities of the actors. That is, the ways untreated data is experienced by organisational actors, enacted and then transformed into individual and organisational knowledge. He has utilised a set of concepts to illustrate the qualities of such cognitive practices. For instance Weick argues that actors rely on the "schemas" whilst making sense of their environment. By definition schemas are used to

determine the successive steps for "coordinated" and well-adopted movements. Each step is made with regard to the preceding step and hence controlled by it.

The main implication of the concept is that the past movements retain influence over the current ones. How does this occur? Schema is interpreted by Weick as a kind of "standard" against which actors evaluate their postures or actions prior to their occurrence. However, the term standard underplays the dynamics of this evaluation process because actions are compared continously and standards are developed all the time. In Bartlett's terms (1932), schema involves "an active organisation of past reactions or of past experiences ... and ... whenever there is regularity of behaviour a particular response is possible" leading to "an active organised setting"(p.201). This discription of schema highlights two points (a) a rather exaggerated influence of the past and (b) the significance of retrospection. According to Bartlett the past is used by actors as a point of departure. Weick in his example of the tennis game clarifies this argument: that in tennis every stroke that a player makes is afresh, yet a version of the one made in the past, which is adjusted and adopted to the needs of every movement and balance of posture. Therefore past action (the previous stroke) is not repeated but has constituted the basis for the future moves (the next stroke).

A central characteristic of schema is that it introduces the relational property of sense-makings. People, according to Weick, generate "rules" and regularities on the basis of perceived relationships among events, which are then used as frameworks for producing the appropriate behaviour (also Bougon, 1983). An illustration of such a function which may be given is that of a person faced with an unfamiliar experience, e.g. a person moving to a new job, or a manager experiencing the unexpected changes in his business environment. In such circumstances it is expected that the person draws upon his/her schemas in

establishing maps of his/her present surroundings and probable future location. Briefly, "schema" is a collection of perceived generalisable experiences which people use for exploration and initial understanding of their surroundings. Weick (1979a) illustrates the process on the basis of Neisser's (1976) perceptual cycle (Figure 3.1).

According to this illustration, constitution of schema is not a passive process, it is subject to continuous reproduction of its existing characteristic to enable the user to cope with each situation. Reproduction in this way implies retrospection, that is, people look back at past events and reflect upon them (cf. Mintzberg, 1973). However, it must be noted that this is a rather refined interpretation of Weick's argument on retrospection. Just like Mintzberg, Weick also claims that the reason for managers' conservative decision-making is that, "reflection is rare" in management and "managers don't have much time for retrospection..." (Ibid: 203) (cf. Schutz, 1964; Clark, 1981).

Weick has coupled his schema theory with organisation theory, arguing that organisations can affect the cycle of exploration-sampling (see Figure 3.1). The degree of such influence varies according to the organisational characteristics. Here, regarding Weick's argument, resistance to change in an organisation will be desired as tight coupling between the exploration stage and the organisation's cognitive models.

Building of a schema (or an organising recipe) not a solo job; various activities in the process are dispersed among the people in the organisation. Those actors who have occupied the "boundary spanning roles" (as Aldrich, 1979) are particularly involved in the "sampling" and "matching" of activities. In Weick's view, organisational problems arise from the problematic communication of the results

Figure 3.1   Neisser's Perceptual Cycle (From
             Neisser 1976: 12)

of the boundary spanners' samplings to those who are in the position of modifying and varying the schema.

Moreover, organisations will face problems if they operate on the basis of a single schema. Any single schema will have a dual function of directing the actions of the members and validating the outcomes. The drawback of this singular system is the attachment of the managers to the schema and the consequential growing consensus among them. Weick, here, assimilates the process to Janis' concept of "groupthink" (1972), raising the point that consensual validation under such circumstances can be dysfunctional particularly maintenance of in-group status is valued by the individual and where pressures to conform are excessive.

Schemas develop on the basis of what is already experienced, (thus beliefs), according to Weick, however, these experiences are simultaneously tested by the beliefs that people and organisations hold. What are the origins of beliefs and how are they established? In Weick's view, beliefs set the background for organisational performance. This assertion is based on Weick's claim that people's acts provide the raw material for their beliefs, i.e. "actions precede thinking". The process operates to demonstrate the significance of beliefs in the enactment process Weick (1979a) puts forward the "placebos" analogy. The implications of this analogy are that beliefs provide cognitive comfort and often are taken-for-granted. The analogy is also used to support Weick's assertion that people "simplify" their surroundings to facilitate their understanding of what is going on out there. It is one way of "economising" on thinking. Weick notes that people (or organisations) are thus smart enough to find mechanisms for avoidance of complexities. The assumption that people make here is that selected beliefs or maxims will provide the desired outcomes.

Weick's argument on both the simplification of events and use of beliefs as the medium for that process has implications for habitual thinking in organisations. According to Weick, familiarity becomes the rule in people's cognitive activites. This means people may not focus on other/unfamiliar aspects of their surroundings. Therefore, Weick equates the outcome of habitual thinking of people (i.e. enacted environments) to a set of self-fulfilling prophecies. When people consider a response as satisfying they tend to reproduce it under perceived similar circumstances. The process becomes rather like an habitual responding than thinking. In other words, "thinking practices" are formed only when people have to handle events or experiences which create a state of cognitive dissonance, i.e. when their expected causal links between events are not fulfilled and differences occur in the stream of their experience.

Drawing on Piaget's (1969) theory of action and schema, Weick (1977) then has argued that enactment activities are not the simple, continuous accumulation of "replicas" nor do they involve the "copying" of events. For example, in the case of managers in various organisation settings, the enactment of the flow of their experience will include turning their experiences into simple codes, then by decoding them, transferring them into information about the situation, and creating a more familiar situation. The product of the process is an assimilated situation. Therefore, according to Weick, there is no such thing as experience until the actor (here manager), does something with what happens (p. 148). Previously enacted situations will influence, that is limit or enhance, the contemporary coding (enactment) activities. Hence, what the manager and the organisation know already plus what they think is going on, directs the enactment activities. These activities then in Weick's terms "provide a pretext for thinking and not the reverse" (1977: 47).

Weick has equated the enactment process with the sampling stage in Neisser's perceptual cycle (Figure 3.1). Note that the perceptual cycle also illustrate the way the schema develops. Sampling or bracketing a phenomenon, thus, means paying closer attention to the part which has been pulled out of its context. It is sufficient to give the enactor an idea of what is going on. It is therefore expected that the bracketing will confirm the probes which have already been in use. In this way the enacted environments (or the schemas) gradually become more common. However, there will be some organisationally unfavourable implications too since loopholes and bottlenecks in the systems will tend to be perpetuated. Similarly people will disregard them and there will be less familiarity with the events relating to such situations (as the experience is not retained) and so on.

In his attempt to depict the enactment process, Weick has shown that there are certain causal relationships which are considered in the actors' construction of environments. His argument is based on Tolman & Burnswick's (1935) description of "causal textures". Thus he says that the actors segment their experiences by differentiating them into means and ends. The means are then labelled according to their potential for fulfilling the actors' needs. Thus means will vary in the degree that they ensure achievement of the desired outcome. Some means are stronger in the sense that there is less "equivocality" around them. Moreover, there are always signs, i.e. local indicators or cues, from which these means can be inferred by the actors. So the enactment process involves the continual search for reliable means (or paths) to achieve the desired outcome.

The problem that Weick finds with the means-end explanation of the enactment process is related to what he calls "realities of organisation". Drawing on the Carnegie school conception of "organised anarchies" (1972), he has referred to the fluidity of problems and actors difficulty in learning. That is to say one cannot be

certain about the actors' sensitivity to the cues and their performance in the search for the appropriate means. How can they pinpoint reliable cues if goals are ambiguous (as Cohen et al, 1972), or are defined retrospectively or when the means become the ends after they are attained.

Moreover, Weick has noted that in a competitive situation, or when situations are more variable, the causal relationships between means and ends become unstable. Typically, members of the organisation are loaded with already enacted environments, which may become of less use, however, in an unfamiliar situation. New rationales are thus added to the load of enacted environments.

One implication of this argument is for the success of the organisation in the sense that if actors have the ability to set and implement "averagely good" means-end hypothesis, the variations in the situation will be resolved. The other implication is for the causal relationships that the actors assume exist between various "concept patterns"; that is, the way bits and pieces of the experiences can be put together. Weick refers to the outcome of this mapping and structuring of the relationships as "cause maps" which are formed in the selection process (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

Selection Process

Another element in the natural selection (i.e. organising) model is selection. Weick has explained this process in terms of "imposition of various structures on enacted equivocal displays. These imposed structures are in the form of cause maps", and "contain interconnected variables... and are built-up out of past experiences" (Ibid: 131).

Figure 3.2   Formulation of Cause Maps
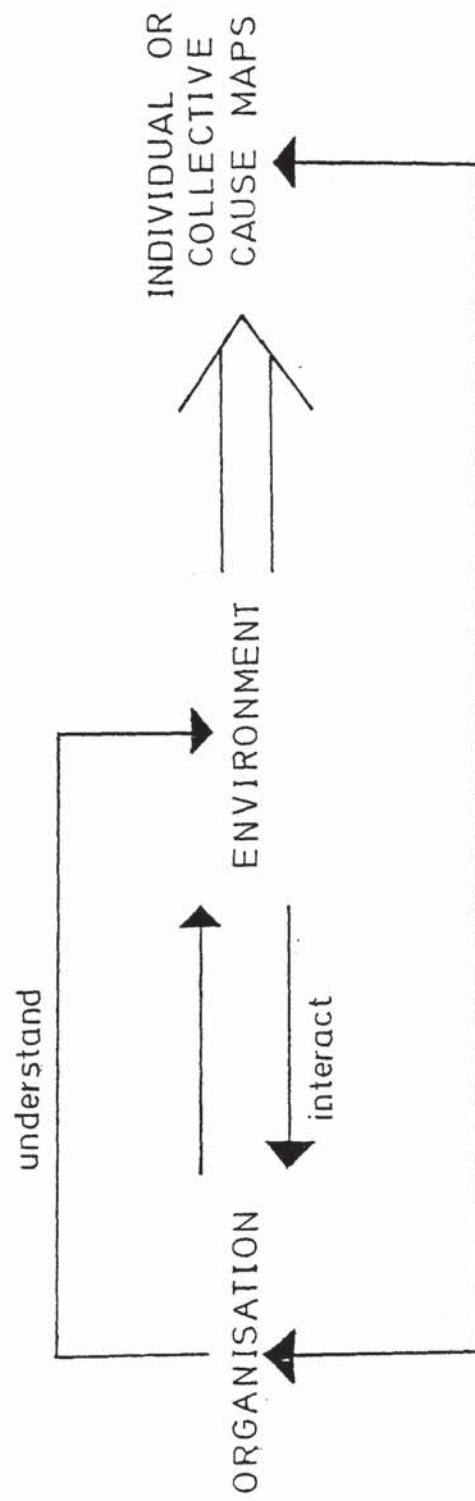
Figure 3.3 An illustration of organisation and environment interactions in production of cause maps
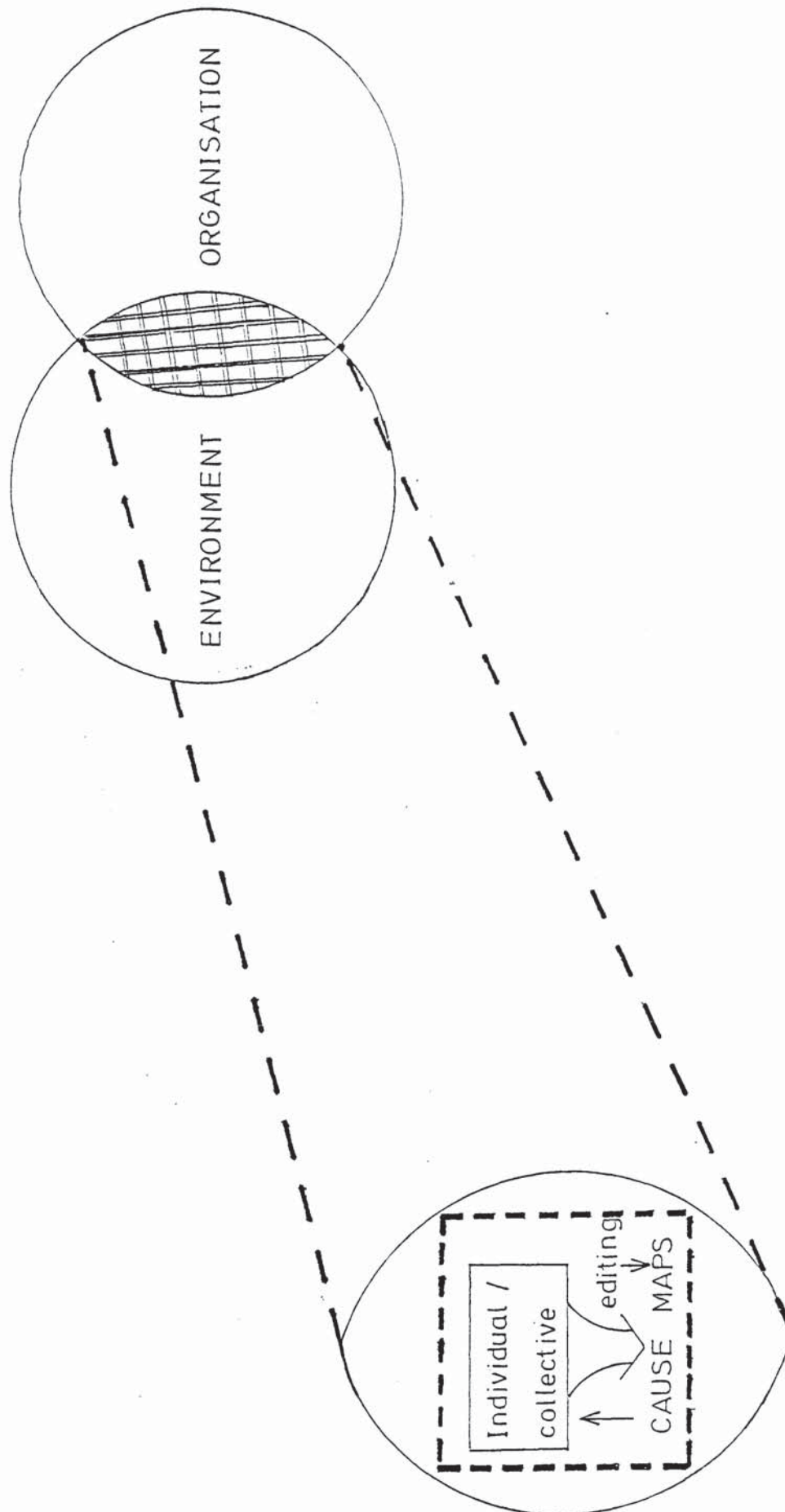
In the selection process, the actors will try to reach a consensus as to which segements of the stream of events should be designated as variables and which linkages among events are more reasonable; in short, which cause map to adopt. Weick has referred to the outcome of this process as "figure-ground" arrangements by which he means differentiating figures from the ground and then stabilising that figure-ground arrangement which provides the actors with both clarity and continuity. By clarity here Weick means reduction in the equivocality of the information inputs, and by continuity he implies that certain cause maps have repeatedly proved helpful and hence produced the desired outcome. But, he maintains that if a cause maps increases equivocality or produces unclear configurations, it will be eliminated.

Maps in Weick's terms thus consist of "variables" which are correlated by causal relationships. In any causal loop, some variables are cause and some are effect. Yet all variables are equally significant in the process of enactment. The map therefore is a summary of co-variations between segmented, labelled variables of a precisely equivocal nature.

The concept of a cause map therefore entails structure and is a solitary concept. That is to say, a person's cause map in the social context that the person is functioning in, is a representation of what the social context means to that person. Thus the structures contained in the mind of that person are imposed upon the person's elapsed experiences which also makes an infinite reconstruction of events possible.

Environments are considered as "dealable" when the actors use their cause maps. Weick has described maps as approximate models or typical representation of the situations. They are similar to an A to Z map of a town, which represents the

detailed skeleton of the streets in various parts of the town but does not show the immensity or character of the town, nor provides information with respect to the means for getting to different points. What the map does actually is to satisfy the need for cognition and order. So maps create images which may be used as guidelines. This way the equivocality in the perceived information is reduced to a certain extent.

The function of the cause maps in the selection process is to suggest how various events in the flow of the actors' experiences should be interpreted (discriminated). The cause maps are therefore involved in the continuation of the sampling/bracketing (i.e. enactment) activities. Here, they operate like a "template" or an "overlay" which actors impose upon their experience to reveal the presence of configurations. For example, considering the activities of the Marketing Manager in Rivet Ltd. (Case II, which is discussed in Chapter Six) the prediction of a recession (template) in the construction industry also meant that there were a set of alternative courses of action (configurations) available to him; he could either maintain the production level and increase their stock, or reduce the production level to meet the anticipated drop in demand, or find an alternative market, etc.

One interpretation of Weick's contention that actions precede thinking is that enacted environments are known whilst the action is occurring but only then selected retrospectively. Drawing on Schutz's notion of "lived experience" Weick then has argued that the characteristics of the selection process may be understood within some form of time. Thus, he recognises (a) pure duration, and (b) discrete segments, in the selection process, which have different spatial and temporal properties and where pure duration can be described as a stream of experience referred to in the selection process which has no segmental

character. Discrete segments, however, may be described as events which come to the direct attention of the actors in the selection process. They have pastness, i.e. they involve something that has already happened or has been experienced.

So, what the actors do in the selection process, in Weick's terms is "historicising", in order to reduce "equivocality" in their environment. In fact people seem to describe past sequences of events more "richly". This increase in rather "fanciful" thinking with time, according to Weick, is of significance for the selection process. Since "the placement of an event in time affects the sense made out if it" (p.196). Moreover, irrespective of the time of an event, actors seem to find it easier to treat the event as if it is fixed in time and then work backward and understand it.

Considering retrospective sense-making in the selection process, Weick has argued that the actor has to use the "future perfect tense" in order think about an event which has not occurred yet. In managerial situations, for instance, the success or failure of planning activities will have much to do with "invoking this complicated linguistic form". Future perfect thinking can make speculation more manageable by focusing on single events, according to Weick (p. 199). In other words, if managers treat their future projects as already accomplished, then they will be easily analysed because their projected acts take on the "temporal character of pastness" (as Schutz, 1967: 61). Presumably people find it easier to consider an event as already completed since they can use their past experience to imagine the process which will realise the projected outcome. Drawing on Schutz's conception of future perfect thinking, Weick continues with his contention that only what is already experienced is meaningful, not that which is being experienced, because meaning is an operation of intentionality which only becomes realised in the reflective glance (also Schutz, 1967: 56).

Briefly, in the selection process, retrospective sense-making activities occur. The raw materials for this process are provided by the enactment process in the forms of bracketed events, self-fulfilling prophecies, or realised situations. The process is governed by retained bracketing or sampling frameworks. The historicising of the events according to Weick illustrates "the influences of retention upon selection"; that is "enacted maps select among various future perfect histories that are hypothesised to make sense out of imagined outcomes". A major implication of analysis of the enactment and selection process has been to signify the point that the boundaries of organisations and their environments "shift, disappear and are arbitrarily drawn".

The enactment and selection processes, based on Weick's contention, include the development of schemas or cause maps, i.e. "bodies of thought", which are the outcomes of actors' "thinking practices".

Retention Process

In the natural selection model, "retention" involves "straightforward storage of the products of successful sense making, i.e. enacted environments" (as Weick, 1979: 131; Aldrich, 1979: 30).

According to Weick, the retention process is "less prosaic" than it is generally thought because of the ways the knowledge, i.e. labelled events, are translated from one person to another or from one point in time to another. The characteristics of the transmitting systems and means by which transmission occurs and can influence the way the retained events get reconstructed or reinterpreted. Moreover, the retained knowledge may be replaced by newly

selected meanings. Therefore, crucial to organising is the way organisations lean and handle the retained meanings.

The retention process is used by the organisation and its people to admit some selected mappings of events (past and present) to the organisation's stock of knowledge. The process is governed by frameworks which are based on the retained meanings and symbols and are used for bracketing and scrutinising future enactments, or even modifying or discrediting the existing ones. Moreover, the retention system includes the rules by which the events are related to each other in the organising process. It illustrates "how past patterns organise the present inputs to the system" (Weick, p. 209).

What happens in retention may be described as follows:

1.   Certain patterns of relationships are reinforced as a succession of similar patterns occur.

2.   The new patterns are initiated by new enactments.

3.   The established patterns are not easily altered, rather they tend to become more fixed.

4.   Retained symbols and/or meanings always reflect the original inputs.

5.   There is a time sequence regarding the enactment and retention of cause maps.

The essence of Weick's argument here is in recognition of the past-loadedness of the people in organisation as an enabling tool for their sense-makings. The past experiences of people/organisations, i.e. "the material which is already recorded", set the precedent for present cognitions and maximise the impact of that which

already exists (p. 211). Retention, however, does not imply absence of reorganisation of the material which is stored. The "bodies of thought" (i.e. cause maps and schemas) which are retained, undergo editing, thus sampling or exploration of new variations (enactments) will not be restricted in this process. According to Weick, however, one of the prominant characteristics of schemas is that they are "refractory to disproof". Furthermore, cause maps and schemas "envelop processes of conceptualising, remembering and acting" (as Bogoun, 1983: 176). "Remembering" here is to emphasise the retained set and the interpretative framework that is produced accordingly.

Since in the selection process, the "equivocality" of the information inputs is removed, the retained material will activate a set of rules and less thinking (in circles) is required. The retained enacted environments will be the sensible versions of what the equivocality was about, yet its imprint will be there (Weick, 1979: 213).

Weick has also asserted that retention systems include "highly localised, dated, unwritten and modest constraints" (ibid: 214). This implies that few actors in the organisation will have access to the retained material. Thus only a very limited amount of information will be used in any decision-making process.

Considering the impact of the retained information upon the organisation's sense-making, Weick has said that "enactments and retention work at odds" (ibid: 221). New variations (enactments) imply discrediting of the existing ones. This is because organisations continue to exist only if they maintain a balance between flexibility and stability. Flexibility is required because the current organisation practices may require modification and edition. Through enactment, organisations detect changes in the environment, therefore they must maintain some room to

accommodate the new variations. Stability implies the possibility of "repetition" and recurrence, thus the organisation can economise on its energies. However, stability can be dysfunctional as it "precludes adaptability" or flexibility. Editing the retained enacted environments (cause maps) implies revision of the bracketing framework in the selection process and consequently revision of the interpretative frameworks which are used in the retention process.

In Weick's view, "organisations need variations so that they can deal with changes in the environment and they need strong guidance from the past to develop efficiencies" (ibid: 221). That is to say, to handle such contradiction in demands organisations must use past events (or experiences) as "partial constraint" on the present. Weick, therefore, stresses that organisations should doubt what is considered as certain, i.e. "to doubt is to discredit unequivocal information and to act decisively is to discredit equivocal information" (ibid: 221).

The "organising model" that Weick has put forward treats an organisation's environment as the outcome of the organising process rather than an input. In this model, people interpret situations through enactments and so construct a "belated" picture of their environments. The existing enacted environments then serve as a "plausible guide for subsequent" actions and interpretations. However, the crucial factor in the life of the organisation is what they do with what they know. The ambivalance arises since the survival of the organisation relies on the resolving of the contradiction between stability and adaptability.

II

Weick has attempted to show that "bodies of thought" and "thinking practices" are the outcomes of actors' organising activities and are assumed to reduce the

equivocality of the environmental inputs. His conceptualisation of the relationships of the organisations and their environments differs from that of the advocates of the open system theory and those perspectives which emphasise the external influences upon the activities of the organisation. For Weick people are actively involved in the construction of their environments within which they will enact. Their organising activities at the same time are their responses to the "equivocal information" that they perceive as they interact with these environments. The enactors in Weick's conceptualisation do not seek to control their surroundings by monitoring the demands. Their actions become the raw materials from which "a sense of situation is built". However, the implications of Weick's contention for the analysis of organising process are twofold. Firstly, post-hoc rationalisation that Weick attributes to the actors does not necessarily mean "effective performance", i.e. producing the desired outcomes. Secondly, thinking in circles in a sense, could explain organisational failure, if and when the founding conditions are undermined in the application of the retained responses.

Moreover in analysing cognitive processes, it seems a false division to separate "bodies of thought" from "thinking practices" as they evolve into one another; for instance, the mapping of the relationships between events takes place through habitual exercises or simplifications. It cannot be said when the construction of thought ends and putting it into practice starts. Thus the information which becomes discernible because of the actors' enactments of their environment, (i.e. the cause maps) is recoded in the selection process.

One of the aspects of the organising process that Weick has emphasised is the role of others in the organising process. That is to say that construction, rearrangement and demolishing of the "objective features" of the environments are "negotiated interpersonally" until at least "partial consensus" on the meanings

and the underlying assumptions about the events, is attained by the actors. This emphasis can be seen in Weick's definition of organising as "a consensually validated grammar for reducing equivocality by means of sensible interlocked behaviour" (p.3). Moreover, by describing schema in terms of Janis' (1972) concept of "groupthink", Weick has indirectly shown the significance of negotiations in the process of enactment. In other words, an organisation's organising activities are like an orchestra's recital, they are not "solitary performances", sets of people will be involved in the execution of cause maps. Here Weick differs from Bougon (1983) in the sense that in Bougon's theorising the emphasis is on the role of the individual actors' cognition in the construction of maps, whereas Weick has basically focused on the involvement of multiple actors (1979a: 47) in the construction of cause maps.

Consensual validation and the involvement of multiple actors is a placid representation of organisational politickings. The natural selection model does not unravel the intentionality, the motives, or the pre-meditated projects of actors in the process of sense-making. For instance, in the enactment and selection processes when the actors' experiences become segmented and labelled, how do people decide on selecting a label or a map? Firstly not all actors have access to the stock of the labels and Weick himself considers such unequal distribution, in terms of locality of knowledge. Secondly the actors who have access to the stock may have different organisational experiences - that is - as a result they may prefer different labels or cause maps. The question is how is consensus achieved in such situations?

In this thesis Janis' concept of "groupthink", which Weick has utilised in describing the functions and dysfunctions of schema, is reinterpreted. It is argued that "groupthink" is the product of people's politickings. According to the

empirical work of this thesis (which is discussed in detail in Chapters Six and Seven), managers held frequent meetings and lobbied their colleagues in their attempt to assimilate their views and thus "maintain a united front" (see for example Case IV), regarding their projects. Furthermore, according to Spender's conceptualisation managers' attempts to assimilate cognitive practices could reduce their "cognitive dissonance" (as Festinger, 1957).

Similarly, it is argued that there are varying degrees of actors' involvement in the organising process. This fluid participation as Weick has also argued, can be due to the fact that some actors "have time" to become involved in such processes, i.e. to attend meetings or bring to the attention of others certain issues, whilst others do not. The same group of people will also handle the organising questions which are raised. However, this implies that certain members of the organisation will withdraw from the arena and become increasingly less aware of the issues, as was the case of the production manager in Rivet Ltd. (Case II). He was out of the Company's scene as a result of his withdrawal from group meetings. His absence from the meetings was not due to lack of time or interest, but inability to grasp and cope with his colleagues' politickings in an economically turbulent period.

In Weick's theorising such points are left unfolded. Moreover, certain important questions are not considered by Weick, such as whose goals are taken into account in the enactment process. Who are the people who decide which map should be retained, or what schemas are appropriate? Or who amplifies deviation or stability in thinking about events?

It is easily detected from Weick's theorising about the organising process that his notions of cause maps and schemas are driven by Schutz's concept of recipe. The organising process according to Weick has at its core the notion of recipe. In

Schutz's terms recipes are both a scheme for expression and a scheme for interpretation (Schutz, 1967). As a scheme for expression they contain directives for actions, for handling people and situations and for minimising undesirable outcomes (Weick, 1979: 46). As schemas for interpretation recipes are explanations of actors' motives Weick, thus, has argued that "most recipes associated with organising are expressive rather than interpretative". In Simon's words, they are "process descriptions" and include instructions for the <u>what</u> and <u>how</u> of organising. On the basis of this defintion, which incidentally Weick finds most directly related to organising, recipes are considered as artifacts. They provide the means for generating desired structures. Here, structures mean organisational "blue-prints". The assumed similarity of organising (cause maps construction) and recipes is the result of causal linkages that actors attribute to events and are assumed to underlie the process of organising. However, for Schutz, recipes are common-sense ways of doing things. They have the element of "relevance", that is to say they are related to the situation in which they are developed and for which they are used. Accordingly, they become established and remain valid though they may not necessarily be in use all the time, unlike cause maps. The validity of recipe is confirmed through recurrence of events. However, Schutz's notion of recipe represents a subjectively constructed and intersubjectively known reality. Unlike Schutz, Weick does not unravel the process by which actors inhabit the schema (cause map) premises. Although he describes the enactment process as the "social construction of reality" (as Berger & Luckmann, 1976) he does not explore the subjective experience of individuals whilst the map is taking shape.

As regards inhabitation, Weick contends that the creation of cause maps is like the creation of territory where one will reside. This contention is similar to the thesis about actors carving out niches and managing their survival paths produced

for example by Aldrich (1979) and McKelvey (1980). Weick, yet does not discuss the way actors determine the location of their habitat.

Other concepts have been put forward in organisational theorisings which have similar connotations to those of schemas and cause maps; such as "cognitive models" (Jenkins, 1979), "cognitive maps" (Bougon, 1983), "Standard Operating Procedures" (Allison, 1971), "Performance Programmes" (March & Simons, 1963) and so on. They equally are seen to provide actors with the means for understanding what they are doing. They can function as self-fulfilling prophecies. These concepts including cause maps, share a common characteristic: they are envisaged to create order in the activities of the actors. In addition they are constraining since they tend to narrow the actors' thinking horizon. Consequently, not all corners of the surroundings will be explored.

An important question to emerge from this examination of Weick's theorisings is that whether there is a need for socio-evolutionary framework by which to describe the characteristics of cause maps and their functioning as structures. For instance, Giddens (1979) has postulated (without utilising the concept of natural selection) that rules and structures are properties of all social systems. According to him structures contain three rules: rules for understanding, rules for controlling and rules for evaluation. Just like recipes and cause maps, structures according to Giddens are the means and the outcome of the actors' interactions with their surroundings, i.e. they are simultaneously produced by and used to regulate these interactions. Thus structures (as allocative and authoritative mechanisms) can be considered as the means used by actors to rationalise their actions. Weick has used a socio-evolutionary framework to emphasise the "ecological changes" which are the reason for a new enactment. He does not discuss the way the ecological changes occur for example; whether they are

intentionally initiated or not. Unlike Giddens who stresses the intentional dimension of human conduct, Weick has argued that only minimal ordering lies in the hands of the actors. Weick's postulation in this respect does not explain the activities of the administrators and planners in Cropshire Health Authority. These actors were clearly involved in breaking the mould of the established practices in the NHS (see Case IV). They deliberately initiated changes in their surroundings as they introduced unorthodox applications of some of their old recipes. Whilst in the process of designing and planning a new hospital, these actors frequently deviated from the prescribed procedures and justified their actions by utilising the popular understandings shared by their role-set in their organisations.

The implied assumption in the natural selection process as postulated by Weick is that the actors' actions are "goal-interpreted" (Weick, 1979b: 195). This is differentiated from most organisation theorising (e.g. Etzioni, 1964) which have assumed that organisational actions are directed at goal attainment. According to Weick there is no such goal as "survival" apparent to organisational members which could be considered as the reason for their activities. Rather, their activities are driven by the ambiguity or absence of goals. In other words, organising occurs first then the reason for it is defined. Weick also refers to this as actions preceding thought, i.e. he argues that actions precede goals definitions, causes precede effects, responses precede stimuli, output precedes the inputs, etc. (p. 195). In Weick's view this is because the actors search backwards to discover events which have produced the outcomes in question.

These arguments can be compared in terms of the degree of rationality that they attribute to people's organisational activities. Here rationality is defined as calculated, intended actions. Weick's description of the organising process, enactment, selection and retention assumes a great deal of rationality, a point

which Weick has not, however, clarified. It is argued here that rationality is shown in the ways people develop their schemas and cause maps and thus in their historicising and retrospections. Their attempts to reduce equivocality in their environment implies that they are at least trying to be rational (cf. Weick). However, in Weick's view, because disorder and change is the dominant state of organisation, rational action, i.e. planned, (thought) actions are rare. It is argued here that unpredictability of events (or occurence of an unexpected event) may not necessarily lead to an irrational selection. According to Argyris & Schon (1978), members of an organisation develop their theories of action on the basis of "what if" questions, just like the marketing manager in Rivet Ltd. (CaseII) who developed contingency plans to deal with "surprise" times.

Furthermore Weick's description of the enactment process (i.e. interaction of the organisation with its environments) presents a tidy inposition by the enactors. Peters and Waterman (1983) have refuted the tidiness of this process of interaction on the basis of their survey of successful American firms. They have claimed that through "chunking", that is less structured organisation activities, "the corporation encourages a high volume of rapid action and efficiency. The organisation acts and then learns from what it has done. It experiments ... it makes mistakes ..." (p. 114).

Focusing on "goal-interpreted" behaviour, in Weick's terms, or post-hoc rationalisation of actions stresses the significance of past events in the organising process, in validation of the organisational grammar and in the understanding of its present state. According to Weick, people show preference for practices with which they are familiar. This is illustrated by their habitual thinking and their attempts to routinise their sense-makings, and so increase the cognitive comfort felt accordingly. However, this implies that the outcome of people's cognitive

practices can be more conservative than it is portrayed by Weick. Often actors when faced with change handle the situation in a way which will protect their existing maps. Sometimes they simplify the situation to create more certainty, as was the case with the managers in Metal Finishing Ltd. (Case III, see Chapter Six). At the time of decreasing demand for their services, they explained the reason as being the recession in other industries and thus refrained from doing any aggressive marketing. However, another explanation could have been the lower prices that other metal finishing companies offered for their services at that time.

It seems that cognitive practices as such have conservative influence upon the organising processes. Moreover, managers are assumed to deal with situations, or minimise the ambiguity in their environment by searching for the familiar and simplifying things. In other words they seek to create boundaries around their decision-making areas. Weick has explained this simplification in terms of actors' reluctance to spend time or energy on thinking. It is argued here that when a situation is simplified it means that the equivocality is reduced to a level which can be handled by utilising the existing recipes. Thus there will be more habitual organising activities. It also implies that the organisation's efforts will be channelled towards maintaining the existing systems of operation, within their identified boundaries, and perhaps becoming more specialised in such organisational activities. The exploration of new domains of activity (new niches) is thus delayed. Hence, the actors may prefer to adopt a "defender" type of managerial strategy in their interactions with their environment (as Miles & Snow, 1978).

For Weick this state of inertia seems possible because the organisations can remain self-contained for a long period of time. Moreover, organisations are said

to be suspicious of their surroundings. Thus they will have tighter ties with the "known" surroundings. If this is the case, how are organisations to enhance their effectiveness, i.e. survive, if they are captive to their momentum? According to Miller & Mintzberg (1974), organisations find it difficult to come out of this state of inertia. Their strategies evolve around maintaining their organisation's momentum (Miller, 1980). However, the point to be raised here is that the momentum of an organisation is maintained through the frequent rehearsal of a set of cause maps or recipes. This implies employing a set of self-validating and self-fulfilling mechanisms, which in return narrow the cognitive horizon of the organisational members and their consequent activities.

"Recipes", "cause maps" and "standard operating procedures" are described here as enabling analytic tools for the organisations and their managers. They provide the managers with directive and interpretative frameworks, whilst simultaneously they are constraining tools, because they attenuate the equivocality-reducing activities of the managers to predominantly routine task management. This is to say that recipes, maps are "driving forces" (as Hall, 1984) for managers' "parochial search" (as Cyert and March, 1963). This argument could be used to explain the "Fall of the Saturday Evening Post" (Hall, 1976), in which case the actors' cause map had linked the editorial pages with the amount of advertisement and subscription rate. The causal relationship initially proved appropriate but finally became fatal. According to Hall (1984), the failure of the management policies in the case was due to the managers' "misattribution of causality" in their mapping. The question is how are managers to detect such misattributions or "blind spots" in their decision-making? If management of the routine or rehearsal of a set of recipes over a period of time implies misconception of ecological changes, hence, maladaptation, how do organisations learn?

According to Weick's natural selection model of organisational adaptation, the actors' maps are constructed through backward thinking. This is to say that the assemblage of bits of information in the maps takes place through trial and error learning (also Cohen et al, 1972; Argyris, 1978) and/or solving problems then defining them (i.e. treatment first, diagnosis second). Learning is implied in the description of the evolution of cause maps by Weick (1979a,b) and Hall (1984). They have, hence, asserted that cause maps are used by the actors to see the organisational realities. These realities are shared among the organisation's members through their interactions. Here sharing is interpreted as actors' learning. This is differentiated from Argyris & Schon 's (1978) notion of learning; since Weick assumes that there is no editing or elaboration due to such elements as bounded rationality or time pressures. According to Argyris & Schon's notion of "double-loop learning", the detection of errors may lead to changes in the organisation's structure and strategies.

In summary, taking Weick's view, "bodies of thought" and "thinking practices":

. are based on the beliefs and schemas that actors have;

. are directive and interpretative frameworks;

. are shared yet locally dispersed among the members of the organisation;

. are retained for their later referencing;

. are liable to addition but this rarely occurs due to

    actors bounded rationality

    ambiguity in goals

    time limits on actors' exploration;

. imply that actors' organising behaviour are goal-interpreted.

Accordingly, concepts of bodies of thoughts and thinking practices are intended to

illustrate the development of an organisational epistemology, that is, the origin of organisational knowledge and ways of theorising about organisations. Weick's "organising formulation" may be utilised to resolve the "fragmentation" puzzle. Hence the fragmentary nature of managerial work (as Mintzberg, 1973) is explained in terms of managers' attempts to understand their environments, their handling of the mismatches between the information inputs and their cause maps. However, Weick's contention is more in line with Mintzberg's generalisation. He admits that "retrospection is rare in managerial work because managers do not have much time for deliberate selection" (1979b; 203). The point is, however, that the existence of even abbreviated selection processes does not mean the absence of objects for thought. In addition, to explain the decline of organisations in terms of the managers' lack of time for thinking is to miss the intentional and temporal dimensions of organising practices.

Weick's focus on the ways organisations unfold is a rough and ready consideration of the temporal dimensions of organisational actions, that is historicising about organisational events or the influence of the past experiences of the actors on their schemas. Yet he does not consider the "temporal spread" underlying managerial actions. That is to say he fails to examine events as the nodal points for identifying ecological changes in the organisational surroundings. Thus he has disregarded the time-reckoning activities of managers which are based on the identification of periodic-contingent events (as Clark, 1982).

CHAPTER FOUR

TEMPORAL EMBEDDEDNESS OF MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

TIME, FLOW AND EXPERIENCE

"TIME" IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION THEORY

"TIME" IN STUDIES OF MANAGERIAL WORK

TIME RECKONING SYSTEMS: THE ROLE OF CONTINGENT
PERIODICITIES

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis it is argued that any perspective for studying managerial work should consider the temporal-embeddedness of everyday managerial constructs and thus become a perspective in times. The perspective proposed therefore is one which envisages that event trajectories are used by managers and their role-set as frames for understanding what is going on around them and the future prospectus can be. The key time dimension for studying what managers are doing will, therefore, be "event" rather than soley clock time. This approach is based on the assertion that time is in the event, and unlike Newton's claim, not separate from it. Also that the events related to the activities of the setting are collectively identified and defined by its members (also Clark, 1982).

This Chapter, therefore, examines the conceptions of time as utilised in various strands of inquiry into management (i.e. management sicences) and managerial work. It commences with a brief examination of the individuals' experience of time, in order to show that time, as an important resource available to people, determines the meaning, context and duration of events and situations for them. It is maintained that people's subjective experience of time has biological as well as social bases.

This theoretical consideration of individuals' experience of time draws upon Giddens' notion of "situated practices" (Giddens, 1979), so arguing that managerial practices are constituted in a set of dimensions, i.e. temporal, paradigmatic and intentional. The theory of time as it has been applied to management and managers is analysed next with reference to theories developed in management sciences and descriptions of managerial work.

It is argued, here, that the classical and pragmatic theorisings about management have focused upon the development of theoretical principles for identifying conditions which ensure optimal utilisation of resources by managers. Time, in this respect has been considered as a highly valuable resource at managers' disposal which must be constructively used for the achievement of the organisational objectives. The management of time is maintained to be a key attribute of the effective manager. This is a typical conception of time which is ontic and drawn from a notion of clock time, yet is inadequate for the analysis of temporal embeddedness of managerial practices. This conception of time has become dominant in the theory and practice of management. Over the years management practitioners have been involved in the application of the clock time to work and discipline (also Thompson, 1967) and management scientists have focused upon the analysis and development of these applications. Furthermore due to changes in the technological and economic environments of work organisations and in the conception of work efficiency, the irregular pattern of work based on events as in agricultural activities has been transformed into more regular, homogeneous patterns which are typical of factory work.

Certain management theories, hence, have basically developed within perspectives which have paid inadequate attention to event time. They are mainly concerned with rational approach to management in an abstract way and severed from the temporal situations in which managerial practices develop. Furthermore, empirical generalisations about the nature of managerial work (e.g. Mintzberg, 1973) have failed to break the mould of clock time conceptualisation in management theorisings. They have portrayed managerial work in terms of a set of discrete activities the duration of which are measured against the clock time, thus have presented a "time study" account of managerial work.

In the following discussion this argument is developed in order to illustrate that managers' cognitive activities are embedded in the temporal structure which belongs to the setting within which they are operating. It is demonstrated that managerial activities are temporally-differentiated. This analysis will draw upon Clark's thesis about "contingent periodicities" (1978, 1982). The concept of "contingent periodicity" has been developed upon a critique of studies of organisation and their inadequate treatment of time and includes event trajectories which are shown to function as analytic tools which are used by certain groups of managers in an organisation.

TIME, FLOW AND EXPERIENCE

The concept of time and what is included in this concept has long been the core of philosophical and sociological debates. These debates have circled around questions about the nature of time, its flow and continuity and how it is experienced by individuals. According to Heidegger (1977) being is in time and life is lived in time. Thus, different people live in different times at the same time. It has therefore been conjectured that time is in the subjectivity of the individual's experiences, in terms of before and after, past and future (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The significance of analysing the concept of time is with respect to its relationship to experience and behaviour and to the point that perception of time is a psychic event and that the physical world changes through time and such changes are cyclic and rhythmic.

The following provides an account of the concept of time as an ontological reality and the ways it can be related to the individual's everyday understanding. The argument is put forward that managers are socialised into temporal practices, and various implications for managerial projects are identified. The argument thus

sets the background for subsequent discussion of managerial experience of periodic and contingent events.

I

From a Heideggerian point of view, time is basically seen as a temporal spread "past-present-future" and a sequence of disjunctures. The emphasis is on continuity, which is essential for the formation of concepts and for the synthesis of past experiences and of possible future experiences. This is shown by the examples of everyday life and managerial experiences. Take for example the concept of a chair, which is a synthesis of an individual's (possible) past experience, that the person sat on it and it was solid. That supporting feeling will be there any time the person uses the chair again. The example from the managerial work is in more abstract terms. The marketing manager of a manufacturing firm (see Chapter Six, Case II) had developed a concept of recession (an event located in the early 1980's) which was specific to that firm. For him and his colleagues in the marketing department, the concept had developed at the time when their accounts showed profits but they could not achieve the set sales targets. The volume of sales was declining as the customers were not buying their products. The stocks which were sold to distributors were, put back on the shelf which was perhaps the reason for the profit figures. This could stretch into the future, i.e. there was the possibility of the recurrence of the same experience. In other words, if the experience recurred, the situation could be defined similarly, triggered off by a similar state of economy and consequences, etc. However, it appeared from the case study work that managerial experience of continuity of the past into the future is less empirical (i.e. not like the experience of a chair) and more intuitive.

Heidegger draws a distinction between ontic and ontological realities. He defines ontic realities as things like chairs and tables plus individual acts and thoughts about particular events, either historical or future, which happen within a framework of time. Whereas ontological reality (i.e. time) is the structuring framework within which the ontic event takes place. Heidegger's differentiation of realities is a simple distinction of temporal (e.g. historical and non-temporal spatial) entities. Time and space are thus ontological realities. Attempts to grasp time as a structuring structure within which the individual's future planning actions, their calculations become possible and verifiable, also embodies the same basis for the development of meanings.

Pursuing the view that time is a temporal spread and that unity of past-present-future as the basic ingredient of actors' experience will also explain the flow of time and the way one experiences its passage. Heidegger postulates that if one is aware of one's possibilities, one can create a temporal order by which one can regulate one's actions and projects. For example, a farmer will plough the field when the sun is at one side of the sky, and when it is on the other side, the farmer will decide to stop ploughing. In this case time is grasped as "before" and "after". Time is used to order this human project. "Project" is a significant aspect of Heidegger's conception of time. According to him, actors plan projects every day in the sense that they are continuously and perpetually pushed ahead of themselves towards the future. Time in this perspective is used as a sequence to regulate things, activities, ends. This is an empirically grounded experience of time, thus a more common understanding. The analysis of the activities of the managers in some manufacturing settings (see Cases II & III) has shown that these managers were continuously planning projects and constructing their future activities. The calendar and clock time were used to create a sequence or order for the projects.

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However, Heidegger's concept of the temporal spread of time confirms that time flows whether individuals turn their backs to it or not and whether they argue that the past is no longer, present is actual and future is not yet; it flows because of these three tenses (Barrett, 1968). For instance, the production manager in Rivet Ltd. (Case II) planned his work activities on the basis that the future was unknown considering the Company's business potential (and his own future career), and that he had to concentrate on the "here and now". Hence he characterised his work as "fire-fighting" - an obligation to maintain the operating systems for the time being.

The central issues in Heidegger's analysis of human existence and passage of time are of significance to the argument of this Chapter. These are (a) the point that time is a flow and it should be considered as a passage unifying the three tenses: past, present and future; and (b) the assertion that individuals temporalise, that is to say, they establish themselves in time and create a temporal order. Thus that human life is a portfolio of projects of varying length (and related to the individuals' temporal horizons).

When time is viewed as a flow, whether or not it is quantifiable in nature, and what criteria are used for such quantifiability, hence become peripheral questions. The flow of time does not necessarily occur in homogeneous units in the way that Newton asserted (as Barrett, 1968). However, this argument does not reduce the significance of clock time and the face of the clock in the everyday life of the people (here managers).

In Kantian language, the flow of time is connected with the spatial movements of the "substance". This view can be complemented with Husserl's doctrine of the intentional nature of consciousness. However, this assertion requires scrutiny of

the flow of consciousness and a systematic description of what is given in experience which is a complicated inquiry and beyond the scope of this thesis. Time is considered, in this thesis, as the structuring structure within which the experiences of individuals unfold. This definition is the same as Heidegger's concept of ontological structure, i.e. a condition for understanding or meaning (as Barrett, 1968). It is therefore maintained that human beings use time to regulate their projects yet they also become trapped and dominated by it.

II

This conception of time introduces a further set of questions such as how can the regulating function of time be described regarding its relationship to the individual's everyday experience and behaviour and what can be the nature of time in that description?

The academics' understanding of time has been influenced by the development of the physical sciences and the clock. Theories of motion have made time just as measurable as space. Furthermore, the fact that the physical world is rhythmic in nature has contributed to a rhythmic conception of time. Therefore today the modern homo sapien thinks of (and perceives) time as a homogeneous variable. The advancement of technology in the industrialised world has limited the sensation of seasons for individuals. Also the availability and growth of fruit and vegetables throughout the year has made the change of seasons of little significance. Indeed, the introduction of the clock time and calendar has played a determinant role in people's conception of time. Time, i.e. subjective time as a frame of reference for experience, is perceived in cycles which follow the movements of the clock's hands. Yet this present day attitude does not explain the nature of time.

The man-made counting systems, the clock and the calendar, hours, days, months, years, etc., make individuals' experience of time repetitive and rhythmic in nature. These rhythms and cycles determine the potential patterns of an individual's behaviour. The rhythmic aspect of behaviour accentuates the individual's learning experiences whilst their adaptive behaviour is partly genetic. Thus people's cyclical patterns of behaviour not only result from their responses to exogeneous physical conditions but also involve certain internal mechanisms which enable them to cope with the cyclical changes. Note that here the innate capacity of all living things, plants, animals and human beings, to measure the passage of time and produce the relevant behaviour is being considered. This capacity to adapt to cyclical changes is manifested in the people's (organism's) bio-rhythms which may vary on a daily or monthly or annual basis. The internal clock helps individuals cope with external or internal variations.

However, although people's perception of time may be related to these internal clocks, their responses to time develop throughout their lives on the basis of certain expectations which are socially constructed. These expectations are concerned with the duration of events, relationships (Toffler, 1971). Knowledge of the duration of events is gradually given to the individual in his/her socialisation process for example one learns about the lunch hour and its duration. Hence, there exist spoken or tacit rules about the duration of all activities. According to Toffler, these "durational expectancies" vary in different societies where the pace of life varies. But when changes in the pace of life occurs within societies, these durations are "shaken up" too. The assumption is that the individuals enhance their capacity for coping with change by internalising the principle of changing durations, otherwise the implication would be failure to recognise the situations correctly and consequently activating irrelevant responses.

People's lives these days are therefore filled with temporal variations, that is in ecological terms they are provided with options. It has become possible for people to occupy a single niche at different times. For example consider shiftwork and somehow autonomous time usage at work, or entertainment times; variations in times in these cases are deliberate so are those in educational systems: terms, holidays and vacations, shorter working weeks, etc. These examples also describe the person's experience of time as well as space in everyday life.

To illustrate, for farmers (especially in places with a tropical climate) the working day is arranged differently. Certain jobs in the field must be done before the day gets hot. The nights also start earlier, bearing in mind that in some of these agricultural areas relevant advanced technology and facilities are absent. Farmers are continuously engaged in monitoring the development and growth of the produce against the seasonal changes. These changes are not (directly) determined by the variations in the clock time rather by changes in the climate, the behaviour of the crops, movements of the sun across the sky, longer daylight, etc. Newby (1977) in his study of farmworkers in East Anglia has shown that there are climatic influences upon the social structure of rural areas, because the physical environment determines the pattern of work. Depending upon the type of area, whether pastoral upland or arable lowland, growing of the crops entails distinctive cycles of production, rhythms of work and deployment of all resources. Thus, for example, the lowland arable areas which have lengthy cycles of production with periods of intensive activity like "seed time" and harvest, when larger numbers of workers are employed and a more rigid hierarchical social structure is thus established. Moreover, in farming societies, subjective time is embedded in social time. For instance future is not calculable (thus unknown) as it remains in the domain of assumed uncontrollable forces such as God or nature.

According to Georg-Brose (1982), the conception of time of the urbanised individual is influenced by digital time-keeping devices, i.e. the movement of time is no longer associated with cyclical movement, rather the duration and discontinuity of time are simultaneously signified. However, in urbanised societies clock time as opposed to seasonal cycles has maintained its role as organising device.

Irrespective of the facilitating role that has been attributed to advanced technology in reducing the seasonality in everyday life and improving the coping capacity of people, there are still events with which people are expected to deal. For example, people had to deal with the effects of the "oil shock" in the mid 1970's and how it could deteriorate the supply of petroleum and fuel; or lorry drivers' strike in 1979 which influenced the supply of food and raw materials; or power-cuts like those experienced by people during the miners' strike in the mid 1970's. The power-cut affected work shifts in various industries and required alterations to be made in order to compensate for shortage of supply of coal such as using other kinds of energy, which in turn, changed people's way of life. Or, similarly, the effects of the miners' strike in 1984 upon the life and the work patterns of the mining communities. The need for some mechanisms, or contingency plans to deal with such disjuncture became apparent. This confirms Toffler's argument that "transience" affects people's "durational expectancies" and perhaps enhances their capacity in coming to terms with disjunctures, i.e. unexpected situations. The "oil shock" for instance has constituted a turning point in all nations economic and political strategies and their expected outcomes.

A similar argument could be applied to managerial work. That is, if seasonal changes, business cycles and organisational timetables are recognised, the disjunctures will activate certain managerial strategies and the possibility of

coping with the outcomes of the unexpected event will be enhanced. The question remains as to how such reactions or proactions are internalised. Managers may perceive seasonal changes and temporal cycles differently as a result of which different patterns of managerial behaviour may be produced.

III

Turning to consider the significance of experience of time, each individual's experience will vary. Experience or awareness itself has duration in time (as Heidegger, 1977; Orme, 1978). That is to say there is a time-span of awareness which is affected by various factors of a psychological character such as, relaxation, or stress. The everyday activities of an individual affect his or her experience of time and its duration. For example, people talk about how time passes quickly when they are enjoying themselves and how it passes slowly in illness.

This psychological view of experience of time assumes a strong link between personality, mood and experience of time. Accordingly it is conjectured that pyschological characteristics impose some structure upon the experience of time. People's experiences of present events or expectations of future events usually vary with their pyschological state of mind. The experience of time, especially within a pyschological perspective, is affected by factors within the person as well as the external elements.

The individual's experience of time can also be described in its pastness. People refer to events which belong to the past. There are all types of causal relationships recognised among these events. Individuals conceptualise the past by searching for events which can be the cause for their present situation and events

which can be the effect - a temporal order of events is hence created. Georg-Brose (1982) argues that ordering of events may take place randomly and that unanticipated consequences of the experience cannot be ordered in sequence. This reveals the external and internal motives and initiatives in that process. Moreover, causation and sequences have structuring functions as previously mentioned. Pastness of an event is always regarded with the events in here and now.

Within a "physical scientist's" frame of reference, the nature of time and its resultant behavioural characteristics are disregarded. The significance of considering a non-physical scientist's view of temporal variations lies in the ways the events are predicted or anticipated (as Clark, 1982; Orme, 1978). According to Orme, the individual's ability to foresee future events is concerned with mechanisms other than calculable channels. This in a way refutes the role of forecasting tools introduced by management sciences in the depiction of future trends and behaviour of the market place, which are extrapolated from past trends. However, an examination of the activities of some managers in two manufacturing firms (see Cases II & III), has shown that these managers anticipated the future movements of their rival firms and customers by reflecting on and analysing the events which occurred in the previous periods, the cause and reactions of people involved to these past events. They also observed the behaviour of the market place by referring to statistical information collected by surveys, and the sales figures over these periods. In this respect the marketing managers were sensitised by certain cases (events) which were used as indicators of the forthcoming events. Here, time (i.e. event time) may be considered as a network of intentionalities which linked managers to their environments and mapped-out the shape of the future in the expectation of the continuity (discontinuity) of the past (also Hopkins, 1982).

Indeed people's experience of time starts by the way they put events in epochs and create dates afterwards. Throughout the development of these activities, their understanding of pastness and futureness of events is facilitated by the use of language in its specific and common function. Just like the farmers, the experience of time by the actors in their particular setting can be inferred from the specific language they develop. The point emphasised here is that temporarality is located in events (expressed by language); for example, note in the statement "it is hot so it is summer". The heat, a physically (externally) perceived sensation is used for defining the situation. Yet this conception of time is formulated with regard to calendar. People usually believe that time is made by the calendar. Thus the linking of time to events seems discontinuous; events such as Christmas and New Year are treated as starting or ending points. This conception originates in Newton's treatment of time as absolute and severed from events.

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IV

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It is groundless to assume that there are universal notions of time. Time has multiple meanings in non-urban cultures; it has twelve meanings in Burmese for example. The urbanised notion of time theoretically is one of directional change in mythical terms, unlike the notion of time used by the non-urban population which implies repetition and seasonality. Whorf (1968), in his study of the American Indian tribe "Hopi", has asserted that in Hopi language there is no grammatical construction or expression equivalent to time, i.e. past, present or future, as in the English language. Yet the Hopi language is capable of describing in "operational sense all observable phenomenon of the universe" (p.379). Regarding the Hopi view of metaphysics, "time disappears and space is altered, so that it is no longer the homogeneous timeless space of our supposed institution of

classical Newtonian mechanics" (ibid). However, new concepts flow into the picture and provide a description of the universe without referring to time or space.

Regarding the domain of understanding for the Hopi, the objective realm is that which is accessible to the senses and thus, no differentiation is made between past and present, yet the future is excluded. The subjective realm is therefore all that is in mind - or in the Hopi's terms in the heart - and therefore is equal to that which is in the future. Accordingly, the Hopi conceive time and motion in the objective realm - a matter of connecting events. To distinguish between two past events, periodic physical motions between them are displayed. For the Hopi "things" are events, and events can only be known if they have happened. For example, an event in village A - execution of a traitor - is "present" in village A (there) and will be past in village B (here) when the news is heard. According to Whorf, the Hopi can live without the tenses for their verbs since such terms as space and time are re-cast into expressions of extension, operation and cyclic processes.

Gearing's study of the Cherokees, an American Indian village people, also has shown that the Cherokees had a rhythmic pattern of life. The rhythms were determined by identification of three types of events: fixed events such as ceremonies, religious or otherwise; variable events which were fixed within seasons, such as hunting and wars, and unpredictable events. The year (or perhaps the cycle) for the Cherokees started in October (the reason for this could be that October was the time of harvest) and it contained these three types of events. Seasons were marked by festivals; summer was the time when the crops were in the ground and before the harvest; winter was the time soon after the new year in October when the longer hunt started. The Cherokees had therefore developed

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systematic and rhythmic ways of handling the variety of events throughout their year.

Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer and their reconstruction of time and space has had a great influence upon the studies of time. According to Evans-Pritchard, there are two distinctive seasonal paths experienced by the Nuer, with regard to the presence or absence of rainy weather. There is a variety of event trajectories developed accordingly such as, type of cloud, etc. There are "strategic time-keepers" (as Clark, 1982) who are responsible for the tribes' activities during the transitional periods. Evans-Pritchard's study is considered as central to the study of temporal dimensions in the organisation. As Clark has argued it "deserves close scrutiny because it possesses many guidelines for the study of time in organisations" (1982: 10).

Other variations in the experience of time can be found in societies governed by the Islamic way of life. In these societies life is patterned and the day is pegged by the time which ought to be spent on the worship of God and praying times - that is five times a day - dawn, noon, afternoon, dusk and night. Time-keeping as practised in industrial settings, i.e. training of industrial workers in the manner that Pollard (1963) has described as regards the industrialisation process, becomes irrelevant. Notions of punctuality and organisational systems based on punctuality originate in Western industrialised societies, who are assumed to work on mercantile and mercantilist foundations, e.g. time is money. which is different from the fatalistic, transcendental approaches to life of people in Islamic societies.

In summary, it has been argued that there are variations in people's experience and conception of time. An attempt has been made to shift the direction of

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thinking and theorising about time from the notion of clock-time and calendar to a notion which is of persistence and existential (as Bergson, 1910). It has been argued that a more useful conception of time is one derived from events which are identified by the individuals using "rules" for sequencing these events and placing them in trajectories.

<center>V</center>

The variations in individuals' experience of time and the different ways non-industrial societies use event-time have shown that human activities are situated temporally (as Giddens, 1979). According to Giddens, incorporation of temporality into the understanding of human "agency" and constitution of social practices must become the core of theorising about actions and institutions. The following is an attempt to show the problematic character of time and also to develop an understanding of time without the use of clock time conception. Hence, there will be an examination of the ways event trajectories are established and the "rules" which are used for such "time-reckoning" activities (as Clark, 1982; Giddens, 1981; Gurvitch, 1964).

The identification of sequences of events is a routine practice in some settings, as configurations of events are developed regarding different situations. These configurations contain a set of elements as follows:

1. There are durations and intervals between the events which are socially constructed and intersubjectively known by the members of the organisation.
2. There are events which are indicators, bench marks or signifiers of a period for certain activities.
3. The events in the trajectories are contingent.

4. The degree of contingency is recognised by those who are users of these trajectories.

5. There is a variety of temporal units such as those based on time counting systems, e.g. weeks, and those which are related to cosmic time and are mythical. Nevertheless, these are periodic courses imposed upon an on-going phenomenon.

6. There are identifiable phases within these temporal units which are interpreted and labelled subjectively and explain the individual's experience of time. For instance people talk about surprising, exciting or memorable events (Gurvitch, 1964). There is diversity and co-existence of times.

7. There are also "time frames" oriented to the changing pasts and futures within an errupting present (as Georg-Brose, 1982). The past events are objective, concrete realms and are used for temporal ordering. These time frames are embedded in everyday practices (as Giddens, 1981; Clark, 1984).

8. The elements of these configurations (the frames, units, phases) are continually edited and reconstructed by the members of the collectivity.

9. Some individuals will occupy the role of time keepers and thus will search for signifiers and references within the repertoire of configurations to the present events.

It has been shown that these rules are embedded in the everyday sense-making activities of non-industrial societies.

"TIME" IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL THEORIES

Various ways exist in which the conception of time is utilised, in the studies of management and organisation. Time in these studies is chiefly used as a phrase and severed from its experiential, existential properties.

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There are prescriptive studies of management which refer to the "time-span of discretion in a job" which implies the existence of a "maximum period of time" (that is the clock time) "during which the use of discretion is authorised and expected" (Jacques, 1970: 21). Some studies of organisation have pursued an "over time", "longitudinal" study of cases of decision-making (e.g. Hickson et al, 1984). References have been made to the necessity of considering the time contexts with regard to the strategy-making process (e.g. Pettigrew, 1977), by which the researcher is required to regard the life span of the decision process. There are studies of organisations which have examined the regularities, linkages and relationships among a set of variables. The resultant theories are expected to hold true despite their disregard of the temporal dimension. For example, the Aston Programmes (e.g. Pugh et al, 1976) which were studies of organisational structures. These have considered organisation as a homogeneous entity through its functions and over time (Clark, 1978). Thus, the structural features of the organisation remain unchanged. In essence, the Aston study is time-free. However, its principal investigators have observed that "longitundinal studies (of organisational actions) struggle to describe change against the calender". The consequent conceptualisation will be inadequate when analysed with regard to "longer cycles or trends". The common characteristic of these studies is their conception of time as a unitary framework.

The study of management was largely developed in the early twentieth century within the context of American capitalism and the linking of education and capitalism in the training of engineers as corporate reformers (Urry, 1978). Within this context the pragmatic theorising of engineering evolved into management sciences, where prescriptions developed on the basis of theoretical principles as a means to identify conditions under which managers may

optimisethe use of all resources. For instance, network based management systems PERT and CPM have been developed on such grounds.

The theoreticians in the management sciences school are pre-occupied with developing theories which are aimed at providing solutions to everyday administrative problems. Their approach is based on identification and definition of organisational objectives, like profitability, or higher productivity and efficiency. Then the researcher looks for regularities in relationships and accordingly identifies a set of causal, intervening and end variables on the basis of which a typical model may be developed. Furthermore, certain performance measures and means for the achievement of these objectives are prescribed. The existing working practices are examined against the prescribed models to diagnose any organisational ailment. One basic assumption in these theorisings is that organisational actions are goal directed/oriented (e.g. the Carnegie school).

The problem-solving approach of the management sciences originates in the development of operation research models in the immediate post-war years. Problems are approached on the basis of a feasibility study method. That is to say a set of hypotheses are produced on which basis data is collected. Alternative courses of action are suggested and examined according to the obtained data and known causal relationships. In this process, time is treated as a calculable item which can be divided into equal units. These units are then used as the basis for comparison of performance in different phases. As a matter of clarification such activities as were carried out in one of the firms which was studied (i.e. Rivet Ltd., Case II) will be considered here. In this Company there was a growing concern among the managers for the discrepancies which were found between the actual volume of stock of rivets and recorded figures. This discrepancy was queried by the Director and the need for investigation into the operations was hence identified.

The appointed inspector (a marketing management student) started his inquiry by measuring the production and stock levels at different time intervals; between t_p (when produced), t_q (before sent to platers) and t_i (when loaded and sent to clients). In order to provide some grounds for comparison of these levels, recording took place during both day and night shifts. Different speculations were developed on the basis of evidence presented by this investigation. Thus it was suggested that the problem was caused by the employees in charge of the recording not being precise in measuring the volume of steel which was being put into the system. In addition some problems were identified with the recording of the produced items. However, inaccurate recording of the volume of stocks at certain time intervals did not explain the underlying problem. It provided a starting point. The use of time (units of clock time) was obstrusive as it concealed the conflict of interests between the day shift employees, the foreman and the night shift workers. However, a computerised recording system was suggested in order to ease the problem but the discrepancy question remained unresolved.

The point is that management sciences do use the concept of "events" yet they equate "events" with activities. Consider the function of PERT as an action planning tool for managers; it identifies in sequence the related activities that must occur to accomplish the set objectives. What planners are expected to do first is to decide how the job or project is to be done. The next step is to develop a schedule. Scheduling involves estimating the time taken by each activity which will be carried out for the completion of the job. The significance of using PERT as a management system lies in its capacity to help managers use their judgement to estimate the range of time for completion of the job and avoid possible setbacks.

The concept of time as used in PERT is in its unfolded sense. Time estimates for each activity accordingly range from optimistic to pessimistic. These estimates are the bases for determining the uncertainties involved and the probability that the expected "events" will occur as planned. Note that, as was previously mentioned, events here imply "activities". The time estimates are revised every now and then to change the rate of time use. The accuracy of time estimates is important to the management systems.

Furthermore, the impact of these atemporal approaches of management sciences has been twofold; firstly, upon the theorising of management, and secondly upon the orientation of management education. The core of management education has accordingly been to enhance the effectiveness of decision-making processes by creating measurable and computational variables and time as a scarce resource which cannot be stored or purchased has been one of them. The application of clock time to work and discipline has also been attributed to management sciences. This approach finds its roots in the post-industrial revolution, the period during which factory work developed. Also, according to Thompson (1967), between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries there were significant changes in the apprehension of time. The contrast between nature's time and clock time could be noticed in the extent that people's lives were influenced.

Thompson (1967) has suggested that "different notations of time" are presented by different work situations and their natural rhythms. As the invisible hands of the markets and the visible hands of the managers have become involved in the work processes, it has become less possible to disregard clock time. But for some communities such as those in fishing areas, there are only limited marketing and administrative activities carried out and the application of clock time to the

activities of members of these communities seems irrelevant. Furthermore, as it has been discussed, some anthropological studies (e.g. Gearing, 1954; Evans-Pritchard, 1940) have shown that for people in non-industrial societies the passage of time through a day is reflected in a succession of tasks. Yet there can be periods of intense working followed by periods of relaxation, irregularities which are related to tasks at hand.

However, the Industrial Revolution, according to Thompson, marked the start of employed labour. It necessitated the allocation of roles and the introduction of discipline in employee-employer relationships. The task-orientation of a farming community was changed to timed labour. Thus in industrialised societies the factory owners, entrepreneurs and capitalists determined the minimum and maximum limits of speed (pace) for each tasks and the time to be taken for each job. These measurements were also used as models in the design of the layout of the factories and places of equipment, machinery, production scheduling, etc. by operations managers. Ergonomics as the study of environmental and physical conditions was used for standardising human movement thus increasing the efficiency of the employees in the office. This technique developed on the basis of the assumptions underlying scientific management. The scientific assumptions about temporal and spatial characteristics of the structures of the relationships between people were, however, challenged by the "Human Relations" school of thought in the 1950's for de-humanising work.

It has been asserted that the conception of time utilised by the management sciences and scientific management school is that of the homogeneous time and of the clock. Time-reckoning systems thus developed have considered sequences and adopted a particular concept of duration. In addition some researchers have developed a conceptualisation of work organisations as "temporal inventory"

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(Moore, 1963; Clark, 1978). The management sciences have developed techniques for the study of spatio-temporal aspects of organisational resources.

"TIME" IN STUDIES OF MANAGERIAL WORK

There are two major questions which can be applied to concepts of time used in existing studies of managerial work: how are these concepts utilised in these studies and to what extent can such usage be assumed to illustrate the "real" image of managers' work?

The empirical generalisations about managerial work; the new orthodoxy in management theorising have been used by researchers in the critique of the prescriptive theorising of management sciences. It is evident from the review of the contemporary literature on managerial work that the key time dimension in the main empirical studies (for example Carlson , 1951; Burns, 1954; Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1976, etc.) has been the clock. Specifying the duration of managerial activities has been at the core of these studies since 1951. Inductive research into managerial work, i.e. systematic analyses of what managers do through the use of the "diary" method was initially carried out by Carlson (1951).

Carlson studied nine Swedish managing directors by asking the managers to record various aspects of their day-to-day activities - duration, place, people - on a pre-classified form (time diary). Using this method he found that managing directors have long working hours; a finding which in fact contrasts with Horn & Lupton's (1965) study of middle managers. According to Mintzberg (1973) this difference can be attributed to the lower degree of specialisation at the executive level of management.

Carlson's study set the pattern for other diary and activity studies. Stewart (1967) has studied a large number of managers using diary methods. Her main focus has been to illustrate the variations in managerial work. She has argued that the use of a pre-coded diary form will illustrate the "content" of the jobs of managers; that is, what activities are undertaken and for what purpose. The term "purpose" here implies the kind of questions which have been intiated. The questions are classified with regard to classical theories of the function of management (Mintzberg, 1975). Other diary studies such as Burns (1957), Horn & Lupton (1965), Dubin & Spray (1964), have focused upon how middle managers spend their time. Diary studies have mainly produced "time-spending models" of managerial work, yet have had a great impact upon the issue of management of time.

Other studies of managerial work have used two observational techniques: that is, 'activity sampling', in which the researcher takes a note of the manager's activities at random time intervals, and 'structured observation' in which the researcher fills in the diary pad instead of the manager. For example, Mintzberg (1971, 1973) has used structured observation to study five chief executive officers. He has developed a set of categories during and after the observation. The purpose of each "event", its duration, and its place have been observed and recorded by Mintzberg. Here the term "event" implies "activity".

The findings of the diary and observational studies emphasise the lack of repetition, and a high degree of fragmentation and variety in managerial work. The characteristics and content of managerial work are portrayed in terms of roles which are similar to the classicist classification.

The diary and observational studies, as empirical accounts of managerial work, seem to have considered the character of time as unproblematic. Their

investigations and findings have developed within the unitary framework of clock time. The point is, the attributes of clock time, its duration and sequence are attractive for studying what managers do, yet its even flow, being free from events, being precise and quantifiable, limits its use in the analysis of what managers are actually doing.

Thus time has been treated inadequately in various studies of managerial work or processes. There are references to time pressures, time management, and time spent in meetings which all contain the chronological codes of the clock time. The decision-making model postulated by the Carnegie school, for example, is confined to clock time pressures upon the decision-makers. These pressures, i.e. short time-spans or deadlines for projects, are identified as the reason for the parochial searches undertaken by decision-makers.

The fallacy that managers are over-burdened with work due to the pressure of time has led to the mass production of packages of self-help methods for managers outlining how they can best utilise their time. The clock time provides the organising basis for such exercises. There is no doubt that the application of clock time may have significance in terms of the deployment of resources, but the use of its attributes solely, denies the integrating function of time.

Furthermore, studies of managerial work and time spending models attempt to illustrate the extent that managers feel tied down by the constraints they perceive in their work surroundings at the time. The issue which is disregarded, hence, is that the episodes in a manager's working day have structuring functions. Therefore the manager may peg his/her day around certain key structuring episodes which facilitate the use of the time-budget. A reinterpretation of Mintzberg's study for instance can be that scheduled meetings

and tours are the structuring episodes (also Cullen, 1972) as the analysis of the activities of the director in Rivet Ltd, discussed later (see Case II) will also show. For some months this Director took over the responsibilities of the production manager who was demoted at the time. A visit to the shop floor in the early hours of the day and meetings with the foremen and the marketing manager in the afternoon, were the main episodes and would determine the main feature in the scenario for the day. However, there were other episodes which were "flexible" in the sense that the Director could shift them around during the day, for example, checking the computer print-outs of the budget figures for the monthly staff meetings. Some episodes were time-filling or unplanned; for instance, he would make a visit to the Company's other factory site, to meet the Personnel Director. Most of these episodes were initiated by the Director's analysis and account of what was going on at the time.

The treatment of time in the "time-spending" models is explicit; it is rather easy to monitor the time that an activity occurs, its duration or even its frequency. For example, the average duration of a managerial activity ranging from mail processing to talking to others, according to these studies, has been between 48 seconds and 2 minutes. Stewart has found that the managers could work uninterrupted on average for only 30 minutes. Such studies are meant to emphasise the fragmentary characteristic of managerial work (Stewart, 1975). The question which is raised accordingly is how can managers lengthen these durations? Or how can they free themselves from interruptions? Durations and frequencies of activities tell us nothing about the dynamics of managerial behaviour and its motivational basis. For example, Mintzberg (1973) has observed that 59% of the manager's time in the working week is allocated to scheduled meetings (with each meeting lasting on average for 60 minutes), and that 22% of the manager's time is spent on desk work. Stewart's studies (1967, 1976) have

shown that managers are alone for only 34% of their working time and that the rest of their time is mainly consumed by their informal communication. These figures show managers' preference for verbal media. However, no explanation is given for such a preference.

It is argued in this thesis that meetings are arenas where managers seek consensus and the members of the managerial role-set become victims of "groupthink" (as Janis, 1972). However, managers may find ways of avoiding such episodes. For example, it will be shown how the Production Manager in Rivet Ltd. (Case II) avoided the scheduled meetings to a large extent (cf. Mintzberg, 1973); he was frequently on sick leave around the time of these meetings.

The existing empirical generalisations about managerial work have therefore regarded time in its Newtonian sense; separate from the events. It is therefore contented that studies of managerial work ought to be located in times; where events rather than activities are considered as the key time dimension. There are some aspects related to this contention which need to be explored. First of all, events are of significance in an individual's everyday life, and are used to reduce the amibiguities in their surroundings. The frame of reference for these evetns is time. In this way an individual's experience of time will describe some events as recurrent or periodic. Moreover, the individuals' notion of time also varies according to the context of their activities; take for example the notion of time held by the actors in different occupations: doctors, teachers, students, managers, etc. Each occupation (profession) has its typical structuring episodes and time dimensions.

Equally, as Cullen (1978) has argued, time must be treated as a path which orders events and separates cause and effect. Thus, the present situation or behaviour

must be explained in the light of the events of the past. This will demonstrate the motivation behind the activities of the actors. Hence, regarding managerial activities a distinction must be drawn between deliberated and routinised activities. It is noted that the dynamics of behaviour can be sought in premeditated action. In this case time separates the cause of action from its effect.

Many examples of premeditated actions can be found in everyday life such as when people change jobs, purchase a house, etc., these decisions will not be made on impulse. This argument can be applied to managers and their fragmented patterns of work. This is to stress that the conduct of the individual manager is purposeful and that the purpose can only be identified by monitoring the reason (or motives) the action. However, arguing for consideration of the purposeful behaviour of managers in an analysis of managerial work may not necessarily imply that there are defined goals of which actors are conscious. It is one way of illustrating that there is continuity in managerial activities.

Deliberate action may therefore be in the form of initiation of discontinuities, or disjunctures in some events and processes, or in the form of searching for such points. There are intended as well as unintended consequences for such actions. In the study of a set of actors involved in the design and planning for a general hospital (see Case IV), it will be shown how they intended their actions to modify the patterns of thought in a well-established organisational culture, in order to enhance their opportunites for climbing up the hierarchial ladder. Their public explanation of what they were doing was set against the background of their routine functions, however. This is also to say that the reasons given by these actors represented the characteristics of their specific settings and were inferred from their shared repertoire of reasons.

With regard to routinised managerial activities, an absence of rationalisation is assumed. In other words the characteristics and procedures for fulfillment of the activities (tasks) are taken-for-granted by the managers. Activities are referred to as routinised by managers if and when their outcomes are predictable and often managers use the term "routine" to imply that particular activities are of less strategic significance.

Analysing the fragmentary and varied pattern of manager's activities on a day-to-day basis conceals the premeditation involved in managers' behaviour. Daily mail-processing, attending meetings, etc. are ways by which managers keep up-to-date with happenings. The everyday routine is also a manifestation of long-term choices and perceived opportunities, as well as constraints.

Perhaps it is more appropriate to interpret the time that managers allocate to tours or spend in meetings as a means by which they exercise control over situations and logistic questions (cf. Mintzberg, 1973). Indeed managerial work cannot be adequately analysed by arguing that it is fragmented, or that there are multiple interruptions. Within an atemporal perspective, where snapshots of managerial activities are developed, the intentional aspects of the work will be displayed by fragmentary patterns. Once its temporal context is recognised there will be seen to be more continuity. This is because the temporal spread of past-present-future will show that there are underlying mechanisms which shape managerial activities, their purpose and direction.

The on-going nature of managerial work may be highlighted through the analysis of the cycles of events and their causal relationships. The structuring function of

time is embedded in events. Recurring situations in which managers become involved through their actions also imply continuity. As regards the episodes in the manager's working day, clock time is a normative illustration of the start and finish of each episode. This is misleading since episodes may be interrupted but not disrupted. Therefore, studying managerial work should include analysis of continuity through discontinuity using Giddens' (1979) terms.

It has been asserted here that incorporation of the aspect of time into studies of managerial work is central to understanding its nature. It is argued that studies of management have mistakenly considered organisations as "temporal inventories", when they should analyse organisations as "time structures" (as Clark, 1982). Accordingly, it is asserted that clock time is only one of a myriad of heterogeneous time-reckoning systems which are used by the organisational members, in their sense-makings, and thus their organisational activities.

TIME-RECKONING SYSTEMS: THE ROLE OF CONTINGENT PERIODICITIES

The following argument is an attempt to locate the analysis of managerial work in times. The attempt is made to demonstrate that the embeddedness of managerial work in events of a contingent character must be placed at the centre of analysis. The argument is mainly based upon Clark's examination of "time-reckoning" systems within various settings. It will commence by explaining the capability of managers to accumulate knowledge about the temporal-embeddedness of organisational decision-making. The activities of some sets of managers will be reviewed with regard to recurrent events. The argument will be directed towards the concept of "seasons" in managerial work, thus it will unfold the seasonal characteristics of the work of managers.

Various examples of time-reckoning systems and their components have been revealed in the studies of the life-styles of non-industrial people which have been undertaken, e.g. Evans-Pritchard's studies of Nuer (1940). Attempts have been made by some researchers (e.g. Clark, 1978, 1982) to find such temporal embeddedness and seasonal task orientations in industrial organisations. Clark has argued that the assumption of total reliance on the clock time in capitalist societies has prevented people from considering change and event trajectories is incorrect (cf. Toffler, 1971). As a point of departure for studying times and structuration in organisation, Clark contends that industrial organisations can be characterised by temporal patterns similar to non-industrial people.

In his studies of some large establishments, Clark has shown that a high proportion of employees in these organisations become used to certain ways that situations can be predicted and that these predictions are organised into typologies. The typologies contain event-times, events which signify a specific situation and the relevant, specific course of action which should be taken accordingly; that is in terms of changes in time periods of activities of members' role relationships and deployment of resources. For example, in any organisation there are units of production which have defined (known) time periods in "everyday" situations. When an innovation period is recognised by members of the organisation, new groups are set up with a different production time period. The employees are knowledgeable about these organisational time-tabling activities. Furthermore, there are members of the organisation who are "boundary spanners" (as Aldrich, 1979), who look for discontinuities and are in a position to identify the disjunctures. They are "strategic time-reckoners" and they assume that role. The disjunctures are searched for irrespective of the items on the existing portfolios.

In addition there are members of the organisation who look for continuity which makes their activities take on a tactical character. Search for continuity is related to application of routinised practices and maintaining the context of their existing portfolios. For example, they will look for seasons or recurrent characteristics.

So, what managers do is to build gradually specific systems, the inputs to which are some selectively identified events. The selection is grounded empirically in the contexts of managers' activities. The events are placed in trajectories or sequences. The event-based systems are continually utilised by managers as they attempt to understand different configurations of events.*

II

It is suggested in this thesis that an additional focus for studying managerial work can be one based upon the examination of "heterogeneous time-reckoning systems" (as Clark, 1982) in organisations. This focus emphasises the identification of those organisational members whose roles include constructing and editing of time-reckoning systems. A brief review of these systems which are found underlying the activities of some marketing managers and other actors in various industrial settings and have been studied by Clark (1976, 1978, 1982) is given below. This review will illustrate the extent that managerial decision-making co-varies with seasonal levels of economic activities.

Clark, in his studies of two groups of marketing managers in a large British

Foot Note

* For the rules included in the systems see the beginning of this Chapter.

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knitwear firm (1978), has identified the development of time-reckoning systems on the basis of periodic and contingent events.

These groups of marketing managers were geographically separated. The group who worked at the headquarters, in Acorn were older, non-graduates and had many years of experience in detecting periodic/seasonal events in their semi-fashion side of the industry. On the other hand the marketing specialists at Harp Mill, the new subsidiary were recent recruits, graduates in social science with limited experience and familiarity with the seasonal characteristics.

The assessment of the levels of sales, within defined time intervals (for example, normal seasons), was at the core of Acorn management responsibilities. Two other groups also had access in Acorn to the outcome of these analyses; the executives and the production managers. Decisions made by these groups regarding sales targets and production levels mirrored their confidence in the marketing specialists' projections.

The projections of the marketing managers at Acorn, also set the background for the variations in the labour process and practices and the activities of the production department in particular. The anticipation of a period of low level of sales was taken as a signal for a set of cut-down exercises. These would include cutting down overtime work in the Production Department, for instance, or the adoption of cost-saving schemes, limits would also be set on the recruitment level, etc. Conversely, projection of high volume of sales would imply more room for actions; less concern for cost-saving schemes, increase in overtime, etc.

The characteristics of the knitwear industry would determine a third possible projection. This is an industry which has some seasonal characteristics in its

activities. For instance, weather conditions as well as fashion determine changes in the operations. Types of styles produced and material used between successive seasons in the year may vary. The marketing managers at Acorn would also anticipate a change in customers' preferences and tastes. This kind of projection would change the role of the design department. Reinforcement would be put in from other departments in terms of financial and human resources, to assist and accelerate the production of new styles.

According to Clark daily management meetings were initiated with regard to the sales figures of previous days, and the comparative day in the previous year. A wide range of factors were considered while analysing the figures - such as weather conditions, fluctuations in the market due to that particular season's shades and colours, the state of the economy and so on.

The stock of information that these managers possesssed also contained hearsay from a variety of sources about the possible variations in the production activities and supply of raw materials, etc. These were often the shared side of the information processing and disseminating activities. However, the individual managers were also involved in matching their own experiences of events, their duration and sequences, with the shared trajectories. On some occasions their decisions were made on the basis of this valuation and they turned out to be incorrect (as Clark, 1978).

According to Clark (1978), the Acorn men seemed to possess an extensive and appropriate repertoire of sets of event trajectories which they used to reduce uncertainties in their surroundings. Accordingly, within a period of some days or weeks:

(a) they would look forward to upcoming events;

Figure 4.1 Time orientations in managerial planning: Acorn - on Spring season

Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

SOURCE: Clark P.A. (1976)

(b)   they would look at the present situation to see if it was as predicted;

(c)   they would edit the past definition of particular situations.

The marketing projections thus set the boundaries for the choices available to those who were in decision-making and executive roles. The choices as identified by the marketing managers were considered with regard to the projects for next season. For instance, in terms of style, they recognised that they could either continue with existing styles (i.e. of the same season of the previous year or present fashion) or shift to a new style range. These perceived options thus determined the choices which were seen to be available on the production side and it was therefore recognised that they could:

(a)   expand production with regard to the selected options,

or   (b)   reduce production, etc.

This is an over-simplified version of the marketing and production interface at Acorn and the managers' "time-reckoning" activities. However, it reveals some of the main features of the process. The point is that the employees at Acorn were aware of the seasonal variations in the knitwear industry and also knew that the management patterns of control co-varied with such changes.

The awareness of the marketing managers at Acorn may be explained by the concept of "organisational imprinting" propounded by Stinchcombe (1965). The concept implies that any organisation during its foundation will be under pressure from its environment. These environmental pressures involve screening what forms the organisation is likely to take in order to survive. But more important are the "organisation structures, processes and norms" which are "imprinted" during the founding period and which will persist even if the environmental

conditions change. Thus the "imprinted" norms at Acorn were different from those at Harp Mill as they were created at different times and under different types of forming pressures.

The founding conditions of Harp Mill were different from Acorn in terms of the temporal indicators which were institutionalised in the first few years of its establishment. As a result of this, certain critical contingency elements were absent in their repertoire, i.e. no allowance was made for the unexpected and surprise times. For example, at one point, the marketing managers at Acorn anticipated a shift in style, taking into account the longer waves in their industry. Employees from various parts were re-designated, as members of an innovation group. During the same period the managers at Harp Mill anticipated continuity in style, and as a result they expanded production, yet in fact, their sales figures dropped. Clark has concluded that these actors failed to activate the appropriate structural arrangements because it was not included in their repertoire. They had established their trajectories of events in a period when there was a low degree of variety in the surroundings, thus they could not identify the changes.

On the bases of the activities of the marketing managers in Acorn and Harp Mill, Clark claims that the time-reckoning systems utilised by them were both heterogeneous and strategic. They were heterogeneous because the temporal units and intervals used to establish "bench marks" were diverse and uneven in pace. Moreover, the time-reckoning knowledge was specific, local and understood by only a few members.

Clark's observation of the activities of marketing managers in the knitwear firm and other organisations support his proposed point of departure for studying the

organisation. So he has suggested that the existence of temporal differentiation is a normal feature of any organisation. To illustrate this point his study of two contrasting situations, sugar beet processing and can making in Britain, will be examined next.

According to Clark, in the sugar beet industry in the UK, the factories operated as processing plants (i.e. they process the beet) for only 100 to 120 days in the year from late September to the following February (due to harvesting schedules). This period was referred to as the "campaign" period. For the remainder of the year the factory was actually dismantled and rebuilt, by the same labour force. Each period had its own structural arrangements. The time frame of a year thus contained two sets of "contrasting" recurring activities. All the factories opened at the same hour and on the same day. "Deadlines" as such were set by the headquarters. The "campaign" period was one of great excitment for the employees, as it included a number of significant events, for instance, the "unilateral" allocation of employees to the various positions on the job ladder in the factory.

The set-up period was an important transitional period, marked by the managers' anticipation of changes in the relationships amongst the employees and between them and their families. Throughout the campaign period, increasing boredom was felt among operators and an increasing sense of control was experienced by the managers, Clark has claimed.

The "off-season" period (February onwards) was another key transitional period, as the factory closed down and employees were dispersed. However, there were also variations in the nature of activities within and between the campaign and off-season periods, which arose either directly or indirectly from weather conditions

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and other natural elements.

In summary, according to Clark, the sugar beet factories possessed two main distinctive "structural poses" (as Gearing, 1954) in their repertoire and therewere recognised rules for switching from one to the other. These arrangements had strategic significance as regards their managerial practices.

The situation in the can-making industry in the UK was more typical for organisational units which experience "contingent periodicities" (see Figure 4.2). The form and timing of the production operations were much less predictable than in sugar beet factories. Demand was uncertain and more contingent upon weather conditions, the hours and intensity of sunshine and the time period required for crops to ripen, etc. Usually the cans could not be stored in large enough amounts to provide a large "temporal buffering" for the factory. In can-making factories, like the sugar beet, the employees' involvement in the operation of the system co-varied with the seasonal events. Furthermore, the employee-management relationships were shaped by the events in the year. Thus there were explicit and implicit negotiations going on all the time in the can-making factories which changed the frontiers of control throughout the year (as Clark, 1976).

In general Clark has argued that the activities of the actors in these organisations included defining and monitoring of various events. An example of the definition of an event which was shared by various employees in the sugar beet factory was "start-up" day (i.e. the commencement of operations). Such events, however, are different from the activities or interactions to which Katz & Kahn* (1966:20) have

Foot Note

In their depiction of the characteristics of open systems Katz & Kahn have described "systems as cycles of events". Here events imply "the activities of the energy exchange", or the product of the interaction between the system and its environment.

Figure 4.2   Can making: the seasonal sources of uncertainty

Aston University

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Here Clark has shown how the can-making industry experiences uncertain demands arising from the rates at which crops ripen and the extensiveness of sunshine in Britain

SOURCE: Clark (1982)

referred.

According to Clark the activities of managers as described in these case studies illustrate the ways organisational members become competent in "utilising a large and varied collection of time-reckoning rules" (also Giddens, 1980). These managerial "time-reckoning rules" contain certain elements, which are as follows:

1. There are event trajectories which have defined intervals and durations. These trajectories are intersubjectively constructed and managers are socialised into them. For instance an anticipated increase in demand may be interpreted either as indicating the need for an increase in production during the next period or the need for maintaining the existing production level. These trajectories are known to those in the boundary spanning roles.

2. There are events which are used as bench marks and are remembered by all members. For example, as will be discussed later, one of the consequences of the steel workers' strike in the mid 1970's was a shortage in the supply of raw materials for Rivet Ltd. (Case II) which affected their activity levels. This event was considered in the process of production planning by the Company.

3. There are temporal units ranging from stable ones: such as weeks, months, or the time taken to produce the trial sample of a product, or the time taken to prepare design specifications, to ambiguous units such as the time taken by a new product to win the trust of the users.

4. There are identifiable but unpredictable phases within the stable and ambiguous temporal units which managers label as "unexpected", such as

breakdown of machinery.

5. There is a spectrum of time frames oriented to the changing pasts and future within an errupting present. Managers make references to past events upon which they construct an image of the future. For example, as shown later, the managers in Rivet Ltd. (Case II) referred to the disloyalty of the distributors in previous years and anticipated their future moves on the basis of what had happened.

6. The variations in the outcomes of the time-reckoning systems determine the degree of editing and constructing of the elements which takes place.

7. Some members of the managerial role-set occupy time-keeping roles. These "time-keepers" continuously search for reference points within the multiple systems which can be linked to the emerging present events.

There are two main points to be noted regarding these time-reckoning rules. The analysis of the spectrum of time by Gurvitch (1964) and the evidence from Clark's study, demonstrate that these rules and their components firstly are not so stable, as it has been implied in anthropological studies and secondly are intersubjectively known by the organisation members.

Indeed, the diversity of time-reckoning rules originates in the diversity of times which Gurvitch believes exist in societies. In fact Gurvitch has developed a typology of these diverse yet co-existing times. However, the clock time and its metaphors are not significant in his typology. These typologies have much to offer in the identification and analysis of varying situations and towards reaching an understanding of the discontinuities of production and re-production of

structures.

It is maintained here therefore that time-reckoning rules are intersubjectively known to the people/managers within an organisation and that individuals are continuously involved in constituting and re-constituting segments of their experiences. This constituting activity is temporal. Yet time-reckoning involves interacting individuals who have constructed their own subjective meanings of events and their temporal features. Their interactions produce a set of "consensually validated" rules (as Weick, 1979).

Adopting a "time-reckoning rules" perspective is to emphasise certain aspects as follows:

(a)   that there are seasonal/periodic variations in the managerial experience of time;

(b)   that these seasonal/periodic events are of contingent character; and

(c)   that these events become sedimented in the everyday managerial practices.

Past studies of labour strategies in the British motor industry have also demonstrated the periodic and contingent character of the events located in the time-reckoning systems. Friedman's study of the car plants in Coventry (Friedman, 1982) has shown the existence of periodic switches in the management strategies of control. Variations in demand and supply of the cars formed the basis for the management's expectations with regard to future variations in the market, which in turn determined their behavioural patterns and preferred styles. According to Friedman, a decline in demand in motor car markets would mean less responsibility and autonomy for the workers, and a move towards

strategies of "direct control" (1982). Although Friedman's study is not directly related to the study of time-reckoning systems in industrial organisations, it signifies the point that there are certain determining events underlying managerial strategies.

In the sugar beet case study, the unilateral appointment of the employees to particular posts on the job hierarchy, and in the case of the knitwear firm the redesignation of various groups to a new innovation group, were of a periodic and strategic nature. It can be argued that these appointments affected logistic decisions and determined the sales performance in general. Furthermore, the time-reckoning rules with their assumed implications for the organisation's human resource demonstrated how the internal labour market was used by managers for restructuring of the labour process and safeguarding certain characteristics of the workforce, thus maintaining its reliability and stability. In other words, time-reckoning rules operated as control mechanisms in this process.

Clark has referred to other case studies which conceptualise the periodic character of certain events, but where the periodicities have often been depicted and measured against the calendar, i.e. homogeneous time. For example, Turner et al (1967) in their study of industrial relations in the motor industry have considered the seasonal variations in the output of different firms in relation to the frequency of strikes experienced by these firms. They have plotted the volume of output and frequency of strikes against the calendar months, for four periods from 1921-1964. Not surprisingly they have shown accordingly that in the car industry there were variations in the output of various firms which could be attributed to differences in the number of working days in each month. For example, the production output was lower approaching the annual holiday shutdown in July-August. Also the isolated holidays in December, March and April

affected the monthly output. The strikes which occurred in major firms also affected monthly production output of the industry. Figures show that variations occurred in the number of strikes between months, with the "peak frequency" occurring between April-June (p.122). Turner et al (1967) also found an inverse relationship between the number of strike days and the output. Thus the number of strike days was highest during the months in which production was below the "peak level", and declined as the output reached a maximum in December. They have concluded that "strikes were the major influence on production fluctuations" (p.127). Moreover, types of strike showed seasonal variations with the disputes over wages and redundancies showing marked variation. For instance, strikes over redundancy were more frequent in August and after the shut-down when the reorganisation of work took place.

These case studies have shown that the grip of some periodic events on managerial practices can be very strong. The identified time-reckoning rules become sedimented, vis-a-vis managers' activities and their internalising of event trajectories. Sometimes this sedimentation takes place to such an extent that the detection of new events is postponed and interruptions are not identified.

Sedimented time-reckong rules indicate the tendency of the organisational members to maintain the momentum of their organisational activities. Indeed, the changes in the elements of time-reckoning rules, that is, in durations and sequence of events, have implications for the adaptive behaviour of organisations. Thus, it may be argued that a failure to recognise such changes can result in a decline in organisational performance.

Moreover, founding conditions (as Dill, 1962; Clark, 1976) impinge upon the type of rules retained; the way they are altered and the type of adaptive behaviour

Figure 4.3 A Comparison of Time-reckoning Systems

Homogeneous Time-Reckoning Systems	Heterogenous Time-Reckoning Systems
. Uniformity of pace	. non-unformity of pace
. divisibility into equal equal size units	. divisibility into variable size units
. possibility of culminating units	. units not cumulative
. units recognisable by large population	. units known to local people only
. absence of contingency	. units are of contingent character
. absence of evaluation of times	. past, present, future important for interpretation of times and evaluation
. disregard for past and future	

adopted, as was in the case of Harp Mill. The managers at Harp Mill had developed a repertoire of responses which contained fewer configurations of events; hence fewer imprinted templates for reference, since in the period of its foundation there was a low degree of variety in the firm's environments.

Clark has shown that time-reckoning systems combine the elements of homogeneous time systems (i.e. calendar) with event-based elements. Thus he has defined time-reckoning systems as "shared sets of rules in which identifiable sequences of anticipated events are constituted into socially prescribed blocks which are given a durational interpretation" (Clark, 1978: 402). Given this definition, the next question is: how are these systems recognised, or in other words, what analytic tool, or analytic unit, is appropriate for explicating these systems?

III

Clark has suggested that the concept of "structural pose" (as Gearing, 1954) can be an appropriate analytic unit for examining time-reckoning systems. The concept was initially introduced by Gearing in his anthropological study of an American Indian tribal village. Gearing's study challenges the orthodox conceptualisation of social structures and refutes the common conception that human community can be characterised as a single set of roles and organised groups. The concept of "structural pose", thus draws attention to the point that there are multiple sets of roles and groups which appear and disappear according to the tasks at hand. In other words, there are rules which categorise a variety of situations as they occur and determine which members of the group(s) should take part in which categorised situation, and how their participation should be arranged. The notion of structural pose implies that collectivities are typically

capable of rearranging themselves to accomplish tasks. This is based upon a shared understanding of what operational arrangements and what arenas for decision-making exist and which actors are involved.

Gearing has observed that in the eighteenth century Cherokee village social structure was characterised by the rhythmic appearance and disappearance of four structural poses, e.g. ceremonial, hunting, wars. The villagers guided themselves by the set of relationships involved with one or the other of those poses throughout a year. There were signals that would evoke which pose was to be utilised. Recurrent tasks for each villager were also signals of certain relationships with others. These poses were event-related. Thus there were three types of events: events which were fixed at exact points in the year (e.g. new year in October), events which were variable within fixed seasons (e.g. ball games, hunting) and events which occurred at unpredictable times (e.g. clan revenges). The roles of the various sex and age groups were prescribed for each occasion.

Regarding organisations and their actors, the concept of structural poses draws attention to two major aspects: (a) that there are recurrent situations which cause actors accordingly to move in and out of relationships with others and (b) a repertoire of structural poses is thus developed and shared by the actors. On a similar basis Clark proposes the concept of "structural pose strategy" and argues that the repertoire of these poses is activated by strategically located time-keepers (Clark, 1978). He then adds that an organisation's repertoire of structural poses will contain pose strategies for:

- coping with general events on durational basis recognised by the members;
- detection of requirements for innovation;
- dealing with unexpected, unpredictable events.

Clark's thesis on the role of "time-reckoning systems" in the managerial process illustrates the failure of the existing management theorisings to grasp the temporal dimension of this process. The decision-making models depicted by various schools of thought have attributed managers' bounded rationality to their parochial search for alternative courses of action. Thereafter, they have disregarded the point that this search by managers may be initiated by a "strategic when-ness". Moreover, he has envisaged that in the existing perspectives on organisational phenomena such as structure and process, there is no account of contingent periodicities, as these theories have concentrated on the enduring features of organisations.

It may be noted that Clark's conception of "contingent periodicities" is similar to Schutz's conception of recipes. That is to say, the event trajectories become institutionalised and thus constitute the analytical tools for the actors. They are then used by the actors for reducing the equivocality in the surroundings. Just like recipes, the "contingent periodicities" are retrospectively developed.

Clark's notion of "structural pose strategy" has similar implications to Giddens' description of structure "as rules and resources" which are "recursively organised" (Giddens, 1984: 25). However, these two concepts may be differentiated regarding the emphasis which they give to the intentional dimension of organisational practices. Giddens' notion of "resources" illustrates this dimension clearly. Here, "resources" are the media for transformation of intentions (power) in the routine course of interactions. Therefore, they have authoritative and allocative capabilities which generate command over people and things (1979: 91, 93, 100). Accordingly Giddens' conception of "structure" is intended to emphasise the strategic conduct of the actors. Clark's description of time-reckoning systems is

apolitical; it shows the social construction and consensual validation of the elements of the these systems. He has not yet considered the motives and intentions of the actors in their locating of events in the trajectories; in their selection of events, etc.

According to Giddens intentionality is part of the routine conduct of the actor (or agency). That is to say, the actors (here managers) in their everyday practices, choose to take one course of action and not another. Regarding this contention, Clark's conception of time-reckoning systems and "structural pose strategy" can be criticised for its failure to address the question: how do some detected recurrent events become embedded in strategies. An underlying assumption, however, regarding the social construction of contingent periodicities, appears to be that there are shared goals and purposes within the organisation. Drawing on Karpik's contention (1978, 1981), it is argued here that in organisations there are shared means rather than ends. This point also emphasises the politickings of the actors and so the intentional dimension of managerial behaviour.

Clark's emphasis on the temporal dimension of organisational action is illustrated by the way he envisages an event trajectory is constituted. The organisational members frequently look backward with regard to the situation in here and now and edit the durational and periodic elements in the trajectory. This is "retrospective sense-making" in Schutz's terms. Also it illustrates, according to Clark the influence of the past upon organisational actions; that is, on the way the actors compare previous periodic events and the way chronological events are put on the trajectories.

It is argued here that "the past" can be constraining as well as enlightening. The past is constraining if the actors' past-loadedness is considered. Such loadedness

narrows down the scope for detection of new events, new periodicities or preparedness for innovation. For example, the marketing managers at Harp Mill perceived their business situation differently since they were loaded with a different set of past events and trajectories. Also as was previously mentioned, the founding conditions of the Harp Mill sub-system had inflicted similar boundaries. Clark has described the situation in terms of temporal differentiation and mechanisms which are included in the repertoire of the structural poses. The point is that the aspect of temporal differentiation can be unfolded by stressing the role of founding conditions in affecting the choices available to managers in their decision-making processes.

The past is thus an enlightening influence if the tactical time-reckoning activities of the actors are considered. In this respect, past influence may be described in terms of the rehearsal of a set of known scenarios which are taken from the organisation's repertoire of scenarios (recipes). This contention emphasises the continuity in organisational actions. "Continuity" here may be interpreted as an absence of any disjunctures and thus any need for edition or rearrangement of structural poses. However, it can be argued that edition of the existing poses, as was the case in Acorn, may not alter the basic analytical template for the actors. This aligns with Clark's assertion that there is continuity in managerial work. His theorising addresses the way organisations develop their adaptive behaviours, i.e. the mechanisms which result in the activation of appropriate structural poses. But, crucially, such adaptability implies absence of continuity, if it is considered within Aldrich's (1979) or Weick's (1979) organisational perspectives. If such a premise is accepted, the retained structural poses will work at odds with perceived variations in the situations.

Furthermore, the emphasis that Clark, in his earlier works (1976, 1978), has put on

the influence of the past on organisational actions and on continuity in the managing process, underplays the implications of disjunctures and discontinuities for the adaptation process. Indeed, any experience which imposes a disjuncture in managers' expectations and in so doing causes surprise, may also require scrutiny of the established scenarios (see also Figure 4.3). Yet managers may fail to recognise this need. There are other studies, however, which have illustrated the continuity in organisational practices in terms of organisation momentum; for example Miller (1981). According to Miller, the nature of organisations' interactions with their environment is like slow evolution. That is to say, an organisation's adaptive behaviour is directed towards preserving the existing momentum in the organisation's strategic stance. Miller argues that this situation, is often interpreted as "sluggishness" in an organisation's response to environmental pressures.

The question which may be raised here is to what extent can the concept of "structural pose strategy" explain the situation regarding merger of companies where the established patterns of thought which are possessed by either companies may be interrupted. Such a situation, for example, happened in the case of Rank and Toshiba Television partnership, although the merger of these two different corporations only lasted for three years (1978-1980). The British partner had emerged from the failure of the Amplion Radio in 1930. In later years as Bush Radio, it acquired a reputation for the quality and reliability of its products. Then the Company was taken over by the Rank Organisation. Rank's profit boom started in the late 1960's when they anticipated the growth in demand for colour TV's. In the early 1970's the Company reached its profit peak. The oil shock in this era however forced the Company to put restrictions on the availability of consumer credits. No contingency was allowed for this event. A major collapse in the market for electrical consumer goods followed.

The structural poses that the Company had developed, at the time of its founding and when there were limited strategic events to be considered, indeed constituted the bases for its failure to cope with the change in the market. The Company's poses could only deal with the home market and no thought was given by its managers to expansion in terms of overseas markets. The following presents a brief background to the founding conditions of these corporations. The Japanese side of the merger, Toshiba company, was founded in the late nineteenth century. The Company is known in Britain for its TV, and audio products. Toshiba witnessed the downfall of Rank Radio and since it needed a stronger base in the UK, it formed the merger with Rank in 1978.

Following the merger no drastic changes were introduced, contrary to the expectations of the employees. The sites of the Rank manufacturing plants were used. However, the financial situation of the new company did not improve and the merger was wound up in 1980. The reason given by Rank for pulling out was a recession in the sales of TV.

The appointed director* of the Company aimed at eliminating the traces of the managerial practices of the old company (that is Rank Company). He introduced a new philosophy which was contrary in many respects to Rank's, yet similar to Toshiba. This was termed working together with a recognised common purpose (MBO). This approach was assumed to be the way to save the ailing child of the merger. The MBO targets seem to have provided the control mechanisms in the process. However, whether this was the appropriate structural pose strategy is

Foot Note

* The management team were British.

another issue.

The case of Rank-Toshiba is significant with regard to the notion of the structural pose strategy. These companies had developed two contrasting repertoires of structural poses. Rank's repertoire developed during the early years of TV manufacturing and the boom of colour TV, in the late 1960's. The repertoire of structural poses for Toshiba included consumer-oriented as well as product diversification strategies. The Toshiba team in Japan and in the UK were continually monitoring the market and had systems for detecting signals about market potential. However, the activities of the Toshiba-Rank Company were mainly shaped by the repertoire possesed by Rank (having 70% of the shares). Japanese employees only worked for the engineering side. The new managing director's approach was to resist the continuity, i.e. to inactivate the structural poses of the Rank Company.

Considering the concept of "system", time-reckoning systems (TRS) are expected to give structure and order to their contents, i.e. the events. According to system thinking the concept of system implies boundaries. The boundary is the way the members, the users of the system, view their surroundings. Boundaries are created through the ideologies, understandings and experiences of the members. Identifying "time-reckoning systems" implies unfolding the ways the members of that setting think. Considering Clark's conception of "TRS" as against the more widespread conception of systems as having boundaries, the question remains as to the ways the boundaries are selected and hence, how the contingent periodicities are monitored and identified.

The repertoire of structural poses will include, according to Clark, pose strategies which deal both with the general events and with some specific events such as

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periods of innovation. These events are detected by boundary-spanners who have access to the repertoire. In describing the detection activities of the marketing managers, however, Clark has underplayed the individual manager's judgemental abilities, their organisational background and loadedness. Furthermore, it may be argued, that in terms of specific events such as the detection of requirements for innovation, there is the future aspect to be considered. Thus detection and planning activities take place in anticipation of and for the fulfillment of some desired outcome. They are also aimed at the reduction of uncertainty. Clark's contention considers such anticipation of future events, yet implies a limited time-horizon, since the detection is designed for planning and scheduling of production activities for the future season. However, here, the question of uncertainty resolution and judgemental abilities of the managers may be considered by arguing that the future is always unknown. Moreover, there are variations in the wider systems which the pose strategy may not allow for due to the conditions during the time of their establishment.

In summary, Clark's proposed notions of time-reckoning systems, contingent periodicities and structural pose strategies are crucial to the analysis of organisational actions. Yet in his conceptualisations, he has not discussed the analytical tools that organisational theorists or researchers can employ in order to recognise the poses, periodicities, etc. Also, with regard to his apolitical assumption that if managerial work is considered in its temporal dimension there appears to be more "continuity" than "fragmentation", he fails to resolve the question as to how such a dichotomy can highlight the underlying social structures which influence managerial behaviour.

Foot Note

* The case argument of the thesis which has been put forward in Chapters Three and Four is summarised in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4   Factors affecting Survival of an Organisation
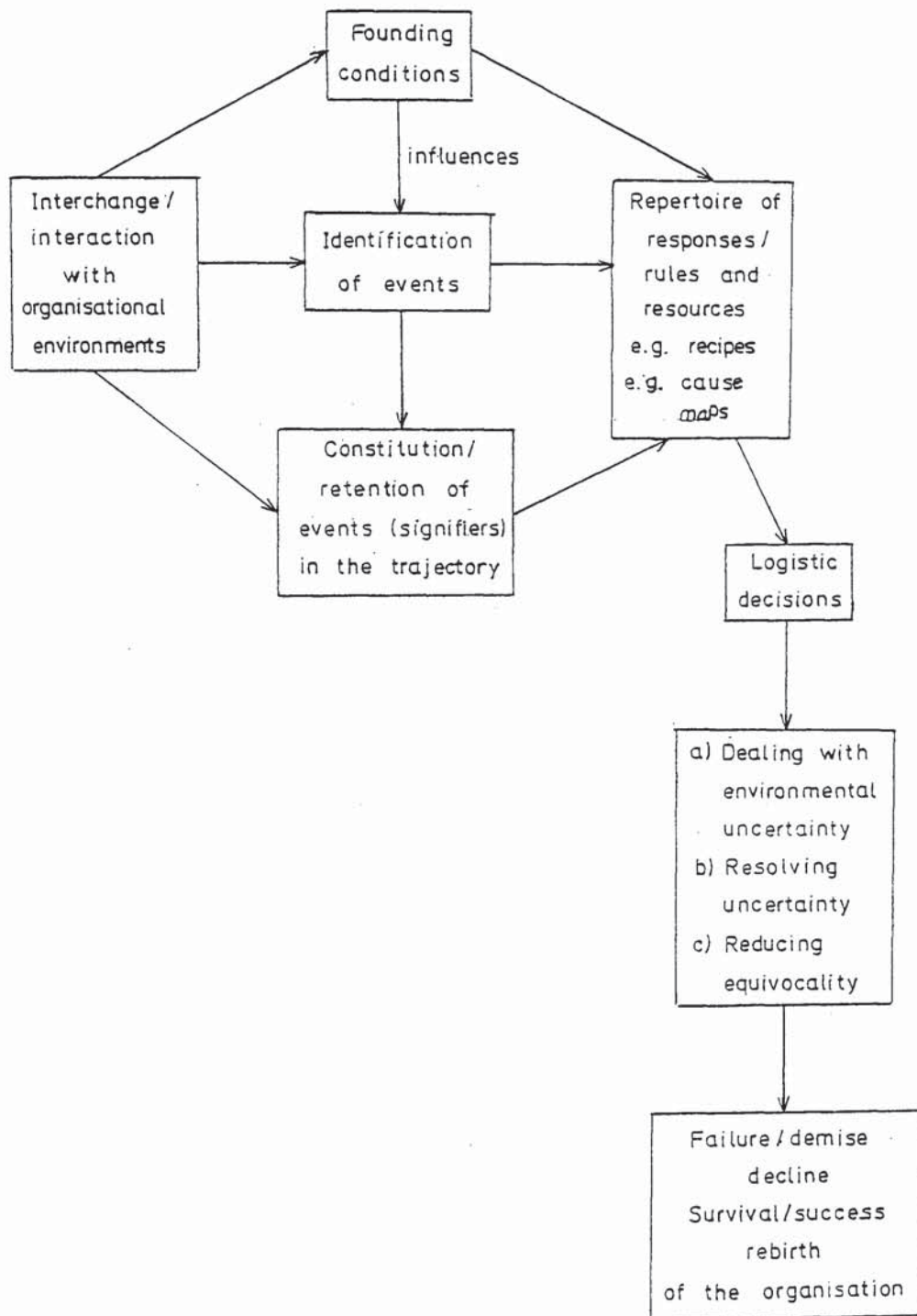
CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT DO MANAGERS DO?

INTRODUCTION

The domain of management theory resembles an "untidy patch-work of bits of knowledge and techniques derived from other disciplines" (Journal of Management Studies Conference, Manchester Business School, 1983). However, there are two major strands of inquiry which have dominated the field since the early 20th century. One strand has emphasised the pragmatic theorising of engineering and evolved into management sciences. Here the main concern has been to provide managers with means for optimum utilisation of organisational resources (mainly human resource) through theoretical principles. The other strand of inquiry evolved from a basis in case analysis and observation of what actually happened, considering the needs of business practitioners and what is desirable for capitalism. These strands have co-existed and influenced the characteristics of business schools and management education. However as these theorisings proliferated a whole range of concepts, terms, measures and research paradigms emerged which sometimes make it difficult to discern the current direction of management theorising.

The last three decades witnessed the challenge to the classical theories of management and leadership particularly in the theorisings of the "activity" school and their "time-spending" models. They have criticised the "classicists" for their failure in producing the accounts based on observation, of what managers "really" do. Carlson's study of Swedish managers in 1951 initiated a set of studies of managerial work in which one central question was overworked, that is, how do managers spend their time and thus, what are the common characteristics of managerial work? The research methods used in these studies are similar and attempts are made to absorb findings of previous studies, draw new conclusions and sustain the research stance adopted by the "activity" school. A great number

of studies are carried out in this manner which have decelerated the process of discovery and realisation in the field of managerial work. What is the problem? It is not that the studies of managerial work activities are mistaken in questioning what managers do, nor is it their pursuit of some kind of inductive research. Rather, it is their particularistic approach to investigating and analysing what managing really is. It has been argued in this thesis that the improvement of management theorising is dependent upon:

(a) recognition of the contexts within which managerial work activities are embedded, which in turn will enhance the understanding of the ways managers develop their everyday practices;

(b) reworking of the classical theorisings and their perspectives;

(c) incorporation of some analytical concepts which are ignored in studies of managerial work activities.

This chapter provides a critical overview of some of the major studies of managerial work which have dominated the field, for example, Mintzberg (1973), Stewart (1967, 1976), Kotter (1981). Some critical issues and questions will be raised regarding the development of a perspective for studying management. Additional conceptualisations for incorporation into the study of managerial work have already been offered (see Chapters Three and Four). But to understand these additional focuses it is useful to have an understanding of what has already been theorised. The overview will commence by considering briefly the meaning of "work", then questioning the extent that theories on "managerial work activities" have considered this conception. Empirical generalisations about what managers do will be considered next. Their inadequacies are highlighted with regard to the research question.

It is argued here, that the concept of work is loosely defined and used in studies of the nature of managerial work (e.g. Mintzberg, 1973). Within Mintzberg's perspective work is described as the activities which are performed by the job holder, i.e. the manager. The characteristics of the work are distinguished by the type of activities in which the manager prefers to engage and thus the kind of roles which are inferred from them. Missing from the set of questions that Mintzberg has raised, i.e. "what flow or frequency of activity is there" or "who to contact", are such questions as, "what purpose is there for each activity or work?" and "what does the performer (i.e. manager) gain out of such activities?"

The main concern of Minztberg, Stewart and others in studying the work of managers has been to explore the ways the overburdened manager can be rescued, and therefore how managers can be trained so as to facilitate the introduction of advanced management and planning systems. What is meant by work in these studies is not related to the question of work as a way of life. Managers are studied and observed on the job and within the pre-conceived features of the managerial world.

A general conception of work implies the use of mental and physical powers with the purpose of making or doing something with time and space. By definition, work imposes a time structure on the day of those who are working and provides them with the opportunity for sharing experience and of contacts with others in their working environments.

Nevertheless, it has been shown in the studies of non-industrial economies, that the structuring function of work is reflected in the allocation of tasks and roles according to the gender and age of the actors and the different times of the year or seasons (for example see Gearing, 1954). In these communities, unlike

industrialised societies, these work activities are not segregated from leisure. Hence a free flow between leisure and work exist. Thus, central to any conception of work, or use of the term, must be the consideration of these regulating elements and the actors' translation of them into their everyday life.

The observer of the work of managers may be able to identify certain apparent characteristics from their activities. There are, however, tacit, latent aspects of the work which may not be grasped by passive observation of managers at work. A major latent aspect of work is its imposition of a time structure on everyday life of the managers, providing shared regular experiences, contacts with various members of their role-set. With respect to the latent functions of work, the characterisation of managerial work as fragmentary, in Mintzberg's and others terms, becomes redundant; since they have segregated the apparent function of work from the latent ones. Moreover, attending meetings and other types of contacts may be considered as rituals or ways to avoid nothingness, or insignificance. For instance, Stewart (1976) has claimed that managers prefer a fragmented pattern of work and that somehow they create it, but she has not examined the reason for such preference. Perhaps this is because managers are unable to cope with free time and lack of compulsion.

The term "managerial" stresses a kind of autonomy or control which can be experienced by managers over the pattern of their activities. These are the result of activities performed by the employees at higher levels of the organisation's hierarchy. There is also the understanding that it may involve planning and organising (cf. Mintzberg, 1973).

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STUDIES OF MANAGERIAL WORK: AN OVERVIEW

I

The so-called empirical studies of managerial work (mainly the observational and diary studies carried out between 1951-1981) have criticised the earlier studies of management for their focus on describing the functions of managers and/or prescribing the most effective management styles. According to these studies the observable behaviour of managers has limited resemblance to the categories and classifications put forward by the classical management theories and management textbooks. They have also refuted the findings of studies based on interviews for creating misleading views of what managers do.

The main concern of these more recent studies has been to improve training programmes and selection and appraisal procedures for managers. Moreover, the challenges posed by these studies are meant to illustrate the misinterpretations by the managers themselves about what they should be doing. What is taken into account therefore is the actual on the job, and thus the observable, behaviour of the managers.

These generalisations (by the "activity" school) about managerial work raise some issues within their specific theoretical framework. The following are some of these issues.

Exercise of Control over Work

How much choice do managers have over what they do? Mintzberg's study portrays managers as "puppets" with regard to short-term issues. Yet he claims

that managers can determine their long-term obligations and commitments. Stewart's study shows that freedom of choice, in this sense, is indirectly related to the hierarchical level. The top level managers have more choice, but often they over-estimate the amount of choice they actually have in deciding what to do. According to these studies, managers carry out routine functions such as processing mail, etc. They also initiate contacts with their subordinates and are contacted by their superiors. They "have to be" reactive and responsive to the others' requests.

In contrast to the studies that have viewed managers as victims of the demands of their jobs (e. g. Carlson, 1951; Stewart, 1975) the study of the college presidents by Cohen & March (1974) has shown that most of the time the presidents refused to say "no" to requests even when they could have. Regarding the "unrelenting pace" of managerial work the questions that these studies raise fail to clarify the extent of managerial control. Studies into the basis for the creation of managerial hierarchies and "visible hands" of the managers (Marglin, 1974; Chandler, 1977) provide some evidence for this argument. Similarly, it is argued in this thesis that what managers are doing depends on the looseness of their formally defined organisational roles, and their awareness of others and of what is going on in the organisation, i.e. the extent of managers' politickings whilst developing their portfolios and organising their work.

Content of Managerial Work

Determining the content of managerial work has been at the core of these empirical studies; what activities managers carry out and why, are the questions which must be answered. An essential point here, however, is to what extent determining the amount of time spent on "technical" or "administrative" issues

can illustrate the content of managerial work. The problem lies in the content categories which are presented in these studies. Various classifications are used by different investigators. For example, the activities which are included under production or called "production matter"; in Burns' study (1954) this includes maintenance and production control, whereas in Horn & Lupton's study (1965) these items are introduced under a "technical" category. However, it is difficult to have an all-embracing category in relation to the existing studies as the data have been handled in different ways.

Classification of the content of managerial work cannot be achieved if the content is severed from its characteristics. Such characteristics as brevity, variety, fragmentation and the unrelenting pace of managerial activities also imply a varied content. Thus, the content of managerial work is at times ambiguous, and therefore difficult to categorise.

Organisational Characteristics

The size and type of the organisation seems to influence the pattern of the work of managers. For example, Mintzberg's findings about the work of chief executives compared with findings related to the work of managers in small organisations shows certain differences in terms of the amount of time the managers spent in scheduled meetings, in contacting outsiders or doing some desk work.

The presidents of the large universities in Cohen & March's (1972) study spent more time alone and in administrative roles and the presidents of the smaller colleges had tighter links with their establishments. Burns' study shows that the age of the organisation and Lupton's study shows that the technology of the

organisation also affect the way managers organise their tasks. However, "time-spending" studies do not seem to have included the organisational characteristics in their framework or even in their basic research question.

Cyclical Patterns of Managerial Work

Regarding the ways managers spend their time, some studies of managers' jobs have shown that there are cyclical patterns to what managers do. Cohen & March (Op. cit) concluded that daily and weekly cycles of work played a major role in the way the college presidents spent their time. Their findings indicate that administrative work was done early in the day and that political activities tended to take place in the later parts of the day or evenings.

These studies, as it is argued in earlier sections of this thesis, have, however, disregarded the business cycles that the organisations follow, such as budgeting periods, sales periods or strategic planning periods, which are longer term cycles, i.e. monthly, or yearly. Moreover, the typical activity patterns that they have portrayed exclude the short term cycles, such as weekly cycles. However, Stewart's study (1975) has illustrated that there are "periodicities" in some managerial jobs which have some implications for the job holder in terms of behavioural demands. It is argued in this thesis, that identifying these cycles is central to analysis of managers' work as they reflect the ways managers organise their work and thereafter their portfolios.

A Note on Method

The generalisations made by these theoreticians about the nature of managerial work are bound by their methods of study. The differences in the findings of these

studies may be linked with the methods they have utilised, although they have focused upon the same research question. The indirect methods of collecting data and information (i.e. interviews) are criticised and rejected for representing filtred information about what managers think they are doing. This is because in Mintzberg's terms "managers are poor estimators of their activities" (1973: 222). But it is argued here that the direct methods (i.e. observational recording techniques) suffer from certain deficiencies, i.e. there are non-observable aspects of managing such as thinking or planning. Therefore, the main drawback of these studies is seen in their "methodological parochialism".

II

The "hard" data produced by these empirical studies portray management as a number of discrete activities which are carried out by managers. The nature of these activities generates relationships which are considered as central to the "content" of managerial work. The emphasis is therefore put on the relationships instead of work. It is, thus, inferred that the types and frequencies of these relationships vary according to the level and the functions of the managers. It is shown in this thesis that as a phenomenon managerial work can be explained by the manager's characterisation of the situations; by investigating the taken-for-granted aspects of the work and by searching for the context of managerial activities. Although the empirical generalisations claim to be the alternative to the established theories and images of management, their studies do nothing more than test the classicist hypotheses about bureaucracies and bureaucratic organisations (also Glover, 1979).

What seems to be the problem with these studies is their reliance on scientific approach and their attempts to present a scientific account of what managers

do. Inevitably, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, as a result of this orientation, their descriptions of managerial work are more or less time-spending models in which durations and frequencies of episodes, are measured and yet humanised by introducing the actors into each episode. These measures, however, provide the grounds for conclusions that managers are over-burdened or busy. There is no account of the purpose or the content of each activity; for instance, why do managers prefer verbal communication? Is it only because they dislike paper work? Why and how managers do process and disseminate information? What is the use of the processed information to the manager? It can be argued that processing information is one way of keeping up with events and deciding on various courses of action. Furthermore, if managers translate pure information into explanations which are put to the colleagues, how is information here distinguished from explanations and meanings? For example, if the managers are told that "the price of steel will go up next month...", is that information about prices or an explanation of the likely reactions of some sectors or people in the economy? Studies of the political contexts of management have shown that information provides grounds for exertion of influence and is the source of power (Pettigrew, 1972). Indeed by providing advice or explanations for their colleagues, managers are managing the meaning of things for them; as the farmer did for the farm workers in Newby's study (1977), in order to safeguard the power which had been bestowed on their position historically.

Decision-making seems to be a remote action, according to these studies, in the managers' working days. This is obscure. Decision-making according to classical theorists, e.g. Simon (1957), is the main function of management and managers process information in order to facilitate making decisions. If there is little time for managers to make decisions, what do they do with the processed

information? Conversely if there are no such activities how do organisations survive?

In general, all that these studies tell us is that different managers spend their time differently and they do not know how they spend their time. The aim of these studies has been to help managers to use their time-budget more effectively. Yet there is no explanation of how an "effective" manager (that remains problematic itself in terms of criteria) can be distinguished from an ineffective one. These studies are just pure descriptions of what managers do and yet they proposed characteristics of managers' work, i.e. "brevity, variety and fragmentation" (Mintzberg, 1973) has been accepted as the popular image and the accurate account of the work of managers.

The following will contain an examination of the studies carried out by Mintzberg (1971, 1973); Stewart (1967, 1975, 1976) and Kotter (1981). Mintzberg's early work is selected for close scrutiny because it has had a great impact upon the thinking about managerial work and behaviour. Stewart's work has been chosen because of its particular focus upon training and education of managers. Finally, Kotter's work will be examined because his earlier work influenced Stewart's study of managers' agendas and his later work takes a different perspective to that of Mintzberg's and considers certain dilemmas in management.

BREVITY, VARIETY AND FRAGMENTATION

I

In the late 1960's Mintzberg identified a gap between the prescribed functions of management and actual practice as he induced a theory of the work of managers

from observation of 5 chief executive officers, each one being studied for a week. He recorded the number of times they made verbal contacts, 'phone calls and handled their mail. From this data base he portrayed an image of managerial work, its characteristics and content.

Characteristics of managerial work are distinguished from the content and this is significant to Mintzberg's inductions. Mintzberg believes that if the researcher questions such things as "where managers work, with whom they do so, how long they work, what media they use...", (p.22) the answers to these questions will show the characteristics of the managerial work. The contexts of managerial work, that is, internal and external environments, which are monitored by managers, are included in discussing the characteristics of the work. Mintzberg relies on Carlson's and Stewart's diary studies for identifying these characteristics. He has claimed that the categories used in the diary form in his study "are developed during the observation" (p. 231). His method is also differentiated from other diary studies as the investigator records the activities and not the manager.

The content of the work is described on the basis of this recording. Inferred from the content of the work which is characterised by "unrelenting pace and variety", are a set of roles grouped in three categories; "interpersonal, informational and decisional".

The chief executives are engaged in interpersonal roles due to occupying a top level job (which has implications for the manager in terms of authority). The relationships (network of contacts) which develop accordingly are the illustrations of managers' preferences for verbal communications (see Figure 5.1) and are considered to provide access to information which is then monitored and disseminated. The "decisional roles" are performed on the basis of the monitored

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information. With regard to these roles, types of setting and managers' style, Mintzberg introduces eight managerial job types: "contact man, political manager, real time manager, insider, team manager, entrepreneur, expert manager and new manager" (ibid:26). These findings have some implications for the future of managerial work, for the managers, for the teachers of management, for the scientist and the researcher.

Managers are warned against existing managerial methods as they are not properly understood nor analysed. Mintzberg continues with his advice to managers specifying that "management is an art and not a science" (p. 174). Yet, he emphasises that this puts the pressure on the manager because of the lack of a "scientific" basis for managing.

In order to understand their work, Mintzberg has advised managers to use a "self-study" method and question what to do, where and when. In order to be more effective and to make the most of their efforts, managers "must become sensitive to key difficulties in their jobs and seek their own means of dealing with each" (p. 177). In so doing managers should share information with their subordinates as they need to know, through the manager, the "specified goals and values of the organisation" and because "they look to the manager for a sense of direction".

Furthermore, he identifies the superficiality in the work of managers as a hazard that they should consciously combat. The other implications that Minztberg considers are mainly related to encouraging managers to delegate and also make use of their obligations. Mintzberg contends that this is the area over which managers can exercise control.

The implication for management schools and teachers is summarised in

development of managerial skills, i.e. leadership, negotiating, disturbance handling skills, etc., and training managers for these skills is described by Mintzberg to be the revolution in management education.

Regarding the overworked managers, Mintzberg claims that the management scientist's role is to alleviate this burden, by providing managers with tools developed primarily through understanding the dynamics of managerial work and through getting access to "managers undocumented information" (p. 195).

In summary there are two aspects to Mintzberg's claim about the nature of managerial work. First Mintzberg has presented an "actual" (though in his terms it is "the real"), i.e. the observed image of managers' jobs in the form of roles that they perform. Second he has concluded by portraying an "ideal" picture of what managers should be doing in order to enhance their performance.

<div align="center">II</div>

The basic assumption in Mintzberg's study of managerial work is that previous theorisings about management have failed to account for the observed behaviour of managers. This assumption is correct to the extent that one either considers the classical theories, i.e. POSDCORB theorising (for example, Fayol, 1914; Urwick, 1954) or a Taylorian perspective in its unfolded sense, or relies on a narrow perspective to explain what managing is. But, if one considers some of the work done over the past three decades, including Dalton's study of the influences on managerial contexts upon managers' actions (1959) or Pettigrew's studies of decision-making processes (1973, 1977, 1985) or Clark's studies of managers' time reckoning activities (1978, 1982), the assumption becomes open to criticism and thus requires close scrutiny.

Mintzberg's "real" image of the work of managers tells us little about what it is that managers are managing or how they are doing it. Describing managerial work as a set of brief activity episodes (which are rather predictable) reminds us of post-Taylor and Human Relations studies of alienation among the non-managerial employees (for example, Mayo, 1933, 1949; McGregor, 1960). However, the focus of Mintzberg's study is not to examine the implications of fragmented, brief (and perhaps meaningless) activities for managers' morale. With regard to the central argument of this thesis, a re-interpretation of Mintzberg's characterisation of managerial activities will be, that managers are involved in identifying recurrent events and thus operating within certain frames of reference and their observable activities will, therefore, seem varied and fragmented. But if their activities are considered within the temporal context of their work, they will be repetitive and routinised.

The brief, varied and fragmentary nature of managerial work may not necessarily imply that managers are not reflective planners. Firstly, there is little evidence in Mintzberg's database that managers do not plan. Secondly, Mintzberg is fascinated by "scientific" approaches to planning and this certainly may not be detected from observation of managerial activities. Although he describes managing as an art, his attempts are directed towards development of a science of managing. Finally, studies of the growth of enterprises and managerial hierarchies have shown that managers do plan and believe that they should assume roles and responsibilities for allocating resources and making decisions about logistics (see for example Chandler, 1977). Creation of the managerial strata and horizontal specialisation are the means for the safeguard of these roles (see Marglin, 1974; Hill, 1981).

The "real" image of managerial work which Mintzberg claims to have developed

involves a set of roles which are meant to be considered as an integrated whole. These roles or functions can barely be differentiated from the classicists' classifications (see Figure 5.1). The roles imply control and use of control mechanisms by managers. Resource allocation, for example as a decisional role, cannot take place in a vacuum. There must be plans of some kind. It also requires organisation of tasks and activities. According to Mintzberg, these roles describe what managers "really" do. However, regarding the content of any of these roles, Mintzberg offers no explanation of how these roles are carried out in such a manner. Moreover, the roles are categorised "without" the contexts of managerial work, without the situations in which they are embedded and thus, portrays managers and their activities as mechanical. For example, "interpersonal" and "informational" roles (monitor), are inferred from managers' contact patterns (liaison) and relationships. But Mintzberg provides no analysis of how or why managers develop a network of contacts. March (1980) has postulated that managers talk to others about what they do or what they are going to do; they hold corridor meetings and this is one way for them to understand what they are doing (also Clark, 1976; Janis, 1972) and make sense of their surroundings (also Weick, 1979). This may also explain their preferences for "live action" and why information is so significant to managerial work.

Mintzberg has emphasised that managers have a definite preference for gossip, current non-routine information, the type of information which triggers off action (p. 149). It is argued here that, preference may be interpreted as the managers' way of handling their portfolios of problems or tasks, as a means for keeping abreast of events which they perceive as significant to the survival of their organisations. Adopting Weick's enactment perspective, it can also be argued that this is one of the ways that managers create and select their environments and enact in them.

MINTZBERG	FAYOL

FORMAL AUTHORITY

INTERPERSONAL ROLES:

Figurehead
Leader
Liaison

TO COORDINATE:

Binding together, unifying
and hormonizing all activity
and effort

INFORMATIONAL ROLES:

Monitor
Disseminator
Spokesman

TO FORECAST & PLAN:

Examining the future and
drawing up plan of action

TO COMMAND:

Maintaining activity among
the personnel

DECISIONAL ROLES:

Entrepreneur
Disturbance Handler
Resource Allocator
Negotiator

TO CONTROL:

Seeing that everything
occurs in conformity with
established rule and
expressed command

TO ORGANISE:

Building up the structure,
material and human of the
undertaking

Figure 5.1 A Comparison of Managers' Roles and Functions

In Mintzberg's terms managers' preference for current information is because managers "work in an environment of stimulus-response" and therefore historical information is of less use to them (p. 38). This is to deny the powerful influence of the past (cf. Chandler, 1977) on individual and everyday managerial practices, i.e. that there is no conditioning and socialisation of managers into organisation or managerial practices (cf. Clark, 1982; Spender, 1980).

Describing managing as a set of mechanical activities actually undermines existing arguments concerning the social construction of managerial recipes and maps. Weick has linked managers' preferences for "live action" with their being/or not being over-loaded. He argues that a manager is overloaded when he/she fails to maintain a one-to-one relationship between his/her inputs and outputs. Managers' "preference for live action insures this relationship as high priority" (Weick, 1979: 113). The study of four sets of managers in four different firms which set the background for this thesis, and other studies of managing in various settings, have illustrated that managers do prefer access to information of current as well as historical character. The present situations are frequently identified and described within these temporal dimensions.

Managerial roles, and in particular informational roles, have a set of implications related to managers' authority and the delegation dilemma. The advice that Mintzberg has given to managers is that they should share the information which they have processed, with their subordinates. This suggestion is based on Mintzberg's observations (data) which also allow him to argue that managers store all the information they obtain in their mind and that a great deal of this information is in verbal form and undocumented. This is an explanation for managers' unwillingness to delegate because there is the fear that delegated tasks will be performed on the bases of less information. Unlike studies of the political

context of management which consider information as a power resource and the reason for managers reluctance to delegate, Mintzberg links the question with managers being overloaded with verbal and imperfect information. So in Mintzberg's description, delegation is equated with sharing of information but severed from the power that access to and control of it carries.

Regarding the argument put forward previously, if managers are expected to share information and delegate accordingly, the shared information is altered into explanations or meanings that are situationally appropriate and may serve, naturally, the managers' interests and ends. The language or symbols that managers use for explanation (image creation) plays a pivotal role in the way the information is perceived and issues are, hence, put on the portfolios of the managers by their subordinates and peers and vice versa.

Also it was mentioned previously that Mintzberg's description of what managers do is more about network relationships than about work. The contention here is that management is a social activity and is done through, with, and in response to, other people; these interactions and relationships are adequately explained if considered with regard to Merton's notion of "role-set" (1954). Accordingly, managers can be said to have an "array of role-relationships" with peers, subordinates, superiors and outsiders, with varying degrees of involvement and power. The articulation of the components of their "role-sets" by managers' using various mechanisms, media and means, is the core of what they do.

For Mintzberg the network of contacts is a means for obtaining information. The coupling between the information and contacts is crucial to the nature of managerial work. Within the perspective of this thesis, his contention about the loose coupling made by managers between contacts and information collapses

because, it is argued, different groups of managers in an organisation share a stock of recipes which are used for understanding what goes on around them (also Spender, 1980). These recipes are the basis for tactical and strategic decisions. There are therefore continual tight interconnections between information processing activities, event-searching by managers, interactions with members of their role-set and survival of the organisation.

Moreover, managerial work activities are more repetitive than Mintzberg has argued. The empirical work of this thesis has shown that managerial practices are to a great extent repetitive and routinised if they are considered within the temporal context of the organisation. The practices become routinised because managers continuously detect events of a periodic nature. Thus managers become familiar with a certain kind of information and any "trigger" information if it is not novel will imply predictable activities. Also, only information which is consistent with the existing cognitive maps and interpretative schemas, hence is understood accordingly, flows through the organisation. There are studies of managers in some large organisations which have shown that managerial practices remain unchanged if no crises are detected or anticipated regarding the activities and the environments of the organisation. Miller (1981) has referred to this situation using the concept of "momentum", i.e. the tendency of an organisation to evolve in the same direction and so on. These arguments are also illustrated in such concepts as "cause maps" (as Weick, 1979) or "recipes" (as Spender, 1980) or "theories of action" (as Argyris & Schon, 1978).

Mintzberg's characterisation of managerial work presents an inadequate treatment of time. It is more or less a time study of managerial work in which the duration and frequencies of each managerial activity are recorded against clock time. Elsewhere in this thesis it has been argued that recurrent activities of managers

can be explained by events of a contingent or periodic character and disjunctures which are identified by the managers or their role-set. This description also counters Mintzberg's claim that in his study the dynamics of managerial work are considered (p. 195). Actually Mintzberg has failed to take into account the motives and pre-meditated actions of the managers (i.e. the dynamics of their behaviour), which can be illustrated if managers' activities are analysed in times (also Cullen, 1972) and as situated practices (as Giddens, 1979). As regards the core point of this thesis, the fragmentary nature of managerial work can be resolved accordingly. The emerged characterisation of managerial work will be one of reproduction and reconstruction of events and practices. Here, on the basis of a similar argument, attribution of superficiality to managerial work does not necessarily imply absence of cognitive practices or projections.

Finally it seems that the chief executives in Mintzberg's study operated in non-political environments, thus activities or tasks were performed smoothly; there was no conflict of interests, no politickings in the way networks of relationships were established or information was obtained. Nevertheless, this account of the executives' work might just be justified within Mintzberg's perspective in which the motivational behaviour of the managers are disregarded.

Turning to the implication of Mintzberg's argument for the future of managerial work, or rather the "ideal" image, it is obvious that Mintzberg encourages more scientific intervention in managerial work. He stresses that managerial work must be made more scientific and hence, that the management scientist will have a great role in shaping the future of managerial work. Traditional information systems, he believes are redundant since they are designed on the basis of the classical impression of managerial work. The management scientist, according to Mintzberg, must understand and analyse what managers actually do, what

information they use, etc., in order to devise an effective system for managers which will aim to reduce the burden of verbal, undocumented information. Managerial work, therefore, needs to be re-programmed by the scientists. As the complex tasks, the output and the content of managerial work become programmed, there will be the opportunity to stimulate a variety of programmes with varying elements, in order to increase the effectiveness of managers. So the pivotal role of the scientist is in programming the managers' tasks and providing the required, relevant information simultaneously.

Within the last two decades managers and management theoreticians have witnessed the expansion of the use and markets for high technology devices and managerial aids. Nevertheless, managers still will think and reflect on the everyday practices. As Alistair Mant (1981) has suggested, developing effective managers for the future should be based on action learning and learning from experience. This argument implies that managers learn by acting, or doing, i.e. trial and error learning (also Cohen & March, 1972; Argyris & Schon, 1978) and from their peers, and acquire intersubjective understanding of events (as Schutz, 1964). Nevertheless, this learning is natural and also dependent upon a structure for learning that can be institutionalised.

Mintzberg has claimed that he started his investigation with no preconception of managerial work and that the findings emerged from the rigorous observation of the executives' activities and systematic recording of the details of each and everyone of them. The point is that any conceptualisation and thus understanding of what goes on around individuals involves the "stock of Knowledge" (as Schutz, 1964), to which they have access through their socialisation, learning processes and interactions. People's view of the world, and their definitions do not develop in a vacuum. So Mintzberg's actual image of managerial work has not developed

from scratch but rather it has developed within a spectrum of values, interests, criteria, concepts, his educational background and the academic institution within which he works. Moreover, in order to use any diary form the investigator must have some preconceptions of what managers do or seem to be doing. There is the inherent problem of Mintzberg's method of study; i.e. structured observation; that the observer may have difficulty in understanding, labelling and thus interpreting what he or she sees the manager doing. This will become more problematic when the duration of such passive observation is as short as a week.

Briefly, Mintzberg's attempts to show that there is a gap between management theory and management practice and that this gap can be lessened by grounding management science in a better understanding of the nature of managerial work. However, in defiance of classicist theorising Mintzberg offers little evidence which may differentiate his descriptive or rather proscriptive theorising from the theorising of the classicists. What managers do in practice , i.e. their observed, prosaic and less planned activities, illustrates that managerial work is episodic. This does not necessarily imply that there is no continuity of content or that managers do not plan or reflect.

CHOICE FOR MANAGERS

I

Since the mid-1950's Stewart has been involved in studying the work of managers. She has searched for varying characteristics of managerial work. Various facets of what managers do, such as how they spend their time and respectively what kind of categories of managerial work there are, have thus been considered.

Primarily, Stewart (1967, 1976) was concerned with the demands that managers' jobs make on their behaviour and thus, with developing a language or taxonomy which can describe these demands. Two typologies have emerged from her initial studies of a large number of managers. These are related to "contact patterns" and "work patterns".

Her initial classification of managerial work (regarding demands) by contact yielded 12 patterns and 4 job types: "hub, peer dependent, man-management and solo" (1976:8,4) which are self-explanatory in terms of the extent of relationship demands. The immediate indications and implications are that managers need to understand and develop certain social skills and that these skills vary from job to job. This claim hence represents a simple version of the "inter-personal skills", "leadership skills" suggested as necessary by Mintzberg.

The observed patterns of managers'work described by Stewart are fragmentary, thus similar to those described by Mintzberg. The work of managers is measured against time and the emerging work patterns embraces criteria such as:

- duration of activities (fragmentation v sustained attention)
- time span of problems or decisions
- periodicity and other recurrent work
- expected v unexpected work
- incidence of urgent work and crisis (not self-imposed)
- extent to which work has to be done to time deadlines
- origin of activities; response to others or self-generated (Stewart, 1975).

The implications of these two typologies, i.e. "work pattern" and "contact pattern" are for the training and education of managers according to Stewart. They

illustrate the differences in roles that should be performed by managers. It may be noted that these patterns are partly developed by demands. Some of the characteristics considered in describing the work patterns are based on the choices that managers may have.

Earlier works of Stewart developed with the objective of classifying managerial work into different categories as regard situational characteristics. These characteristics are identified in terms of relationships and tasks. The aspect of managerial work which is accordingly stressed is that there are flexible domains and that managers can simply exercise discretion. This is what Stewart has referred to as "choices" (Mintzberg uses the term "right"). These choices are linked with constraints. For instance managers have choices in the way they operate; they may prefer to delegate tasks to subordinates for example. Stewart summarises the constraints in this case in two questions: can the subordinates do the work without the manager's guidance and direction? And will they? Here "can" includes the subordinates' knowledge, experience and access to resources and information, and "will" includes their motivation to do what is required of them. How this process is fulfilled is not clear from Stewart's argument. Rather, she puts forward the point that the more senior the managers are the more likely it is that they will have highly motivated subordinates who need little direction, so that the managers can focus their attention on other kinds of work.

The concept of "choice" has recently become the core of Stewart's thesis on managerial work (1982). "Flexible domains" (Ibid: 47) and focus of attention, as mentioned previously, constitute two main elements of Stewart's argument about how managers perceive and define their jobs (thus their choices). She thus has concluded that managers have a varying degree of discretion about how they utilise their time and attention. This claim makes organisational job descriptions

meaningless. Stewart, therefore, asserts that within a framework of "demands-choices-constraints", managers construct a reality which constitutes the basis for the way they perform their tasks and which may be in disagreement with their actual job descriptions. The foundations for this claim are to be found in Stewart's studies over the last 15 years and in her composition of managers' own accounts of what they are doing.

The choice model considers the boundaries for the "what" and "how" of managerial work as variable, the boundary spanning activities may also change therefore. In other words the managers may or may not decide to take risks, they may or may not share their activities with others. Their style of management can fall anywhere along a continuum from totally autocratic to purely democratic. Their choices are reflected in their agendas which also indicate their estimation of what they can do and how they can do it. Thus they may be reactive or proactive. Stewart stresses the role of individual choice in this process. Managers on similar jobs may choose to do their tasks differently. The other implication of the model is that managers are envisaged to become involved in varied activities and may actually prefer a fragmented pattern of work (cf. Mintzberg). In fact it is the possibility of having the choices which makes a job managerial.

In defiance of traditional descriptions of management that assume similarities in managerial work in hierarchical terms, Stewart claims that most organisational problems such as design, control, communication, integration and differentiation are the results of the disparity between the "enacted realities" of managers and their perceptions of what they do.

Having observed managers and analysed the choices available to them, Stewart concludes that "many managers do not think analytically about their jobs" (1982:

128). This is to emphasise that (a) managers are not aware that they are making choices while engaged in the process of choice making; (b) managers do not engage in the mental activities which are basic for the co-ordination of various jobs in their organisations. Stewart criticises the pragmatic theorising of engineers and administrators (e.g. Fayol, Taylor) which has influenced and shaped management sciences and has created the myth that managers think analytically. This is also to refute the MBO thesis as managers and employees of the organisations do not (necessarily) keep the objectives of the organisation in their mind while they are making decisions.

Stewart has argued that her studies have certain implications for managers, teachers of management, researchers and organisations. Practicising managers are advised to use the model to perceive their job more objectively and become aware of the fact that what they think is the demands of their jobs are equally the other people's choices. Hence, they can re-think their job activities.

Stewart's advice for management researchers is that they should prepare students in such a way that they learn what it feels like to be a manager and how one can encounter (as a manager) the unexpected, the varied and fragmented nature of managerial work. Management training programmes which concentrate upon the assumption that managers only need to know "x" or "y" are refuted by Stewart, as they fail to convey the "reality" of management.

Researchers in management are encouraged by Stewart to investigate how individuals become managers and the ways their managerial values and beliefs develop and are formed in the process. In other words since a job becomes managerial with respect to the choices which are available to the job holder, researcher should concentrate upon the awareness that individuals develop as

regards these choices.

The implications for organisations revolve around the ways that organisations develop choice mechanisms rather than control mechanisms. In this way an organisation could better manage situations because it decides on the choices and on the managers who make them. This is seen as part of the job selection procedure and the means for matching the choices managers want to exercise with the choices that the jobs offer. Briefly, various users of Stewart's model are advised to disregard the traditional models of management, whereby there are pyramidal approaches to the situation. Instead they should adopt an objective stance considering what is "really" going on and utilise fully the choice-making occasions.

II

Stewart's studies of managerial work may be differentiated from Mintzberg's in that she has focused upon the differences in the jobs of managers rather than common characteristics. However, on the basis of certain commonalities she has developed taxonomies and job types. For instance she has suggested 13 job dimensions for the sort of measurement used for selection, appraisal, training and research, which are compatible with the demands-choices-constraints framework. These dimensions, like any other taxonomy in the classical management literature, have emerged apriori; without apparent empirical verification.

Managers are assumed to construct the reality of what they do within a framework of demands-choices-constraints; a variety of definitions arise which result in a variety of job types. The missing aspect in Stewart's contention is that

managers are not alone; the members of their role-set influence the definitions and the nature of what they do. Stewart's classification of managers' contact patterns does not adequately examine or unravel this social construction, i.e. the inherent intersubjectivity of what managers say they do, what they think they do, and crucially, what they actually do.

Furthermore, Stewart's contention that there are variable boundaries within which managers have discretion in choosing what to do, when and how to do it, produces no explanation about why managers choose one approach at certain times and not at another. There is no mention of the managers' projected acts (see Cullen, 1972).

As has been mentioned elsewhere in the thesis (also see Figure 5.2), there are temporal and intentional dimensions to managerial practices and in Giddens' terms intentionality is a routine part of human conduct (1979). The concept of choice is useful if we consider that managers exercise discretion over what they do and how and when they do it. But this aspect remains unfolded in Stewart's thesis since she underplays the intentions and political activities of managers. It may be argued, however, because the central focus of Stewart's study is the job of managers and not the individual manager as an actor or enactor, the politics of managerial practices may become peripheral. The point is that managerial work cannot be considered without its contexts and severed from the individuals who are involved in fulfilling it especially if its "intuitive" aspect is emphasised as Stewart has done (1982).

Both Stewart and Mintzberg have emphasised delegation and work sharing from various dimensions. For Mintzberg delegation implies sharing information with subordinates is a means for effective management, whereas, the implication of Stewart's contention has developed with regard to the choices that are inherent in

Figure 5.2 Dimensions of Managerial Work

INTENDED

CONTINUITY

(CONTINUITY)

FUTURE PROJECTS

(COGNITIVE PRACTICES)

POLITICKINGS

DOING (ACTIVITIES)

THINKING

(BREVITY, VARIETY, FRAGMENTATION)

(GARBAGE CAN)

UNINTENDED

DISCONTINUITY
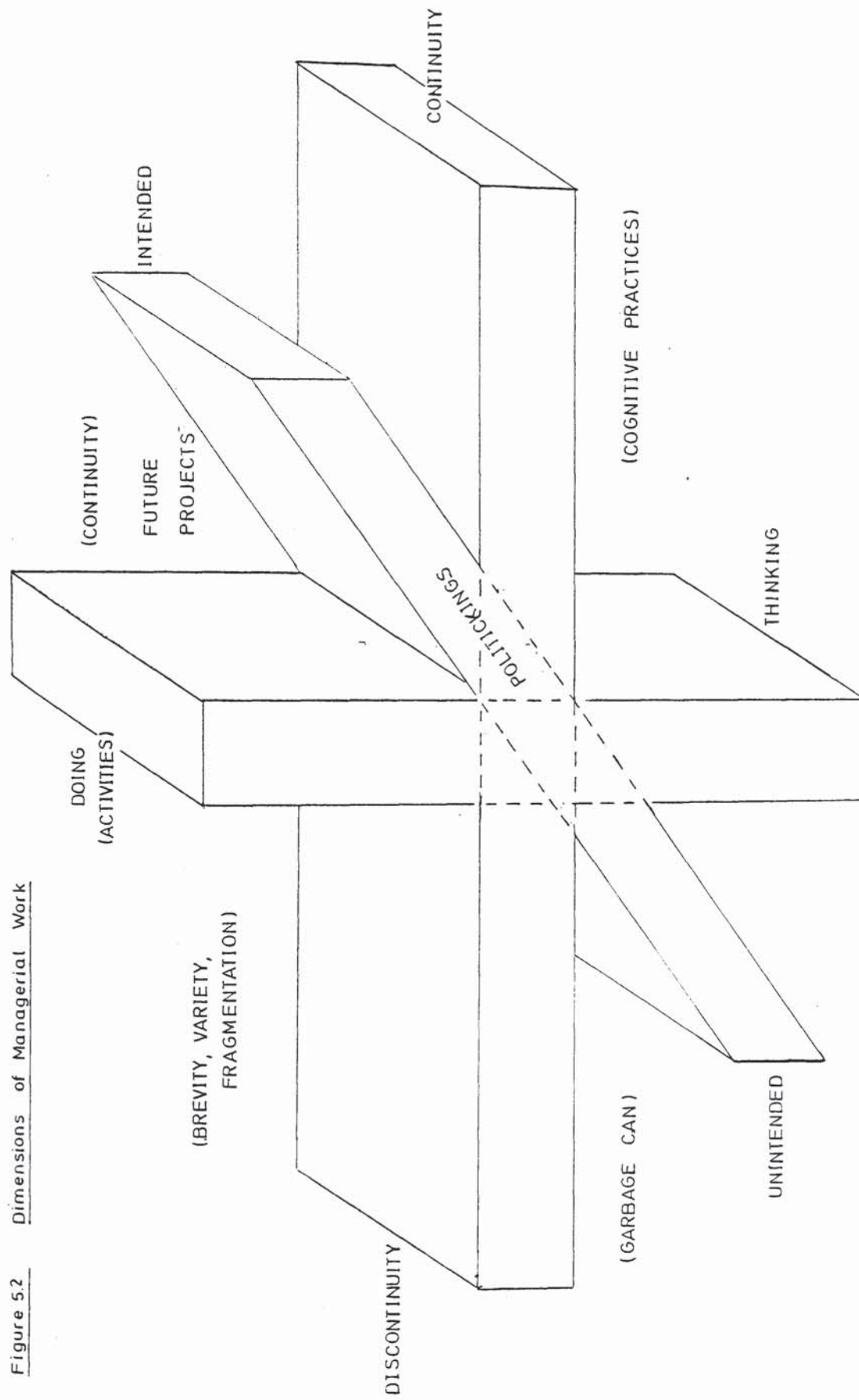
the work of managers. Stewart's data have shown that managers are in charge of their destiny (in any time span), whilst Mintzberg's observation showed that the chief executives were mainly in control of their long-term commitments.

The implications of Stewart's description of managerial work and variables which play a significant role in determining the pattern of the work often leave us wanting for suggestions for unresolved questions. For example, Stewart claims that the extent of managers' involvement with external factors is more a function of management philosophy rather than type of technology, industry or size of the organisation. Stewart however offers no justification for why it should be so, or to what extent management philosophy may be seen to involve the characterisation of managerial motives.

The model that Stewart has offered practising managers is assumed to assist managers to perceive their jobs (their nature and characteristics) more objectively. It is assumed that this objective perception will be based on identification of the physical characteristics of the job, yet this offers an inadequate explanation of the "content" of managers' jobs.

Considering the implications of the choice model for organisations, it can be argued that choice implies control (cf. Stewart). This is to say choices are control mechanisms used to reduce equivocality in the environment of organisations.

Just as Mintzberg has argued that managers spend little time reflecting, Stewart claims that there is no mental activity contained in the work of managers. This contention is in complete contrast to the core argument of this thesis, in which it is asserted that managerial work is a cognitive activity and using Weick's terms, that managers are "thinkers" (1979). The puzzle is that the awareness of choices

involves certain kinds of theorising about what managers think can be done or should be done. But if managers are not aware of these choices it does not necessarily mean that managers do not think. The managers' "thinking practices" are embedded in organisational situations.

The job profiles that Stewart has presented with reference to the "demands-choices-constraints" framework, seem to be too broad to account for detailed differences in work characteristics and this inadequacy reduces their applicability to all kinds of managerial work. Also the typologies are more about careers and relationships than about the work itself. Thus are clear implications in Stewart's studies for training and management development. Stewart seems to be a firm believer of conditioning managers under simulated circumstances which may not necessarily improve their performance.

There are two final points that may be noted as regards Stewart's studies of managerial work; first, her studies have stretched over two decades, during which period there have been tremendous changes in the social context and environment of organisations; yet these changes have not been taken into account or allowed for in Stewart's theorisings about managerial work. The other point is that the typologies and job profiles may not be as generalisable as they are portrayed since there are cultural factors influencing managerial actions which are not accounted for.

WHAT MAKES MANAGERS SUCCESSFUL?

I

By contrast to Mintzberg and Steward, Kotter has directed his attention to the

factors which contribute to a manager's success. Kotter studied successful general managers in 9 corporations between 1976 and 1981. This study was designed to examine the "fit" that exists between the personal characteristics of successful managers and the characteristics of their jobs in terms of responsibilities and "dilemmas". It was also intended to highlight the gap between the classical description of management functions and tools on the one hand and the actual observed behaviour of managers on the other.

According to Kotter, personal characteristics, i.e. the personality traits of the managers, their knowledge and relationships they manage to develop, are the key elements in their success. The main personality themes are as follows:

- achievement orientation

- crave for status and power

- high ambitions and motivations

- emotional stability

- good interpersonal skills

- high intelligence

- analytical intuitive skills

- systematic thinking.

However, he believes there are also job-related characteristics such as development of a vast knowledge about their business and extensive set of relationships, getting to know their competitors and initiating co-operative relationships.

The pivotal argument in Kotter's study is as follows. Managerial work requires certain personality traits. There are challenges, dilemmas and diverse and

complex sets of activities which are connected with managers' work and these determine the managers' type of responsibilities and relationships. Managers develop their personal characteristics while on the job, which will simultaneously determine these dilemmas and required relationships. This argument may be shown as follows:

JOB CHARACTERISTICS	MANAGERS' CHARACTERISTICS
Responsibilities	Ambitions
Dilemmas Skills	
Activities	Motivation
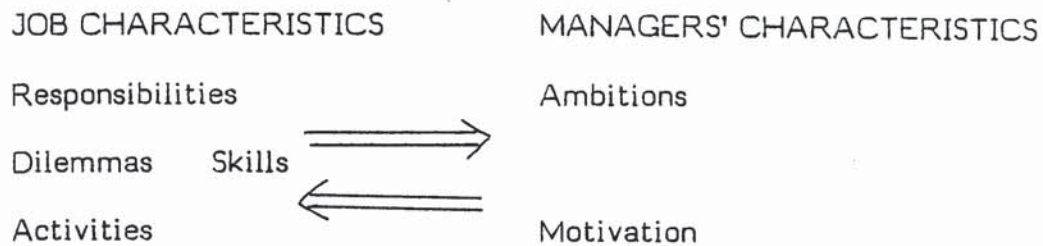
There is, therefore, a two-way "influencing" relationship between the work and the managers.

Kotter's general managers were all ambitious, motivated by power and status, knowledgeable about their environments and had analytical, intuitive skills. According to Kotter there was strong link between the background of the managers, i.e. their family background and educational experiences, and their career paths and their fit with their work. For instance, they were all from "upward mobile middle class" families which also exposed them to a certain network of relationships. For Kotter, successful managers are both "born", i.e. they are brought up in favourable circumstances and "made" overtime through series of events that they encounter in their work (also Lee, 1981).

The other debate in Kotter's study is that the existing studies of managerial work and management have misrepresented the work of managers which have inevitable implications for their effectiveness. Kotter defies the POSDCORB theorising on the grounds that managers do not operate in easily identified, defined

environments, and that there are no formal and systematic managerial tools. He refutes the observational studies for their characterisation of managerial work as fragmentary episodes and filled with verbal communication. Kotter's theorising is an attempt to fill the gap between these two strands of inquiry. Yet, according to Kotter the actual behaviour of managers can be characterised as less systematic, more informal, less reflective, less organised, etc.

His lengthy interiews and observations of the general managers in action have shown that these managers worked long hours and spent most of their time with others discussing a range of topics, some related and some irrelevant to their work. As a result of his study Kotter maintains that managers' allocation of time to others was based on reactions to "others' initiations". However, they were often involved in attempts to influence others through persuasion or intimidation. Managers' contacts with others did not seem to result in big decisions. Kotter concludes that managers approached their work through two sets of activities; (a) "agenda setting" and (b) "network building" in order to decide what actions to take with regard to environmental uncertainties surrounding them and thus how to get things done through a set of people.

"Agenda setting" is considered by Kotter to be an inseparable part of managerial work. He maintains that managers spend time establishing their agendas which are modified over time. These agendas include their goals, plans, responsibilities and priorities. They differ from personal plans, according to Kotter, as they are not detailed in financial terms, have a broader spectrum and involve less explicit connection between goals or plans. The items on the agenda are fulfilled through managers' "network building" activities. This includes identifying those people who satisfy this need and developing "co-operative" relationships with them. Managers utilise a variety of strategies in this process. They make others "feel

legitimately obligated to them by doing favours" for them or "encourage others to identify with them" ... or make others feel dependent on them, etc. As it was mentioned earlier, Kotter has shown that the daily pattern of managerial work is the outcome of the way managers approach their work and thus the outcome of the nature of their work and the type of people involved.

In general, the implications of Kotter's study are for selection, development and staffing processes in organisations. Kotter, on the basis of his findings, has advised organisations to avoid selecting candidates from outside as they lack the detailed information, knowledge and good relationships that managers develop while specialising in their jobs (note that Kotter is loosely emphasising the issue of past-loadedness). In terms of development and training programmes Kotter favours systematic development of the "interpersonal" and "intellectual" skills of the managers. He denies the exaggerated role of training courses in business schools and praises "in-house" training of managers because they make managers familiar with information related to the firm.

<div align="center">II</div>

It may be noted that Kotter's study confirms the conventional wisdom that management involves information processing, i.e. figuring out what should be done and decision-making under diverse and uncertain situations. A further point that is put forward is that there are agendas of tasks which are fulfilled through other people. Kotter's argument about managers' network building activities has some common ground with the findings of Stewart's studies of managerial work.

The central point in both studies is the "relationships" that managers develop through fulfillment of their activities. Stewart, however, has emphasised the

skills required for handling these relationships, whereas Kotter stresses their impact upon the nature of the work of managers and the significance of managerial influence strategies in making these relationships serve their purposes. This is a presentation of managerial political activities in its looser sense. What is political in this process is to get agendas implemented through the built network. Execution of the items of the agenda, i.e. managerial ends, serve the managers' dominance within the network. Kotter shows that managers use organisational mechanisms and "symbolic methods" such as "meetings, architecture language, stories about the organisation, time and space..." (p.74) to convey messages indirectly to the people. However, there is no account of the members of the managerial role-set is given, i.e. no account of their interests, "logics of action" (as Karpik, 1978, 1981), reactions to the general managers' persuasions or intimidations. The members of the managers' role-set are, thus, portrayed as deferential. Therefore within Kotter's frame of analysis, deferential subordinates become the key to the success of managers, though he describes such behaviour as co-operative. There are two main points to be noted here. First, the significance of the concept of "role-set" which will adequately explain the network building activities of managers. And secondly, the concept of "logics of action". In Karpik's terms these are "principles around which individuals organise their behaviours" (1978:47). It will thus explain "why" managers become engaged in "agenda setting" and "network building" activities. Kotter's study is differentiated from Stewart's in its attempts to illustrate the "how" of managerial work as well as the "what".

The idea of managerial "agenda setting" activities originates in Kotter's earlier study of Mayors (Lawrence & Kotter, 1974) in which agenda setting is described as deciding what to do and reactive-proactive dimensions to agendas are recognised. In his recent work Kotter's description of agenda remains the same;

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that it is more or less an action sheet. Elsewhere in this thesis it has been argued that the concept of "portfolio" is preferred to agenda, since it highlights the managers' priorities in terms of issues and tasks. Moreover, it is an illustration of the politickings of the members of the managerial role-set (also Marples, 1967).

Whilst arguing that certain characteristics can be identified which contribute to the fit between the work and managers, Kotter has emphasised the determining role of the family and educational background of managers in this process. Partly managers are seen to become managers because they belong to the middle class and this is one of the professions identified with this class. This contention raises issues related to the class structure of American society, and the way the identities of individuals are developed. It thus points out the significance of the socialisation process for the managers prior to their employment and once they are on the job (also Lee, 1981).

Undoubtedly, Kotter's study of the general managers resolves some of the inadequacies of Mintzberg's and Stewart's approaches to managerial work. For instance, in his analysis of personal characteristics, Kotter has referred to managers' analytical, intuitive and mental skills' which implies that managers spend time thinking (cf. Stewart and Mintzberg) and they think analytically (also Clark and Weick). However, the means or mechanisms that managers utilise for such cognitive practices are disregarded in Kotter's study. Here, the central point to be considered is the processes by which these analytical tools and skills develop, because identification of these processes contributes to the establishment of effective development schemes for managers.

Kotter's study may also be appreciated for its attempt to highlight some of the deficiencies of the "time-spending" models. He rightly questions their simplistic

conception of the nature of managerial work and its implications for practising managers. This is to confirm that any kind of interactions and communication are part of managerial work (cf. the studies carried out between 1959-1970), and must be the means for understanding their surroundings and work (also March, 1980).

In particular, the method of study adopted by Kotter overcomes the limitations of Mintzberg's short-term, passive, structured observation. A variety of methods are used, such as lengthy interviews and observations, studying reports and documents, and Kotter claims that there is more value to unstructured observation as it can deal with the diversity and complexity of managerial work activities. Hence Mintzberg's justification is refuted on the basis that scientific validation of the theory generated by structured observation is impossible. However, Kotter's study, similar to other studies, collapses for its failure to consider managerial "events" as the key dimension for analysis of what managers do; this will require attending to temporal dimensions within which the items on the agenda are created and fulfilled.

The final point concerns the criterion against which Kotter has measured success, i.e. the sales turnover. The question mark remains therefore over different measures of performance, and why one measure is preferred to another and the extent that any criteria can provide adequate explanation and representation.

SUMMARY

In summary, the main empirical generalisations about managerial work are reviewed in this chapter. It has been argued that the focus of some of these studies, e.g. Mintzberg's, has been the activities of managers from which a set of roles are inferred similar to those presented by the classical management

theorists. Yet, this review of existing literature has failed to reveal the positional authority of managers upon which the roles are based, become constituted and are maintained. The study is atemporal as it examines managerial activities using the metaphors of the clock. Events, as the key time dimension in managerial work are disregarded.

In Stewart's extensive studies of managerial work, the focus has been on managerial relationships rather than work. Contact patterns are seen to determine the nature of managerial work. Stewart's work redefines the "repetitive, routine" characteristics of managerial work by emphasising the periodicity and recurrence as some of the characteristics of managerial work patterns. The choices available to managers are envisaged to be based on the demands of the managers' work and are thus located and analysed without their intentional situations. Kotter's study seems to overcome some of the methodological limitations of Mintzberg's study. This study considers managerial agenda setting and network building activities as the core of the managerial work. It therefore has shown the significance of interpersonal skills of managers yet has presented a limited view of the politics of managing.

However, these studies and their characterisation of managerial work can hardly explain the failures or decline of organisations; i.e. whether organisations fail due to their single loop learning or their limited modifications of managerial practices. Furthermore, there are other studies of managerial work which have focused on network building in order to show the "influence tactics" of managers (see Kipnis et al, 1984). These studies have also criticised Mintzberg's work for its failure to describe the "how" of managerial work, that is how managers exercise influence and what their choices of influence strategies are. These strategies are generalisable and not culture bound.

Finally, it may be noted that the empirical studies of managerial work have stressed the importance of "what managers really do" (e.g. Mintzberg, 1975). This epistemologically simple empiricism has rarely been challenged in the literature. Rather, the debate has been supported by numerous studies which assert the "fragmentary" nature of the activities. The "activity school" has developed as a reaction to classical normative literature which was contaminated by the question of "what management should be". Yet the researchers in this 'School' have disguised the inefficiency of their theorising behind the authority of "facts"; that is, the observed behaviour of managers.

This thesis is also concerned with achievement of an understanding of what managers do. However it asserts that managerial work is not just a set of activities, but a process which is social in nature and has various dimensions and consequences. It resolves the fragmentation question by showing the recurrent character of managerial work. Equally, it is argued that research into management must be considered as a social activity and engagement (Morgan et al, 1983), and it therefore includes the researcher's pre-conceptions and meaning-structures, which consequently influence the analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER SIX

APPLYING THEORY TO MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

CASE 1, ENGINE LTD.:
MANAGING THE LEADING IMAGE

CASE 2, RIVET LTD.:
MANAGING CONTINGENT CONTINUITY

CASE 3, METAL FINISHING LTD.:
MANAGING MARKETS AND DISJUNCTURES

CASE 1 : ENGINE LTD.

MANAGING THE LEADING IMAGE

INTRODUCTION

THE MANAGERS

INTERPRETATION

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INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the activities of a set of managers in a multi-national company which produces engines. The case will commence with a brief historical account of the development of the business operations of the company. It then describes the characteristics of the managers and their activities. Finally it offers some interpretations and analyses of the events and activities of the managers in the company.

As was mentioned previously (see Chapter 2), Engine Ltd., was the first case study which was carried out in the process of this research. Yet, it did not adequately achieve the research objectives. Reflection upon the study notes revealed that theoretical framework of the thesis was not properly translated into questions for discussions with the managers.

Engine Ltd., a subsidiary of an American-owned multi-national company, was incorporated in England in 1963, as a joint venture between a well-established motor car company and Engine Incorporation. In 1968 the company acquired 50% of the investment that Diesel International had with the venture. Since then the firm has been a leading manufacturer of engines and components, holding a large share of the market in the British Isles.

At the time of the study, there were 4,500 employees working for Engine Ltd. all over the U.K. The headquarters (the place of interviews) which were located in the south of England were in control of the general direction of the manufacturing activities in the various sites; keeping them in line with objectives of the Corporation and the Company. The main objective as defined by the managers was "to increase profits within the price levels and the technologically determined

production functions". This was an irrefutable stance regarding the activities of all the managers in the Company.

The backbone of the Company was diesel engines, which along with components, were exported to North America, Latin America and Europe. It had a high reputation in both the U.K. and the U.S.A. for the quality of its engines and trucks.

Engine Ltd. had nurtured a prosperous setting in its early years of establishment. The growing economies in the 1960's and the uprise of oil-producing countries as potential customers of heavy engineering products set the background for the Company's early development plans. Subsequently it aimed at increasing its share of the British market.

In the 1970's the increase in the inflation rate and oil prices led to decrease in the demand for diesel engines. As a result the parent company started to consider a cost reduction programme with regard to its operations in the U.K., whilst in the U.S. their strategy-makers were trying to figure out what a diesel engine maker would do in 25 years' time. The attempt was aimed at finding an alternative source of energy to oil, as the assumption was that oil would become harder to get and thus more expensive. Nevertheless, the Corporation invested large sums of money in R&D activities, since the results of such investments in the past had often been products which strengthened their market share and enabled them to penetrate into new markets.

The American parent company was happy to consider the U.K. sites as their manufacturing centres. This faith was confirmed through acquiring new factories and taking over other leading manufacturers of turbo engines in the U.K.

Furthermore, they speculated a great potential for the British truck industry in Europe.

However, in the mid 1970's, the U.K. operations began to show a decrease in profits (although turnover remained high) in comparison to increasing profits in previous years as a result of increasing costs. The U.K. headquarters defined the main reasons for these increasing costs as inflation and the downturn in demand for vehicles in their major export market, that is North America. The U.K. headquarters thus adopted a major cost reduction programme which involved a ban over new recruitments in one of their component manufacturing plants, and initiated reduction in work force through natural wastage.

In the late 1970's, a five-year investment programme was initiated by the Incorporation in the U.S. to double the output of the diesel engines in northern British plant, which was expected to create some new jobs. This action was taken in anticipation of an upsurge in demand for diesel engines in motor, construction and industrial markets in Europe, Middle-East and America. The British Government subsidised one-third of the investment. The main element in the investment decision by the American headquarters was the high quality of the products produced in that factory and the quality of its labour force.

Thus, Engine Ltd. enjoyed high earnings and profitability in the 1970's despite the world-wide economic turbulances and inflation. However, Engine Ltd. experienced some minor crises in the early 1980's due to currency issues, notably the strength of Sterling, and reduction in demand for heavy duty engines. Thus some losses were shown in their operations. The Company had been heavily dependent on the American market for its sales to the extent that strikes in other truck and engine manufacturing companies in the States had great impact in terms

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of its turnover. The strike in the International Harvester Ltd., the major buyer of the Company's truck engines, left it with a bulk of unclaimed orders in the first quarter of 1980. But the impact of strike was minimised when the stocks were sold to other customers. However, contrary to the previous record profit-making year, Engine Ltd. had to be content with breaking even.

As a precaution against any further decline in demand or currency problems the Company began to increase the prices of its diesel engines every 6 months. As a leading manufacturer in the market, this had always had a favourable impact on their financial performance. The effects of holiday shutdowns in the last quarter of the year were also taken into account in their anticipation of demands for their products.

Thus, the over-dependence of Engine Ltd. on its exports to the European and American markets proved to be its main problem in the early 1980's. The recession in the truck industry and in industrial and agricultural equipment forced the Company to plan for reduction in the work force of one of their plants.

It seemed that the 1980's would be the decade of cost reduction in order to achieve lower manufacturing costs and improved productivity. This policy was also favoured by the Company as a result of its expectation of some shifts in the market place. The decision to become more cost effective was envisaged to enable the Company to compete with those truck manufacturers who built their own engines. An OD programme was thus introduced into all sites to identify the ways in which each could make their operations more effective. Managers on the sites studied the flow of work from taking orders to the delivery of production. Material resource planning was carried out to reduce the gap between delivered materials from the suppliers and supplying engines to the customers.

THE MANAGERS

Engine Ltd. was run by a group of vice-presidents who were managing and organising the work of the manufacturing plants located in various parts of the U.K. The headquarters in the south of England was subdivided into product groups in terms of their industrial buyers and was responsible for co-ordinating the operations of various sites with the requirements of the buyers. The Personnel Department at the headquarters was responsible for the implementation of various programmes with regard to the general level of employees' performance. For instance it took charge of the OD Programme in 1982. It was also responsible for the provision of means of contacts between those managers in the product groups and those operating in the manufacturing sites.

The vice-presidents had been with the Company and on the sites since its early years of establishment in England. Operating as general managers they were engaged in speculating the demands for their products, the level of stock, etc. Often the employees, especially the people on the shop floor, were informed about the nature of demand in the market and thus the next set of operational targets. This was due to the management's concern for the relations between factors of production, human and technological resources and their outputs. Any cost reduction programme would operate within such a frame of reference and with regard to maintaining the leading position of the Company.

The directors in the headquarters in England were involved in the interpretation of the policies laid down by the U.S. headquarters and for relaying them to the managers at lower levels. They would supervise the implementation of the introduced changes on the shop floor at all sites.

The second-in-line managers, who were in charge of the product groups' operations at the headquarters in England, were aware of the recipes that the Corporation favoured and thus put into work. They kept their operations within and in accordance with the policies and targets set by the parent company. These managers' experiences with the Company, their length of service, and their perception of their constraints operationally were the main factors which determined their preparedness for taking action outside the perceived boundaries of their jobs. They mainly adapted a parochial outlook whilst fulfulling the Company's objectives. They had to search for tactics within the given Company's time frames and according to the information that they obtained locally. The following is a brief description of these managers' experiences and activities.

1. The Advertising and Publicity Manager was in his mid-40's and had been with the Company since its establishment in 1963. His job was to provide public relations services for the Company. This mainly included preparing booklets and brochures which described the characteristics of the products and arranging display stands and exhibitions. The preparations consisted of a set of activities such as:

- collection of information about the products and the purpose of the exhibitions;
- selection and production of photographs showing the products being in use;
- determination of where and when the products would be on display.

The typical week for the Advertising Manager contained a variety of meetings with his colleagues and agencies from overseas. These were the people who would provide the information which enabled him to fulfill his role. In the meetings with colleagues the publicity issues and his proposals as regards the content of the booklets were discussed.

For the Advertising Manager the preparation for exhibitions and gathering literature for the brochures, in other words the handling of the publicity affairs (the main aspect of his job), was considered as routine as were the attendance of the meetings related to such issues and the budget. There were occasions when he could alter the content of the Company's various means of publicising their products. Often a speculative approach to the market triggered this mood for change. Otherwise various identical cover designs and formats were repeatedly produced.

One major consideration as regards the content of the booklets was the availability/suitability of photographs which were to be included (sometimes displayed as well). This emphasis arose from a previous experience when the Company had the opportunity to promote their products to some potential buyers in Saudi Arabia. This had created an immediate need for photographs to demonstrate the strength of the engines. The already compiled descriptions and photographs had been presented to the customers, but the deal was never made. For the Public Relations Department this was a learning experience as they realised that there were various possible other "images" of dealing with their type of business.

The non-routine aspect of the Advertising Manager's job were unscheduled meetings in which changes in some of the Company's strategic approaches or similar matters were discussed. However, routine meetings, such as staff meetings, were scheduled in the Company's departmental diaries and were known to all employees.

Other time constraints included deadlines for some of the publicity projects; for example, preparing a display stand in an exhibition. These deadlines were set by

the major customers of the firm such as Ford Motor Company. In addition, the Advertising Manager worked closely with a journalist and an administrator and required the approval of the Sales and Accounts Manager on the draft descriptions and content of the booklets.

2. The Accounts Manager responsible for construction sector accounts was in his mid-50's and had been with the Company for three years. He described the main objective of his job as to "penetrate into the market...", that is, contacting original equipment manufacturers and consequently arranging deliveries of products. The achievement of this objective became possible by "keeping in touch" with other people, i.e. colleagues and clients. A "cordial relationship" was thus maintained through meetings with people in sales, planning and engineering departments.

He worked to the deadlines which were set by the customers for the deliveries, which simultaneously created the time deadlines for the Company's manufacturing operations in the U.K. and some other European countries. For instance, in the case of a customer in Sweden who needed an extra engine, the Accounts Manager had to get an engine which was modified promptly to this customer's specification and need and then shipped to its destination determined by the Swedish firm. This meant getting the engine at any cost from any of the suppliers. He would set a deadline for the supplier accordingly. The timing of the activities in this respect was central to the Accounts Manager's job.

Everyday the Accounts Manager would consider his list of customers against the calendar and decide what he would do next. Contacting people was said to be the routine aspect of the Accounts man's job. This included planning and arranging trips to the sites, the clients' firms, etc. The customers actually were listed

against the calendar. He planned his job accordingly. He compiled reports on every contact he made with the customers and after every visit he paid to the sites or customers. The accounts affairs, irrespective of the country where the deal was made, were handled by the Accounts Manager in the headquarters in England. For example, on one occasion a customer's complaint about the failure of the engine 4 days after purchase was dealt with in the U.K. headquarters, whilst the deal was handled initially in Holland. Such routines were sometimes interrupted by unscheduled meetings or ugent customer demands.

3. The Sales Manager, constructions and industrial accounts, was a young graduate from Harvard Business School who had been with the Company for two years. His job included setting strategies and guidelines for the sales of the buses in liaison with their Head Office in Belgium. Central to his job activities was the identification of changes in the market because the Company's pricing decisions were taken accordingly. The Sales Manager utilised forecasting methods in his conjectures about the future sales situation. In general, the planning for sales of the buses was long term and involved limited flexibility in terms of approaches to the markets. He was also involved in marketing of the generator engines used in the construction industry. The speculation of the market in the latter case required a search for more detailed information about the nature of demand and characteristics of the markets. The sales targets for most of the Company's products were decided on a day-to-day basis and with respect to short-term criteria because of the recognised rapid changes in the market. Moreover, there were deadlines which required a selective approach towards the information inputs which he received from their business environment. Often the information which was provided by the Accounts Managers were analysed and discussed in lengthy meetings. In order to select the appropriate inputs the Sales Manager had to rely on the others' technical knowledge.

The Sales Manager organised his activities against a personal diary form on which the details of activities and the time that he thought had to be spent on each activity were shown. By this method the priorities were set after the processing of the mail. He also maintained some other forms which contained his new ideas and some relevant time frames for consideration and implementation. Certain incidences which triggered new ideas would be recorded. Contacts with special customers on the bus side, in particular, were the main contributors or initiators of ideas. In terms of other products the Sales Manager had fewer contacts, in which case he had to seek information through one of his subordinates, i.e. the Accounts Manager for construction.

4. The Business Planning Director had recently graduated in Law and had been with the Company for two years. He was mainly engaged in financial planning, budgeting, use of and return on resources and forecasting sales and demands etc.

He had a schedule of activities for each day in addition to a list of specific issues which he assumed he had to deal with in his role capacity. Visits to other companies or sites and meetings were the main scheduled activities which imposed their time frames upon the general pattern of his managerial activities. The time frames of his planning activities were less rigid and varied, depending on the situational requirements. These activities were considered as the routine aspect of the work of the Planning Director. According to him such routines were common practice in all firms in their industry.

He often had to stay in the office after working hours. He was assisted in his work by 11 people at managerial and 5 at non-managerial levels.

5. The Accounts Manager, responsible for the motor industry accounts had been with the Company for about a year. His job was to deal with requirements and demands of the British Leyland Motor Company. He had to ensure that the engines were made to specifications and were delivered on time, in order to maintain favourable trading relations with BL. For the Accounts Manager a typical week consisted of a few days in the office and the remainder contacting various people, including his colleagues and clients outside. He maintained a list of activities which were mainly initiated by himself. The list also included some rituals and issues which were put forward by his superordinates.

Regularly he was informed by his superordinates of any increase in the prices of their engines, so that his next orders were taken upon the basis of up-to-date prices. Often the regular customers of Engine Ltd.'s products refused the increase in prices and the Accounts Manager had to review the contracts and justify the reason for the up-rise. On various occasions he spent some time outside the Company contacting customers who had no knowledge of the engines.

INTERPRETATION

I

It may seem appropriate to consider the activities of the managers in Engine Ltd. in the light of Mintzberg's propositions that managerial work is fragmented and that managers have little time to think about or plan what they are going to do.

With regard to this interpretation of managerial work, the work of managers in Engine Ltd. could be characterised as repetitive and routine. These managers seemed to be using their intuitions in their everyday handling of their tasks(cf. Mintzberg, 1973). For instance, the Sales Manager for medium-range engines was

using his intuition in planning and setting strategies for more penetration into the market. In this way, as he said, he could "explore the possibilities of expansion in the bus market" and "through contacts" he could "learn about opportunities". This was because he had easy access to information and "... knew what to do...". It must be noted that the Company was leading the market in sales of medium-range engines at the time of the study.

However, there were occasions when these managers made use of management science techniques. In particular these techniques were put into operation as and when the managers perceived a higher degree of uncertainty and had access to less reliable information. The Sales and Accounts Managers approached the planning for the future performance of some of their products by first deciding how the job could be done. They then developed various schedules about the time that might be taken by each activity necessary for the accomplishment of the requirement targets. This type of feasibility study were mostly done with regard to demands and needs of the construction industry.

If the activities of these managers were measured against scales based on the clock time, their work would seem discontinuous or perhaps "fragmented". There were interruptions of all types, such as telephone calls, their colleagues' queries, their secretaries reminding them of their scheduled activities, etc. For example, the Accounts Manager dealing with construction sector received three phone calls within 45 minutes, and two short visits by the Sales Manager (his boss) during the time of the interview. Some ideas were exchanged. He also had a short talk with the Personnel Director. Then he made a phone call to one of the manufacturing sites. These activities were all attached to one project: sales of an extra engine to a customer in Sweden. He switched his attention from one person to another and from one topic to another, yet all his actions were aimed at getting the order

delivered on time; thus within this time frame there was an underlying unity and direction (continuity) dominating his activities.

Moreover, the pattern of the activities of these managers seemed to be dictated by a set of time spans which were either self-imposed or determined by the Company's timetable. These managers worked to deadlines. These deadlines were often set by the members of their role-set which included their boss, the customers and their peers. Any episodes or events which would interrupt the flow of their work to that end, i.e. achieving the time deadlines, was referred to as "unexpected", which often implied an "undesirable" situation. In order to resolve the pressure of time deadlines, these managers consulted some conventional textbooks on management of time and some of them followed the tips suggested by these books.

The time deadlines not only produced some pressures but also determined the temporal pattern of their work. Familiarity with their customers' approach to purchasing and their ways of putting their demands forward made prediction and the timing of the orders possible and alleviated some of the felt hardship.

The other managers described an "unexpected event" in relation to their business environment. As the Accounts Manager for motor industry said, an unexpected event was "when a customer inquires about a type of engine which we do not sell and have no knowledge of it neither ...". For the Sales Manager "industrial action" was considered as an unexpected event, the consequence of which was loss of business. And as it happened, the strike in International Harvester Ltd. created some loss and slowed down Engine Ltd.'s business activities in the same period.

For these managers certain activities set the background for their agendas for the

day. For instance, the Sales Manager's priority list was set by the mail that he would receive each day. In addition there was the Departmental diary in which the dates of the scheduled meetings were shown and all these managers pegged their working days around these meetings. For these managers, as technocrats*, meetings were arenas for discussing in detail the issues related to the business activities of the Company and the manager's tasks accordingly. Their new ideas and approaches were discussed for long hours. No action was taken regarding these ideas without consultation with the corporate management team. Their activities, including their intellectual loadings in the meetings thus became concerned with maintaining the Company's operating system.

In addition to formal scheduled meetings these managers held unscheduled meetings for considering some immediate problems, such as the delivery of engines which were due. There were corridor talks when information was exchanged as regards to changes in their business environment; the events related to their rival companies; currency issues; or office re-decorations, etc. The information was sometimes presented in the form of gossip or annoyance.

These managers were clearly using the meetings, phone calls and visits (the obtrusive means) to fulfill their perceived tasks. Thus, one of the managers described his job as "... an on-going process ... full of meetings with other colleagues, with other people from overseas, those who provide us with information ...". Or consider this statement of annoyance: "the problem is we spend too much time in discussion and we often go into details, (that is whilst considering new ideas) ... One needs to have technical knowledge ... I have to rely

Foot Note

* Here, the term 'technocrat' is used to emphasise that these managers were given a limited degree of autonomy over what they did or how they did it.

on my colleagues' knowledge ...". And this expression of the need to talk to others: "Most of my work depends on what others tell me, (information) ... we are all dependent on each other...".

Attending several meetings in a day presented a fragmentary work pattern for these managers. Yet this was one way of handling the "hot lists" in their portfolios.

The pattern of their work activities seemed episodic; that is, full of switching from one person or subject to another, unlike their claims that there was no typical working day or week, there were in fact a set of "routine" activities. These were activities which managers carried out on a repetitive and recurrent basis. For instance, the Advertising Manager would periodically prepare advertisements for newspapers, posters for exhibitions, etc. The periodicity here was determined mainly by the outside agencies and by the frequency of their requirements. For the other managers routine activities equally implied a lesser possibility of making mistakes in the process. Moreover, depending on the frequency and extensiveness of their contacts with some other groups, for some managers the processes of dealing with others and handling relationships were described as routine. Sometimes the use of the term routine implied less complexity.

Considering the routine and non-recurrent aspect of these managers' activities, there seemed no explicit agenda-setting activity. This was because, according to these managers, there were some kind of external impositions, i.e. priorities were modified by their bosses at the directorial and board levels. However, they managed to compose lists of their daily and weekly activities with their related time-spans and durations. The extent that these lists were considered depended

upon what the managers referred to as "unexpected" or "crisis". The extent of the urgency of a project to be put on the agenda and its priority was initiated by the managers, as the Accounts Manager summed it up: 75% of the projects in (his) hot list were initiated by him, 15% by his boss and 10% were the rituals of the Company. The "hot lists" or "things to do" lists for these managers provided the initial push.

Some of these managers had another list at their disposal which contained new ideas with regard to the routines in their work and their responsibilities. This was referred to as the "data bank". The Planning Director had a list of items which ranged from writing letters, scheduled meetings, working on projects, writing personal memos, etc. But he also had "a separate list for specific issues". However, the duration of each activity on these lists could not be determined for certain.

The managers in Engine Ltd. utilised various means and channels of communication to continue with their managerial activities and to keep up-to-date with events. They made short or long phone calls and received on average ten phone calls per day. The phone calls were considered as interruptions. Making or receiving phone calls created short and long episodes in these managers' days. The flow of their work was interrupted. Yet the calls were related to the project at hand. The underlying continuity did not seem to be therefore disrupted. Furthermore, some managers preferred the use of the phone as it would help them to economise on time which was considered as their scarce resource. Some managers nevertheless chose to make face-to-face contacts, because, as the Planning Director put it: "... of non-verbals..." which could help them to make sense of others' reactions.

As partial fulfillment of their agendas these managers also contacted people outside the Company and visited their customers' firms and plants. Clearly these contacts were a means of communication between the Company and the customers and on all occasions they seemed to be involved in managing the boundaries.

For the Company's operations and for the managers, the markets were the driving force. The engine market varied quite rapidly as did the price of engines. The managers identified these variations which had influence upon what was considered as a feasible course of action. However, whatever criterion these managers considered in their decision-makings had to be short-term. They were informed of their competitors' activities, and the scope of the activities of their own Company with regard to the general economic situation, the price of different sources of energy, the changes in production technology and technical characteristics of similar products, etc. But in practice they had to confine themselves to activities which were the results of their customers' demands and requirements. In essence what they did was of less strategic character and perhaps more tactical. They had to maintain the leading image of the Company by ensuring that the opportunities with regard to their customers' activities were recognised and that also they were in control of the stable side of their market. That is to say that these managers were involved in selecing a set of recipes which were constructed for dealing with more immediate and short-term issues and were constituted in their "data banks". Regarding the temporal framework of their activities, i.e. the shorter time spans for their tasks, the deadlines and the routine tasks, their time-reckoning activities were technocratic: aimed at maintaining the momentum of the Company's operating activities.

These managers found the underlying purpose of what they were doing, whether negotiating with BL or a Saudi Arabian company, in maintaining the leading position of their Company. This belief set the background for increasing congruity in the Company. The managers perceived the object of what they were doing with reference to the Company's objectives as set by the corporate management team. Yet there was no institutionalised framework laid down for resolving the problems that the Company might face; such as, the physical spread of the manufacturing and marketing functions. There were, however, some formulae existing as regards the achievement of the objectives which encouraged quick solutions to the problems.

The managers believed that the Company's general performance was influenced by the nature of its technology, products and environments. The Company thus shared with other firms in the industry similar approaches to the handling of the routines and rituals. However, strategically different firms implemented different "recipes". The implementation of these recipes was a function of managerial style, which, in the case of Engine Ltd., was mainly concerned with problem-oriented planning and coalition among the managerial team and appraisal of the performance of their main competitors, e.g. Massey-Ferguson.

The experience of these managers seemed to play a significant role in their extrapolation of the market trends. The longer they had operated in environments similar to that of Engine Ltd., the more familiar they seemed to be with the changes in the market. However, their past loadedness in this respect initiated negative outcomes. The Accounts Manager for motor industry, who had been with the Company for a year had a different grasp of the market and continually

recognised new opportunities, regarding their operations. On the other hand the managers who had been with the Company for longer periods were aware of the changes and opportunities, but carried on utilising their old recipes, so maintaining the existing situation of the firm and tending to be reluctant to chase opportunities identified by some of their colleagues.

III

According to Stewart, there are boundaries of choice for managers. That is to say, managers have a varying degree of discretion about how they utilise their time and attention. Their job descriptions in this respect will become irrelevant. In the case of the managers in Engine Ltd., Stewart's contention was to be right at a superficial level. These managers carried out their managerial activities within a framework of demands initiated by their colleagues and customers and the constraints they perceived with regard to their felt discretion, time, knowledge and abilities. But this is an incomplete picture of their approach. Within Stewart's perspective there is no mention of the motivated behaviour of an individual manager, as explained below.

The Sales Manager was responsible for the sales of engines to bus manufacturing and construction firms. These involved two different types of products for two different types of market. He perceived more certainty and less complexity in the bus market and could clearly plan for the future developments and increasing penetration. With regard to the sales performance of the products sold to the firms in construction industry, he had to rely on the information provided by the Accounts Manager for construction. The Sales Manager had limited experience in this area. He said that he had "no practical experience in order to ask the right questions and receive and recognise the right response" and that he "needed to

trust his colleague to develop any conception of the market". He had not got this trust.

Conversely the Accounts Manager for construction industry (his colleague) stressed the significance of handling relationships with people in his type of job. For him people were customers. He admitted, however, to the fact that he found it difficult to obtain the co-operation of some of his workmates. He said that they had "conflicting ideas" about the handling of some of the isses but believed in "protecting" his boss (that is, the Sales Manager).

These managers had discretion over how they carried out their tasks, but their perceived choice was related to the degree that the environment of their work activities was considered as political and connected to the constraints, such as the skills of their role-set, or reduction in their work load. As the Sales Manager put it, managerial work was "... a political game. You should try to minimise the exposure... You have to back yourself by getting the right issue at the right time... The risk is high...".

The other point that the case of the Sales Manager in Engine Ltd. illustrated is that managers are not alone in choice-making situations. The members of their role-set influence what they can do or may do. These occasions were referred to as "impositions". Furthermore, the "insecurity" of the US headquarters which was shown through the policy guidelines, according to more senior managers, was considered as another source of imposition. They had to be responsive to their given enacted environments and made only limited attempts to modify them.

CASE II : RIVET LTD.

MANAGING CONTINGENT CONTINUITY

INTRODUCTION

The next section is devoted to the description of managerial work and its contexts in a firm which manufactures rivets, used in the construction and automotive industries. There are sections of interpretation and analysis of events alongside the description of the industry, the management team and their activities, the events and the contextual background to their activities.

Rivet Ltd., as a manufacturer of bolts and rivets ran a reactive business. Their business operations lagged between the time that bolts were made, the time that they were bought by the customers and the time that they were used. The management had to consider all the factors which affected their operations such as the recessive mood in the construction industry, the changing situation in the steel industry, the extent of utilisation of concrete in building and construction projects, and weather conditions. Rivet manufacturing is not characterised by seasonality, yet the extent of sunshine or rain determined the demand for rivets and bolts in Rivet Ltd.

There are certain major points which will be made in the following explanation and analysis of the activities of the managers and the events in Rivet Ltd. These are:

(a) The managers' activities were episodic, but there was an underlying continuity and direction found in the managers' reflection upon their experiences of events.

(b) These managers developed contingent time frames which they used as means for understanding their own as well as their competitors' situations. They utilised events and disjunctures for this purpose.

(c)   These managers were clearly using their intuitions and scientific aids in planning.

(d)   They acted according to certain pre-meditated projects.

The main object of the case study is to illustrate the limitations of Mintzberg's and some other researchers' perspectives for understanding managerial work and perhaps show that classical management theorisings may not be easily dismissed. Moreover, it resolves the "fragmentation" question by showing the 'on-going' managerial situations, and thus the existence of time diaries and organisational timetables.

BACKGROUND

Rivet Ltd. was the U.K. subsidiary of EM Corporation, a multi-national corporation based in the USA. The production and marketing functions of the Corporation were undertaken on a world-wide basis. Its operations were differentiated according to product groups. The product groups were: machinery, chemicals, fasteners, electric and electronics, storage equipment, etc. Rivet Ltd. was part of the Fastener Group. It was first established by a British entrepreneur some 80 years ago and then taken over by an American company. The American company diversified into the production of machinery for shoe and leather tanning after the Second World War. EM Corporation then took over the production of the company as a whole.

The EM corporate philosophy centred upon growth and profit maximisation. These objectives were attained through the use of high technology in all aspects of their operations. Two main options were seen to be open to the Corporation and its

offshoots in order to maintain their leading role with respect to some of the products:

(a)   achieving a higher market position whilst maintaining their price level; or

(b)   becoming a low cost producer.

Both options were also seen to emphasise the preference for qualitative growth rather than increase in sales volume and were known to the managers in the subsidiaries. In pursuit of its goals in 1981 the Corporation divested more than a dozen of its business units in different parts of the world, since they had failed to achieve the required level of turnover. The worldwide recession and the high degree of inflation had some impact on the operations of these units.

Whilst stressing the significance of high technology in their production and administrative activities the Corporation set up a plan for the full automation of the Fastener Group and therefore part of the operations of Rivet Ltd. in 1980. The automated plant was designed to produce millions of rivets untouched by human hands by its second year of development. However, major changes in the specifications of raw materials and application of tooling to accommodate the automation became necessary. The major implication of the compter-controlled production line was expected to be reducing the cost of production of the rivets without decreasing its quality level, which had been the highest in international markets.

The Corporation's strategic planning was mainly focused upon management of change. It thus contained the longer-term objectives. The managers of the companies in the product groups were provided with a formalised process for strategic planning in which the ground rules for the achievement of the goals were

clarified.

In 1981, a divisionalisation plan was implemented in all subsidiaries of the EM throughout the world. The Corporation had identified productivity as the most important aspect of the industrial process and the divisionalisation was presumed to facilitate the improvement of productivity levels in the plants. It was also expected to highlight and differentiate the performance of more profit-making products. The marketing resources were therefore directed to the promotion of some special products, such as rivets.

Introduction of divisionalisation coincided with an increase in profits of Rivet Ltd. in 1980-81. The strategic plan for 1981 was expected to take the Company through a turbulent period which set the background for the collapse of most other firms; and it did. The "false paradise" lasted for eight months however. The advantageous position of the Company declined as management altered their priorities. The nature of the market place was changing and the newly appointed sales force could not detect these changes. In particular a false level of affluence had been created partly due to the strike in the steel industry, which forced the distributors to increase their stocks of fasteners. But this meant that in the last quarter of the year there were no orders coming into the Company. The distributors even started sending their stocks back. As a result the management team decided to increase the prices as the market did not seem to have reacted to previous price increases. The Company survived the difficult period.

With regard to the ground rules which were laid down at the Corporate management level for standardised operations and productivity levels, Rivet Ltd. developed as one of the more successful subsidiaries of the Corporation. The managers maintained the operations through the recessive period of 1980-82 and were able to achieve subsequently a 50% growth rate and a reasonably high

turnover.

THE FASTENER INDUSTRY

The problem faced by Rivet Ltd. in 1980 with regard to under-utilisation of capacity and declining sales level, forcing the introduction of cost-cutting measures, was typical of many firms in the industry. The fastener industry was a low technology industry in terms of both product development and production techniques and there were few economies of scale. No real cost barrier of entry into the industry existed. The production of fasteners had declined since 1975 leading to a fall in the number of firms in the industry. Within a period of ten years there had been few technological innovations introduced with respect to the products.

Manufacturers of fasteners were towards the end of the production chain. This placed them in a position which made them vulnerable and yet important. During difficult economic times manufacturers were affected by falling demand and sometimes by increased competition. In turn, manufacturers reduced stock-holding and shortened their production runs. Fasteners were intensively used in metal-based manufacturing industries. The automotive industry took around 30% of the fastener industry's output. The other large users were the mining and construction industries.

In Britain the fastener industry had been suffering from:

- a falling level of production and sales;
- low level of capacity utilisation;
- low productivity and wages;

-   low technology production techniques.

The decline of the industry had been attributed to the decline in British manufacturing industry and decline in particularly the sectors that the industry was most dependent on, and growing penetration from imports. Since the 1970's the industry had been pessimistic about the future prospects and recovery. The firms that survived the industry's decline had to introduce cuts in their spendings and increase their productivity. Survival rather than success had been the name of the game for most firms in the industry.

The situation in Rivet Ltd. therefore evolved on a similar pattern. In 1980 the Company had a low level of capacity utilisation and sales volume declined. The Company introduced some cost-cutting schemes in order to cope with decrease in the profitability of their operations. Through these measures the Company curbed the inflationary effects and showed some increase in its sales.

INTRODUCING THE MANAGERS

1.   The Production Manager was fifty-five years old and had joined the fastener group as an operator working on machinery tools in one of the plants. For some years he had worked on production of various products, none of which was a profit-making type or leader in the market. He had been appointed as the manufacturing engineer after ten years. In the late 1970's, the Corporation's desire for expanding the fastener group in England and their search for new products, created a few managerial jobs. These new jobs included a post of "production manager designate" for a new product which was being developed, to which he was appointed. In effect he had no responsibility, however, as the development operations of this product were only transferred to Rivet Ltd. from

another company in the Group during divisionalisation. The R&D Department was in charge of the installation of the equipment. He was then appointed as the "Production Manager" in Rivet Ltd. At the time of surveying he had been in his job for four years. He worked closely with two foremen and a chargehand.

According to his job description, the Production Manager would "plan, organise, direct and control" the production activities in the factory. This involved ensuring that the materials and support services from other factories and suppliers were provided in order to meet the production targets. The targets were, however, set by the Director of Rivet Ltd. and on the bases of the Group and Corporation policies and already-set targets.

According to his job specifications he was responsible for a set of activities ensuring that:

(a) performances of the shop floor people are kept at a high level;
(b) the high quality standards of their products are maintained.

The performance levels and quality standards were set at the Corporate level. In practice the Production Manager diffused these responsibilities partly to one of the foremen and indirectly to the Marketing Department. Moreover, he was expected to ensure a "good industrial relations" on the factory floor. This was interpreted by the Director for the Production Manager as "keeping them busy, busy people will be satisfied". In fulfillment of this responsibility the Production Manager was found to make several trips to the shop floor, some of which had no clear purpose, and to talk to the foremen in his office. On various occasions he gave the operators "a pat on the back", ecouraging them to carry on with their work and teased the female workers.

Some aspects of his activities were emphasised and controlled in monthly operations meetings by the Director. Firstly, the achievement of MBO targets which were set annually for his Department was compulsory. Secondly, maintaining the costs of production within the agreed budget frameworks had to be ensured. These two aspects were significant to the jobs of all managers in Rivet Ltd.

2.   The Marketing Manager was in his mid-thirties and had been employed by the group for fourteen years. He started as a sales representative on the road, selling the plastic and metal products used in the construction and automotive industries for the firms in the London area. He was then accountable to one person, the Sales Manager, who was located in the Midlands. When his boss left the Group, he was appointed as the Sales Manager. He had "no management experience as such, no familiarity with the characteristics of the Midlands, the sales and production forces". In the process of divisionalisation he was selected as the Marketing Manager for Rivet Ltd.

His job specifications were similarly worded to the Production Manager's: he was responsible for the "planning, organising, controlling and directing" of the marketing activities of Rivet Ltd. for the U.K. and Eire, for all the products used in the construction industry. This involved the search for new products and ensuring that they were launched successfully. Generally the production and launching of a new product were initiated by the Director or at the Board level. In practice the Marketing Manager's activities circled around preparations for strategic plans which were devised every five years and revised on an annual basis. In addition, on a day-to-day basis, he continuously updated the figures for sales, notably the sales volume and prices, and the received and despatched

orders. It was ensured that the Production Department was kept informed regarding orders, that the factory capacity was not over/under-utilised, and the appropriate stock levels were maintained.

The achievement of the budgeted profitability and sales were considered to be the essence of the Marketing Manager's plan of activities. Obviously, if the targets were hit it implied success and performance was rated as good. However, the budget figures were determined by each department at certain times in the year, for the year ahead, upon the basis of the targets set by the Board of Directors.

The Marketing Manager was also responsible for training and "motivation" of the sales force. With regard to training, training courses were arranged for the sales representatives in which various training packages on marketing approaches were used. The Marketing Manager would determine the content of the courses and thus select the package. The motivation of the staff took various forms; for the sales representatives it included the acquisition of new cars and increase in bonuses. For the colleagues in the Marketing Office, the Marketing Manager's tactics ranged from delegating more responsibility on an unofficial/informal basis to arranging surprise birthday lunches.

In his attempts to maintain an appropriate marketing organisation, the Marketing Manager held frequent meetings with two of his managers who were responsible for "sales" and "product development" activities. The "Area Supervisors" were kept in contact via the telephone. They would visit the Marketing Department periodically to report on their activities, the performance of their products in the market place, the position of their distributors, levels of stock and their access problems.

3. The Director of Rivet Ltd. was in his mid-thirties and had been with the

Fastener Group for twelve years. He was a graduate in Business Administration and on joining the Company initially held an administrative post. During his early years with the Company, however, the group lost some brand loyalty and some of its shares in the market due to poor delivery services, although there were 160 people providing customer services. At that time the Corporation was showing increasing interest in the use of computers for administrative purposes. As the Administrator, he identified the problem with customer services as over-manning and so he reduced the number of employees to 50 and thus made the Department more "efficient" through increasing the use of computerised systems. Therefore, in the post of administrator he increasingly became involved in looking after data processing and computerisation of customer services. He also played a major role in the planning and implementation of divisionalisation programmes for Rivet Ltd. in the late 1970's which was linked with another company in the Group. In 1980 he was appointed as the Director of Rivet Ltd. and a set of profitability and growth targets which were determined by the Corporation's management team constituted the direction for him to follow.

As the Director he set MBO (i.e. management by objectives) targets for four managers and two engineers who were directly accountable to him. The MBO were mainly breakdowns of the growth targets set at the Corporate level and were expected to contribute to the achievement of the short and long term plans of Rivet Ltd. The MBO's also served another purpose; they were mechanisms for monitoring the performances of those accountable to the Director. In practice, the employees in the firm considered the MBO's peripheral to the nature of their activities. Theoretically, the targets were accepted but might not be achieved within the expected time periods. However, the Director, as part of his responsibilities, arranged monthly meetings with the managers, engineers, accountants; his next-in-line officers. These meetings were (a) to examine the

achievement of the MBO targets, (b) a means of procedural communication and (c) processing and disseminating information at the managerial level. The outcome of these meetings formed the basis of the Director's reports to the Board of Directors and to inform them of the performance of Rivet Ltd., its achievement of the targets, etc.

In the Director's job description, exploitation of market opportunities for new products was considered as essential. However, in practice it was the Marketing Manager who continually monitored the market place and the Director was kept informed accordingly. This enabled him to safeguard their profitable business operations.

The running of the data processing services remained with the Director as part of his specific responsibilities. Following computerisation he had to work towards the improvement and development of new information systems which could contribute and facilitate the Company's operational efficiency and profitability. The Director's "administrative" background, by work experience and qualification, affected his assessment of his colleagues, and what they did. The Production Manager referred to him as "the organisation man". He considered himself to be "task-orientated". This implied that he would ensure that the people in Rivet Ltd. knew what was expected of them and there was limited possibility that these expectations would be altered. He referred to his own style of management as democratic, by which he meant "getting people to say yes to what you want them to do". He was known as "the successful" director in the Fastener Group.

RIVET LTD. IN ACTION

The factory in Rivet Ltd. manufactured rivets continuously. Each day 50% of the

people on the shop floor started work at 0730 hours in the morning and stopped work at 1600 hours in the afternoon. This group included some of the people in charge of production, sorting, packaging and storage of rivets. The other half of the employees worked on three shifts; the morning shift which started at 0600 hours in the morning until 1330 hours in the afternoon, the afternoon shift which came on at 1330 hours and finished at 2100 hours and night shift which lasted for 9 hours and included fewer employees. The employees on these shifts worked for 37 hours a week, whereas the rest of the workforce worked for 39 hours a week. The machinery and the equipment were in operation on a similar basis. The number of working hours and days in a week varied according to perceived changes in the market place and the economic situation in general. During the recessive period, the number of working days in a week were reduced to 3 or 4 days for various groups of employees. As the signs of economic recovery were detected, that is, there was an increase in orders for all types of rivets, the number of working days were increased to six and a half days. In the "good old days" of the 1970's, especially 1979-80, the Company worked at full capacity and employees were engaged for 40 hours a week.

In other factories in the Group the hours of work were different - the people on the shop floor would have longer lunch breaks and therefore would stop work at a later time. However, one of the long-term plans of the directors in the Group was to move towards more standardised working timetables for all the employees in various plants. In principle, the working hours and shift arrangements were negotiated centrally by the unions. The management team had provided a universal form of "agreement" (contract) to be used within the Group regarding the timetables.

The management in Rivet Ltd. preferred a more flexible working timetable.

However, employees of the Company had to sign an agreement that they would be prepared to work shifts if it were required. The manufacturing operations usually stopped during the shut-down periods; that is, for two weeks in summer; last week of July and first week of August, Spring Bank Holiday week (which would be late May) and then for Christmas and the New Year. There were a "skeleton" warehouse staff working on shifts during the shut-down period and the store would be kept open to provide despatch facilities for the customers. The Christmas shut-down was an exception to this rule and no despatching would take place.

During the shut-down period the factory was partially dismantled and re-built, sometimes by the shop floor workers. There were occasions that experts were brought in from outside agencies to see to the process. Any required maintenance work would be carried out during the shut-down period where possible and throughout the year, notably when the machinery were in use at full capacity.

A few weeks before the shut-down, the activities on the shop floor became more intensive. The "store girls" provided the latest account of stock, i.e. packed and ready-to-despatch products. The "sorting ladies" had to handle a heavier load. There were "rush" orders and "urgent" despatches which came through the marketing and sales departments in their attempts to reduce the backlogs before the shut-down period. This was a period of hard work and excitment with angry comments often being exchanged as the trays of rush orders were piled up. The workers on the shop floor and the Production Manager blamed the "chaos" on the inefficient performance of the Sales and Marketing Departments for construction and welding systems. Expectedly, the Sales and Marketing Departments and the Director, described the production people as slow in reacting to situations and in recognising the priorities, and thus ranked them as low in performance regarding productivity. The "backlogs" and delays in handling of orders were revealed at the

times of shut-down or holidays and were followed by inter-departmental criticisms. Initially the problems were apparent when there were some incidences of error and customer complaints. Incorrect numbers of goods sometimes were packed and despatched to some customers, whilst at other times some customers received goods which they had not ordered.

RIVET LTD. AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Rivet Ltd. had been leading the market with regard to their fastener products. Some of these products were made of steel (some galvanised finish and some steel anchorbolt) and some of plastic. Both types of product were mainly used by the construction industry. Demand for fasteners was therefore heavily dependent on fluctuations in the construction industry. In general construction activities were fragmented and projects were of an ephemeral nature. Turnover in this industry was found to vary greatly during the year as a result of various factors. In particular site works were highly seasonal due to the weather, and were therefore restricted during winter. Holidays also affected construction work between May and September. Thus building contractors tended to lose money on site operations during November to April and relied on "hay-making" between May and October for profit and high turnover, with October being the month of peak turnover. Most construction companies, therefore, started to purchase raw materials for site operations in March, whilst monitoring the weather.

The fastener industry, however, exhibited trends less pronounced than the construction industry due to marginal interfaces with the maintenance areas and DIY markets. Considering the situation in Rivet Ltd., the sales of rivets and other types of fasteners usually peaked in June and remained high until late October. This increase was related to weather conditions but not in the same fashion or

parallel with the fluctuations in construction activities. According to the managers there was a four month time lag in the selling system, because the rivets were usually sold to the distributors who would store them and at a later stage sell them to the users, e.g. the construction companies and builders.

Despite this belief in a four month lag, managers in the fastener industry linked performance for sales in a particular month to the same month's weather rather than that of four months previously, in the sense that if it rained in December it was considered a "bad" December regarding sales, or if it snowed in January it would be a "bad" January. The sales volume indeed dropped accordingly. Similarly if it were sunny in June it would be described as a "smashing month" in terms of sales. But if a time-lag existed there could not be any direct relation or fit between the sales and the weather, because if the weather were fine in June the construction people would be using the stocks they bought in March or April. Thus the time lag recognised by managers can not explain all the variations during the year in the sales of rivets, in what actually seemed to be a reactive business operation. Other, perhaps unrecognised explanations, must therefore exist. In particular it seemed likely that when the weather was better than usual construction work proceeded more rapidly than anticipated and therefore bolts were sold quicker than distributors expected. The distributors therefore began to worry about finishing their stocks and demanded more bolts from Rivet Ltd. However, fluctuations which reflected the weather could also simply be because when the weather was nice the sales representatives were more mobile and promoted the products more aggressively.

In addition to these weather-related factors, and demand from the construction industry, another cause of fluctuations in demand for fasteners during the year was found to be .factory maintenance work. This was usually carried out during

the shut-down periods, leading to a demand around that time from factories for nuts and bolts. This "cold business" was very slow and cyclical. Demand for fasteners was therefore heavily dependent on the construction industry. The serious effects which recession in this industry could have on sales of fasteners was well-illustrated by Rivet Ltd.'s attempt to launch a new product in the early 1980's. Thus one factor which affected the sales of rivets was the extent that concrete was utilised in construction works since Rivet Ltd. produced a special type of bolts which could only be used on hard surfaces. In 1981, the recession in the construction industry and the consequent decline for building materials contributed to the failure of the "type A" rivet, a cheaply produced item which Rivet Ltd. decided to launch in the same period.

It was then anticipated that 1982 would be grim regarding the sales prospects and thereafter limitations were imposed upon the expenditure for further improvement of newly-launched products. Similarly, the authorities in the construction industry announced down-turns in the construction operations in 1982 and looked forward to increases in site works and rises in the demand for building materials in 1983.

At the time of the recession price increases had not been seen as an attractive strategy for Rivet Ltd. with regard to the construction industry. The prices of raw materials were often kept at the same level during recession in the fear of adverse reactions, however, at the end of 1982 Rivet Ltd. increased the price of its leading product. This was seen as a means to boost the sales turnover, a usual tactic, just as it was a response to the competition initiated by the cheaper, yet lower quality imported products. The outputs of other industries, such as steel and concrete, as well as construction, were speculated and their forecasts were carefully examined prior to such decisions.

RIVET LTD. AND THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The weld studs and equipment were the second group of profit making products for Rivet Ltd. The studs were used in the automotive industry and their sales performance was to a great extent linked to, and varied in accordance with, the events in that industry. It was of prime significance to Rivet Ltd, with regard to the stud welding systems and operations to observe the mood of the automotive industry and conjecture about events, such as the possibility of strikes, industrial actions and "walk-outs" by the industry's workforce.

The demand for studs was dependent upon the number of cars which were produced in the UK. Forecasting the number of cars that might be produced was a complex task. The companies in the motor car industry, for example Ford Motor Company, had automobile production lines in most countries in Europe, and cars produced by them in Spain and Belgium were sold in the UK market. Rivet Ltd. found peaks and troughs in the sales of studs due to such production policies pursued by their clients in the motor industry and thus had to prepare for them. The commercial relationships that Rivet Ltd. had with the major companies in the automotive industry, e.g. Ford, BL, were founded upon certain critical terms. Rivet Ltd. was committed to the production of weld studs and equipment to specifications determined by these motor companies. Moreover, this created the time deadlines in terms of production and delivery of studs according to which they operated. They would re-arrange the production times of other products to ensure that the delivery was on time.

Generally, delays in delivery only ranged between 24 to 48 hours of the set date. The Production Department would justify the delay by reference to under-manned store and despatch sections. Sometimes, however, double bookings of the same

order by the Sales Department and miscomprehension of delivery dates occurred. The Sales Department for weld studs was not in close proximity to the Production Department and communications had to be done through memoranda or via the telephone. The influential clients such as Ford could often ask for changes in the delivery arrangements. There would therefore be changes in the production schedules to meet the altered date. It would be a disaster regarding sales performance if these customers turned to Rivet Ltd.'s competitors.

The Company attributed its successful performance through the recessive period, to its "quick reaction to customers' needs". Their "customer orientation" was strong and could extend as far as breaking down some of their machinery! By comparison their rival companies worked on the basis that there would never be a need for their production departments to move some machinery around. They believed that such movements could reduce the efficiency of the machinery and equipment. But for Rivet Ltd., satisfaction of the customers was the means for securing future deals and thus worth taking some risks, i.e. over-utilising their production machinery and equipment.

THE COMPETITION

Rivet Ltd. had established and secured its position in the market over the years through the development of a unique riveting system and manufacturing of through-bolt fastening for the building and construction industry. They had been operating in a competitive market where there were threats from the well-established manufacturing companies such as Philips and Hilti as well as imported products from the Far East. Rivet Ltd.'s competitors were entrenched in reduced markets and the general low technology base of the industry eased the attacks from the cheap imports. Rivet Ltd. adopted a different approach to handling each

of their competitors. The main aim was to "keep them out of the market". Philips (UK) was owned by ITT who according to managers in Rivet Ltd. were interested in increasing their investments in fastener products. However, their investment programmes were a direct function of the profitability of the companies in the Group - that is to say, if Philips failed to increase their profitability, ITT would not invest any capital in the development of products, etc. At Rivet Ltd. the managers acted upon certain assumptions with regard to the available information about Philips' activities. In order to keep Philips' profitability down they adopted an aggressive marketing of their unique, high quality products and motivated their distributors by changing the terms for their credits, etc.

With regard to Hilti, their major competitor, the situation was different. The managers claimed that Hilti had always adopted an extremely aggressive pricing strategy which often affected the sales of Rivet Ltd.'s fasteners. Hilti also benefitted from close co-operation between its R&D and Marketing Departments, so that when the Company introduced new products, they often achieved success more rapidly than any of their rival companies. Their professional outlets would ensure that their products reached "the right markets and right customers at the right time" according to the Marketing Manager. The only option available to Rivet Ltd. seemed to have been to increase prices in a way which did not alter their sales volume and by this method they had continued to be the market leader. In addition, Hilti's philosophy was to provide "a service" for the construction industry, but with regard to products for fixing only, the managers in Rivet Ltd. believed that the Company could offer a comprehensive range of products with functional advantages.

In 1982 Rivet Ltd. faced the dilemma of cheap imports of bolts which could

contract their market share. Within a year the share of the British market for these products taken by foreign companies expanded by nearly 10 per cent. There were two options available to the managers in Rivet Ltd.: either to reduce the prices which would decrease their profits or ignore the new competition which could lead to a dwindling market share for Rivet Ltd. in the long-run. In response the managers in Rivet Ltd. thought that considering their automated production plant, which was capable of a high volume of production, any development of products had to be market-orientated. They searched for ways of enhancing the quality of the product (bolts) so that they could maintain both their brand leadership and profits. In order to do this they had to obtain some marketing expertise from outside the company to help them develop an appropriate marketing programme. Their products had some inherent benefits: they were of value to architects and engineers as they could specify fixing devices strictly according to design requirements. A large sum of money was invested to support this quality approach to the market.

It was found that, in spite of these clearly-defined product benefits, the distributors and the users were buying on the basis of price. At the same time the imported products had weak branding. The distribution system was Rivet Ltd.'s established marketing "lynch pin" according to the Marketing Manager. The Company's bolts and rivets were sold in the UK through a wide distribution network. However, these distributors were the prime target of the importers' attack. Rivet Ltd. directed its promotion at the distributors as the most effective way of increasing their awareness (of the benefits of the products) as well as the users and specifiers. This set of actions was considered necessary, in view of the managers' anticipation of what would happen if the imported products attracted the market more widely.

Rivet Ltd. had once experienced a similar problem. A specific product had been imported from Brazil at an enormously subsidised price. In order to keep this product out of the market, Rivet Ltd. had approached the distributors who had bought the product with the intention of selling them to other distributors who dealt with any type of product irrespective of their quality. However, there was "no structure" behind the distributors' campaign. Rivet Ltd. bought the product off the distributors to keep them out of the market. Within a month the product was "killed effectively": as there was nowhere in the UK that buyers could obtain it. Simultaneously, aggressive promotion of their bolts was carried out; the price of the product was increased and the volume of sales remained favourable.

RIVET LTD. AND THE DEAL WITH THE DISTRIBUTORS

As was previously mentioned, Rivet Ltd. sold its products through a set of distributors. There were also sales representatives who worked under regional supervisors and monitored the distribution of their products in the UK. One of their leading products, the special bolt, had been on the market for more than 40 years which was a long life-cycle regarding the character of the construction industry which is ever-changing and mobile. The other products had different life cycles, yet had been on the market for shorter periods and were more vulnerable in terms of competition.

In 1981, since the prospects in the construction industry seemed gloomy and the sales of building materials showed a decline of 13.3 per cent, the distributors of construction products became cautious in their dealings. At Rivet Ltd. special bolts were considered "the only weapon in their arsenal"; the only means to attract the distributors. But the distributors, according to the Marketing Manager were aware of the long life cycle of this product and were unwilling to buy any

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such product which they thought might not be sold. Also they were becoming more sophisticated, searching for new products and new markets and gradually were moving away from Rivet Ltd.'s specialised products. The distributors' brand loyalty was fading away. They started stocking cheaper brands, and selling them in the name of Rivet Ltd. On some occasions the distributors returned the stock to the Company to be resold.

The Company faced a task of "getting the distributors back in line". The recessive period had strengthened the distributors' position. The managers in Rivet Ltd. reckoned that either some system of incentive or sanction had to be introduced to ensure that the distributors followed the Company's lines. The Company therefore looked carefully at its distributors. At that time dealings with the distributors were arranged according to an "80-20 rule"; that is to say, 80 per cent of the business of Rivet Ltd. was done through 20 per cent of the distributors who sold only Rivet Ltd.'s products. The remaining 20 per cent was spread among other distributors who sold a range of products from all companies. Accordingly, there were 3 categories of distributors working with Rivet Ltd.: the main distributors (selling only Rivet Ltd. products), other distributors and re-sellers. The middle group were "bread and butter distributors" which handled 50% of the sales in volume and 65% in revenue terms for the Company. The bottom end of this "pecking order" were the re-sellers who would benefit less in time of recession.

This categorisation became a basic element in Rivet Ltd.'s policy-making and constituted the basis for different approaches to the distributors in the attempt to secure their brand loyalty. The distributors were informed of the new structure. The pre-requisites for membership of each category were clarified; that is in terms of what was expected of them and what they could expect of the Company in return. Hence, the distributors were obliged to stock only the products

manufactured by Rivet Ltd.

By this process the distributors who fell into the middle category would lose some of their benefits. But they could buy similar products from Rivet Ltd.'s competitors, which in the long-run meant losing the orders that they could get from Rivet Ltd. The balance was a delicate one. If the Company stopped supplying this group of distributors with their products, they would have to sell them directly to users in the absence of a professional sales force.

Moreover, the Company could not adopt "price restrictive practices" to control re-sale prices. This was illegal. The distribution outlets were the most difficult to control in this respect the managers thought. However, a more productive tool, rather than weapon, was "credit control"; the Company could increase or reduce the credibility of the distributors through some financial means and allow distributors to climb up the structure, if they seemed to have the potential. Just like a deal, the terms became more clarified and rigid gradually; the more committed they showed themselves to be to the Company's products, the better would be the terms offered to them, e.g. they would have discounts, or they would be given some financial backing for their publicity campaign activities. The structuring of the distribution system, the categorisation of distributors and the related strict policies were encompassed in a document and it was practised rigidly thereafter.

Facing the decline in their brand loyalty, the Company sought other alternatives in addition to categorisation. Direct selling to the users could be another alternative, which could be done in two ways. The first course was to approach the customers directly, which implied facing the market place more closely. This was a difficult task due to the absence of expertise in the Company.

The second course of action would be opening up small distribution outlets throughout the country gradually, just as their major competitor did. This kind of selling would give them "a back door into the market place". Accordingly they could start either with opening a small distribution network in the Midlands, then could expand it and "roll it over across the country". Or they could "join the big band" said the Marketing Manager, and buy up one of their larger distributors and "get into a big way with all cards on the table".

By the end of 1982, the strict "guidelines" which were devised for the distributors, brought back the lost loyalty and improved the efficiency of the distribution network. Direct selling, then, seemed more problematic since the bolts were reaching their saturation point and development of distribution outlets would be less cost-effective. Attention was given to packaging: therefore, the "brown bag" packaging was changed to a new type of "flat" packaging, nobody had packed bolts in such a way before. The new type of packaging made the products more noticeable. The managers in Rivet Ltd. considered the events of this period as a reference point.

GETTING INTO THE "DIY" MARKET

During the period of 1980-82, Rivet Ltd. facing the major issue of declining sales performance for previously mentioned reasons; difficulty in monitoring distributors' trading activities and the fact that their main product was reaching its saturation stage, sought an alternative course of action. Actually, the Company produced a range of products, some of which were oriented towards the consumer market. The Director of Rivet Ltd. believed that a major step towards alleviating the hardship caused by the distributors was to get into the "DIY"

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market. Resources were thus allocated for the development of this project.

This was a high risk area, but if it were successfully implemented, it was expected to double the sales turnover within two years. This represented a great deal of commitment on the side of the Marketing Department to get into this sophisticated market. The risk was justified by the fact that their reliance upon the construction activities had decreased their chances of product improvement and search for other markets. Moreover, people seemed to be more aware of "DIY" techniques and products and becoming more adventurous whilst building extension to their houses and in their repairs and refurbishments. However, the project needed to be approved by the parent Company in the U.S. By the second quarter of 1984, the Company was in its "final throes" regarding the launching of the product.

THE SEARCH FOR OTHER MARKETS

Considering the characteristics of their business environment, Rivet Ltd. also aimed at exploiting certain other opportunities, such as gaining some low shares in the export market. However, getting into an overseas market was a long-term process which would include a search for a suitable distributor primarily and then setting him up with the business. The sales force in Rivet Ltd. were allocated tasks annually for the following year, thus any new assignment had to be considered in the planning and budgeting for the coming year. Moreover, most of Rivet Ltd.'s export market tended to be in Europe because of the fact that their products were mainly made of steel. Farther than Europe the shipping cost would make the attempt more expensive and would affect the extent of their competitiveness.

The markets in oil-producing countries seemed to be promising. Their speculation

was based on the fact that these countries used the oil revenue mainly in building and construction projects. They started approaching the markets in the Middle East, in particular the Saudi Arabian market, which was the biggest for construction products outside Western Europe.

Some meetings were arranged with various tradesmen and the potential sales representatives, who were of Arab origin. Meanwhile, indirect selling to the Saudi market was expanded. By mid-1983, the appointment of the sales representative for Jeddah, the capital city, was confirmed and the products were shipped. Within a year Rivet Ltd.'s market share increased to 3 per cent. The Company, in fact, entered this market by the most economic means available, very limited promotion or publicity was carried out. The representative and the tradesmen involved in the process were continuously contacted.

LAUNCHING "TYPE A" RIVET

The fastener group was aware of the fact that some of their well-established products could always be threatened by some new and more cheaply manufactured products. In 1976, the Marketing Director of the Group, at the time, introduced the idea of "type A" rivet, a product which could be made cheaper yet would not match the "traditional" specifications. It would be sold at the cheaper end of the market within which the competition was growing. The Board of Directors, who made the strategic and policy decisions for the Fastener Group, approved of the idea. The decision was made on the basis of information and reports of the viability of the new type of product which was provided by the relevant Departments.

It took the R & D and Marketing Departments three years to develop and prove

the product out. The expenditure for producing the product, however, was high. The production of the new rivet required traditional equipment as well as some new pieces of equipment, some diverse skills and expertise. The Production Department in Rivet Ltd. was selected to carry out the operations. In comparison to the Company's traditional method of production, fewer operators were required and the cost of raw materials was low. The new technology used in the production of "type A" made these savings possible. However, the labour force lacked the required expertise. There were very few people who knew the characteristics and functions of the new rivet, and these were the people in the R & D Department who were supposed to have disseminated the information to the production department. The Production Manager designated for "type A" was unfamiliar with the technology and the new equipment. The operations were, nevertheless, supervised by the R & D Department.

Following a set of delays in the launch of the new type of rivet, the product was launched for the first time in January 1980. Its initial sales figure was below the expected level, and as a result a large stock of products gradually built up. The volume of sales never increased. This was attributed to the way it was launched and the inefficient advertising activities.

At a later stage of its development, the Production Department in Rivet Ltd. was put fully in charge of the process. In a trial period, the production personnel examined various levels of efficiency for the machines and the operators. The product was re-launched in April 1981, but the volume of sales remained low.

According to the management team in Rivet Ltd., production of "type A" rivet was the biggest mistake that the Group had ever made. As there had been a five year time lag between the initiation of the idea, its production and launch, and the

characteristics of the market had changed drastically by then: "it was a classic marketing mistake" the managers confessed.

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW STOCK CONTROL SYSTEM

The people on the shop floor and the manner by which they carried out the production operations was not found disruptive to the flow of orders into the Company. Nevertheless, in January 1981 a number of significant stock variances, both adverse and favourable, were reported in the product line operating results. There was no doubt that the existing ways of controlling the stocks were unsatisfactory. Initially it was assumed that the loss of stocks of bolts could have been caused by the large order which had been despatched to Saudi Arabia. It was impossible to re-check the account as the order was despatched from America. This incidence raised the alarm with respect to budget control and the Production Manager had to carry out the initial investigation into the stock losses in monetary terms, and a college student studying marketing was assigned to investigate the problem and work on the re-layout of the store. At that time the stocks in the store were not piled in any order because of the shortage of space on the factory floor.

Simply, the situation was that the raw materials - steel bars - were bought according to "weight". Each bar was assumed theoretically to produce "x" number of bolts. The production staff recorded the number of bars they used and also the number of bolts which were produced at the end of the production process. The supervisor would check the recorded figures, then the "filled forms" were sent to the person in charge of the store who would check the number of bars against the expected quantity of bolts. Since, at the point of purchase the recording was done according to weight, a conversion factor was used.

The initial reports suggested that the current stock control systems were incapable of highlighting whether stock discrepancies were caused at the factory floor or the office area. The stock system needed to be reviewed with the aim of illustrating the potential problems which were experienced regarding the stock checks. The matter was put to the Board of Directors in order to appoint an "experienced person" for investigation.

It was then agreed that a physical stock check would take place in March (1981) to cover the raw materials and work-in-progress with regard to bolts. The Production Manager was to arrange meetings with accountants, stock controller and the foreman, to ensure that "proper procedures" were adopted. The exercise was gradually extended to the other products.

The accountants' primary investigation illustrated that the stock loss was likely to be in the work-in-progress (WIP). Samples were chosen from the stainless steel bolts group to compare the transferred lot to finished stocks. Furthermore, the total number of bolts produced on the conomatics (special manufacturing equipment) was calculated and compared to the bolts transferred into finished stock, taking into account the volume at the opening and closing WIP, between the end of October (1980) and end of March (1981).

The stock loss on bolts was valued at £9,000 in the first six months of 1981 and was found to be increasing. On some occasions the variations in figures were attributed to clerical errors. It was speculated that when the bolts were received back from the platers there could have been some weight gain or loss.

The student who was working on the "store re-layout" project started his inquiry by measuring the weight of produced bolts before they were sent to platers and

after plating or cleaning. This exercise was done at various time intervals. There were some discrepancies shown. It was then suggested that a computerised stock control system could ease the problem.

Nevertheless, the stock loss increased up to £60,000 in 1984. In the end it was decided that allowances should be made in the annual budgeting for the losses. The problem was considered to be inherent in the system.

Concurrently the "industrial relations" in the factory entered a new era. There had been minor back-biting among the employees of various shifts, yet negligible considering the general atmosphere of the floor and their performance. There had been a degree of flexibility; often, urgent rush orders were dealt with at short notice.

But some weeks before Christmas 1981 the servicemen refused to unload raw materials which were urgently needed to keep one of the pieces of equipment in operation. The Director was acting as the Production Manager during this period. In response to the management threatened course of action, which was to be taken against these employees, the TGWU undertook a campaign of non-co-operation against the factory management. Discussions and negotiations were carried out with the shop stewards and union officials with a view to "improve the overall industrial relations" and the "flexibility of the factory" said the Director. The negotiation continued for three months. The industrial action did not, however, affect the despatch of orders and the sales performance improved to a satisfactory level.

Further minor unrest was caused by the use of workers from other factories. Sometimes, when the amount of orders increased, a number of workers and

operators had been brought in temporarily from other factories in the Group. The permanent workers protested about this arrangement, so the management sought another alternative. The workers on the shop floor were allowed to determine the duration and timing of the overtime with the permanent workers having the priority over the temporary workers regarding this choice.

The efficiency of the Company's stock control system was examined during this period. The impact that these minor clashes of interest could have upon the production process and recording of the manufactured bolts seemed to have been disregarded by the managers.

REPLACEMENT FOR THE PRODUCTION MANAGER

At the time of this study, the first production manager for Rivet Ltd. relinquished his position, officially, for health reasons. The Company produced a variety of products and ought to be reactive to customer demands. This made the works management a "demanding job" which the first Production Manager found difficult to cope with; his lack of management experience perpetuated the difficulties. The shop floor was then administered by the Director during which period there was a major incidence of industrial action by some of the employees.

The Company, the Director mainly, meanwhile continued searching for somebody who was a "big person" said the Director, i.e. could take all the demands. The recruitment process was organised by management consultants who advised the Company on personnel questions. They looked among the candidates for the person who was technically sound and in the long run would be appointed as the R & D Director.

The selected candidate for the Production Manager's post had engineering qualifications and prior to applying for this job had held the post of general manager in an engineering company. In the first instance he rejected the offer, yet after a few months he accepted it. In his previous role as the General Manager, he had delegated various responsibilities to a group of people, "a string of lieutenants" who would fulfill them the Director explained. In Rivet Ltd. there was no such string; he sought the co-operation of a foreman and a chargehand. At the same time he faced some family problems - his health was affected and he requested "sick leave" for a few months. He left Rivet Ltd. to take the post of the "works director" in another firm. This was unexpected for the rest of the management team in Rivet Ltd. Once more, the Director took charge of the responsibilities of the Works Manager for roughly six months until a new manager was appointed in December of 1983.

At the time that the new Production Manager was appointed, the Company was operating at over-capacity and there existed an enormous backlog, due to breakdown of some machines in the previous months. The quality of the products also seemed to have been deteriorating. He started working closely with the foreman, the chargehand and the quality controller, to rectify these problems.

WHAT THE MANAGERS WERE DOING: An Interpretation

I

Rivet Ltd. manufactured a variety of fasteners products which were used in other manufacturing and building operations. The continuity of these operations was maintained as the managers in the Company coded and decoded the events. Their coding activities contained their analysis and definitions of various situations,

reactions of their role-set and happenings in their business environment which provided the grounds for decisions made at the higher managerial levels of the Company; that is, the Group Chairman. In their attempts to analyse and understand what was happening around them, these managers utilised a variety of means; such as, their intuitions and experiences and other managers' accounts of the situations. Yet they would compare and contrast their "gut feelings" with the given corporate policies and strategies before taking action.

The observation of what these managers were doing initially would characterise the nature of their activities as fragmentary because they switched their attention from one activity to another, from one person to another and from one subject to another. The extent of fragmentation in their activities varied with the type of responsibilities and roles they assumed, and the number of issues initiated by their role-set. There were times, for instance, the Production Manager focused his attention on an event which he considered strategically significant, e.g. meeting with a "potential buyer from Spain", despite the fact that there was confusion on the shop floor regarding the allocation of tasks and priority of orders. He then toured the floor to settle the dispute. Incidences such as this were abundant in the Production Manager's working days and weeks.

Similarly, the Marketing Manager, whilst working on self-initiated projects, (such as researching into ways of improving the characteristics and functions of one of their products, contacting the R & D, production and sales departments), attended to the problems which the sales force faced, e.g. their broken car, by finding them a solution in the form of temporary alternative means of transport. In both examples, these managers directed their subordinates using the outcome of their encounters and analysis of the situation as regards the projects.

However, characterising these managers' activities as fragmentary is an

inadequate and incomplete explanation of what they actually did, since it underplays the underlying reasoning of their activities. The Production Manager's tour to the shop floor was to ensure that the despatch of orders was done according to set priorities and delivery times and that the levels of stocks were sufficient to meet foreseeable demands. Such control ensured that the workforce maintained the reasonably efficient delivery services that the Company offered. The Spanish deal was partly dependent upon the speed and quality of the production and delivery services. The buyers were to pay a speculative visit to the factory floor and would observe the workers in action.

In his attempts to improve a low-selling product which was assumed to have potential for being a leading product in the market place, the Marketing Manager had to ensure that the sales force were in touch with the market place and kept him informed of changes in the moods of distributors and customers. In this way he would be able to conjecture about the type of improvements which were required and test and try the product and its performance accordingly.

Interruptions as such were part of their everyday "managerial life". This way they found out about what was going on in their department, and what problems existed, and kept "in touch" with their peers. These activities were part of their official and assumed roles.

Amongst the responsibilities of the Production Manager there were items such as ensuring that the shop floor staff had high performance levels, which implied close scrutiny of their work and contacts with a group of people: shop stewards, foremen, supervisors, the maintenance technicians, the first aid officer and employees in other departments, etc. Most days the Production Manager reviewed the situation in the factory. There were production reports which contained facts

and figures about the factory's capacity and stock levels. The Production Manager revised these reports whilst consulting the foreman, quality control supervisors, etc.

Usually there were "errors" in these reports and if disregarded production problems could be accentuated. These problems ranged from the capacity to produce, to training of the workers from other factories and clashes between the supervisor and the foremen on quality inspections. The Production Manager allowed some "time to listen to shop floor problems, arrange meetings, analyse what has been said and decide on the course of action and formalise a procedure". The "problems" generally moved up the shop floor hierarchy from the shop stewards to the foremen before it reached the management.

The Production Manager started each day "with some expectations about what he could and would do with regard to the matters arising. This reactive style initiated a variety of episodes each day which in effect made the flow of operations possible. Indeed, the Production Manager was mainly conducting episodes which encircled both routine and non-routine activities. The routine activities included working on "live projects" which was assumed to be Rivet Ltd.'s main role in the Fastener Group and to a certain extent there were clearly defined steps for the fulfillment of these projects. Moreover, the handling of day-to-day affairs on the factory floor was another type of routine in the Production Manager's day. There were some tasks that the foreman could handle, such as assignment of jobs on the floor, but the Production Manager insisted that his approval had to be sought before the operators commenced their work. This created discontinuities in his working day yet ensured the continuity of the operations in the factory.

The "priorities" to a certain extent were set for these managers through the so-called "MBO's" - these were targets determined on the bases of the "corporate objectives" and policies at the beginning of each year. These set the background to the managers' daily, weekly and monthly agendas. The Marketing Manager achieved these targets within their set time-scale. One of the main targets set for him was "to visit one distributor a month", the achievement of which required making contacts with them via the telephone or the Company's sales force or meeting them in the depots. The marketing staff would provide him with the background information figures and trends for such meetings.

There were various marketing projects on the Marketing Department's agenda. The Marketing Manager contacted the staff with regard to these projects in order to check on their progress. Some of these projects required live contacts with potential buyers, suppliers, people in the marketing journals and sales managers in other companies in the Group. Some other projects required that the Marketing Manager worked closely with the Product Manager in his departments.

The prelude to the Marketing Manager's activities in the day was composed while he glanced through the Financial Times newspaper or sorted out his mail.

II

These managers held meetings on various occasions to decide on the nature of problems, to allocate tasks and responsibilities or follow up the achievement of targets and the progress of projects and orders at hand. The meetings were also the means for providing shared experiences.

Throughout the calendar year, scheduled meetings were arranged by the Director,

within the Corporation's timetable. The "planning" and budgeting meetings were timed prior to the Group's and Corporate's budgeting periods. The members of the management team always did their "homework" for these meetings. They provided reports regarding the performance of various products, the production capacity, the human resources, the situation in the market place and the performance of the sales representatives and distributors. Also considering their MBO's, they reported when and how they were planning to achieve which objective.

The unscheduled meetings were initiated by the senior managers in the team and frequently by the Director for discussing immediate operational questions such as backlogs and delays in delivery of the products to major customers, or sometimes writing precis regarding the position of the Company for the Director to be presented at Board meetings. The Marketing Manager held meetings with his "senior blokes" to discuss "what policy" they needed to adopt for coping with the changing market situations. He would issue "detailed notes at sales meetings telling them what to do, where to go, how to do it". The minutes of these meetings were treated as action sheets, a means for following up the performance and achievements of the department's members. In times of disaster, the managers used meetings to establish and maintain a united front as to where they needed to go for the next critical point and what they were going to do next.

Meetings occupied a great proportion of these managers' agendas - they initiated a series of options and alternatives, and decisions about what the Company could do and how it could do it regarding the perceived situations. The participants in the meetings, the managers' role-set, varied in their degree of power and involvement with regard to the items on the agenda. The more powerful members, e.g. the Marketing Manager, utilised his expert knowledge to initiate discontinuity in the

process. The low degree of involvement of the Production Manager was perpetuated by his absence in regularly scheduled meetings and his limited technical knowledge.

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

The managers in Rivet Ltd. were planning using their intuitions, survey reports and publically known "facts". Whilst analysing the market place, and monitoring the movements and reactions of the firm's distributors, the Marketing Manager considered the possible/probable events regarding their business operations. He assumed his role as the Marketing Manager to be "seeing the recession coming", considering "the flow of information from the market place" and thus thinking about "what ifs"; that is to say "what happens if the recession lasts longer than expected?" And therefore, according to him, a great deal of his day had to be spent on "doing nothing, just thinking about where (the Company) is going and how it gets there and what should be done". He reflected upon the past events whilst he was looking forward to the future events. For instance, when reviewing the events in the crucial period of 1980-81 which almost led to the collapse of their business, the Marketing Manager admitted that they "missed the fact that the market was changing rapidly and significantly" because they were not "close to it ... the new sales representatives were young and new ... the senior blokes could see it". That they "should have evaluated what recession meant ... and put down contingency plans. The planning was there to help them through".

The upcoming events were considered from a variety of angles. It was clear to the Marketing Manager that the 1970's era and the boom of large construction projects and building houses no longer existed. The Marketing Manager thus anticipated that due to the recession in the construction industry, the export

business would increase. In planning for the future he "would take one step at a time". He had "fairly clear medium-term plans" that is where they needed to go next. The long-term plans would depend on who they thought would be left in their "particular game". The speculation carried out accordingly by the management team excluded two of their competitors from the market regarding their peformance and potentials at the time, which meant "the cake won't get any bigger but you are able to get a bigger slice". They were aware of the fact that some of their major competitors (ITT) had stopped their short-term planning as they were not "hitting their short-term targets anymore".

Reflecting on the situation of the Company in 1980-81, the Marketing Manager could identify the indicators or signs that ought to have been considered yet had been missed. He had "felt something was wrong", that they were in "false paradise". However, they had believed that their planning was so good before the event (i.e. the recession) that they actually had thought they were doing well during the event. They realised that the next year was "a watershed", a determining year with regard to their "future shape". It was recognised at that time although the Company had expected some degree of de-stocking with less money about, in their budgeting they had not allowed for "stock return" by the distributors. However, the distributors who should have been carrying stock on their shelves, had been finding any excuse to send the stock back to the Company. The Marketing Department therefore concluded that the brand loyalty among the distributors was slipping away.

One of the reasons, as conjectured by the Marketing Manager, was the lack of tactical planning. The Company did strategic planning which covered their future actions for a period of five years and which was revised annually. During the recessive period some short-term (three months) planning seemed necessary - yet

it was not carried out. Nevertheless, the Marketing Manager "put things together in (his) mind" to help the Company find its way. He believed that it was his consideration of "the sequence of events" and "having a masterplan" which kept them on the track.

Certain options were recognised by the Company, on the basis of the anticipated future events and the position of their products in the market. In order to "put the distributors in line" and tidy up the distribution chaos, the Marketing Manager thought of several options; he could "generate lots of spot sales" or "put the stock back on the shelves" or "use promotional offers" or "bully the distributors into going and selling the products". On the product side, some expansion was expected which would give them a broad base to go to other industries. The Company approached other markets (DIY) and primarily was successful in creating demands.

As part of their medium-term plan, which aimed at safeguarding their profitability yet with some reduced margins, they considered the possibility of selling drilling machines. Initially, it was decided that the Company would start with contracting supply of drilling equipment which required some expertise - the asset that the Company lacked. They started a joint venture with a drilling Company instead and operated as "a catalyst" between their distributors and the drilling company.

The articles and operations in the Company plans were both initiated by the managers' "gut feelings". Also a variety of surveys and researches were carried out and the result of these were taken into account whilst they examined alternative courses of action. They plotted all the trends in the construction, concrete and steel industries and "looked at" what these industries "said was going

to happen". The latest economic surveys carried out by various organisations: Henley Research Institute, Bank of England, CBI, The Financial Times, etc., were studied. The figures in the plans were calculated against these forecasts.

The Marketing Manager developed a system which would enable him to do the future planning. This was mainly "gut-feeling", "intuition ..."; that is, the way the market place was felt "through experience". What was done accordingly was "to quantify those gut-feelings". A lot of facts and figures which he read in the newspapers were "logged into (his) mind" and he would "come out with net result figures". The "people out there" were giving him far more statistical information on which he based what he considered as a "hunch".

The planning activities were included in these managers' portfolios of problems and issues - but were not necessarily titled as "planning". For instance, the outcomes of their frequently-held meetings and discussions set the background for the Company's reactions to various existing matters and the anticipation of future events and possible directions that the Company could take. The discussions in the meetings and other types of encounters that these managers had, centred upon the stance of the Company and the operations for maintaining/improving it. The background information for formulating any plans was obtained through their interactions in these events.

Given the contexts in which Rivet Ltd. was operating "getting close to the market" was crucial. In order to know what was going on out there, i.e. "what everyone else was doing", and thus what they were going to do, the managers utilised their membership of certain organisations. They studied the sales history of other companies' products, their life cycle, etc.

In addition, the Marketing Manager for instance, kept his door open to know "what's going on out there": that was the "contact with the market... The girls (in charge of sales, orders) talking on the 'phone kept (him) in touch". These managers allocated times for visiting the exhibitions and promotion launches to keep up-to-date with the mood of the market and competitors. Thus, they listened carefully to the rumours in the office and in the meetings.

These fragmentary episodes constituted the managers' agendas which were modified occasionally, i.e. priorities would change according to the decisions made by the Board of Directors on the direction of their operations. There were certain time spans that these managers would establish in their agendas with regard to what they were going to do. The Marketing Manager, for example, allocated a week for reviewing the performance of their leading product as a result of which he "realised that things were not right" and what they had was not "a boom but the beginning of a slump". Or he planned to spend another week "pondering into (his) policies". The time span of each item on the agenda was partly determined by the MBO's which were set for each manager at the Board level, and partly depended on the extent to which these managers would plan/try to achieve the set targets.

IV

The patterns of the activities of the Director, Marketing Manager and Production Manager in Rivet Ltd. explicitly were determined by the annually set MBO's. The MBO's were targets which each manager was expected to achieve within a certain period of time, for example, monthly or quarterly or by the end of the year. Both the Marketing and Production managers were expected to produce monthly reports for the operations meeting, or to develop a tactical sales plan for the year. by February for the same year and by December for the following year. During the

time of the survey the Production Manager was asked to investigate the number of incidences of goods being despatched to wrong customers and provide a report in a period of six months.

The customers' requirements determined another set of time frames for these managers. The product requirements were determined by the Sales and Marketing Managers every month. These requirements were based on priorities recognised by these managers in terms of importance of the clients and stock levels. They were sent to the Works Department and the production operations and machines were scheduled accordingly.

Regarding these objectives and requirements, "time" was considered by these managers as the key determining factor in their achievements. This was defined in terms of the "homogeneous time", i.e. the calendar and working hours of the day; the question of having to work for longer hours in order to reduce the backlog of the day, etc. The Company's timetable: the scheduled meetings, the shifts on the factory floor, the 9-5 working time, the deadlines for production, despatch and delivery of orders, structured the days for the employees at all levels. These timetables were the result of a negotiation process, yet mainly determined by the bureaucratic orientation of the Director and the upper level management, i.e. the Group and the Corporate team. MBO's were, thus, the synchronising means of the managers' activities, they specified what activities would occur when, and at what intervals. Nevertheless, both the Marketing and Production Managers defied the timetables included in their MBO targets, and considered them as ineffective in terms of their performance and the achievement of the Company's goals. The monthly operations meetings were the means of monitoring the progress of the members of the management team regarding the time interval.

Indeed, "event-time" played a significant part in patterning the managerial work in Rivet Ltd. What the managers were doing was shaped by events which were specific to the Company. The monthly operations meetings took place on the first Monday of every month. The managers were required to prepare reports of their activities, contacts, orders, durations of the projects in hand, and any survey results and statistics which were related to the products, to be considered in the meeting. The managers discussed the information obtained informally with one another and analysed the situations prior to the meeting. The collating and preparation of the relevant data took place a week before the meeting.

The atmosphere and pattern of activities in Rivet Ltd. changed a few weeks before the shut-down periods. The summer recess fell in the last week of July and lasted for two weeks, during which period a skeleton staffing was maintained in the store section on a shift basis. These were always fixed dates, of which the employees were informed at the beginning of each year. The Marketing and Sales Managers for different products revised the order schedules to allow for this period and ensured that the major customers were supplied with their orders. Accordingly, it seemed that the flow of work of these managers was interrupted. Sometimes, in order to clear the backlogs, the machines were overloaded, which resulted in the breakdown of some equipment. This added to the heated working atmosphere. Also as the holiday period approached the store and despatching crew received more orders, resulting in confusion over customers' orders.

In order to smooth the production operations during the summer shut-down, in particular, the Company decided to build up stock, that is to increase production in the first 3-4 months of the year, which would be used in the second half of the year and the summer shut-down. During the Easter week the store was kept open as the Company approached its busy time in summer.

The Christmas shut-down was different: it was a shorter period and started on different dates each year, depending on which day of the week Christmas Eve fell, i.e. if it were on a Saturday there would be no production, otherwise the operations would be carried out for a day or half a day, then the Company would shut for a week.

These were some of the fixed events in Rivet Ltd.'s timetable, which initiated some periodical and cyclical patterns of work. However, there were other cycles, the intensity of which varied throughout the year, such as weekly and monthly cycles which were more dominant during the planning and budgeting periods, and which were semi-fixed regarding the Corporation's requirements. When the Company was operating on a 5-day week, Friday, as the last day of the week, was considered to be the busy day. On Fridays the advice notes had to be cleared for that week, according to the priority that the Production Manager attached to them.

The last week of every month the Marketing Manager reviewed the systems that he had been working with over the previous weeks, and examined the policies and bottlenecks. The outcome of the revision was included in the Marketing Department's monthly operations report. The reports were handed in to the Director's office the Wednesday before the meeting.

Occasional events, such as the Director's trips to the Corporation's headquarters in the United States, the illness of the secretary, etc., changed the patterns of these managers' activities. The Marketing Manager, for instance, in the absence of the Director, contacted other managers on an informal basis to discuss a unified approach towards their budgeting exercise, arranged meetings about one of their chemical products with his staff - otherwise he was required to spend that

time revising the budget for his department. The last month of the year, December, was allocated to auditing, checking of the stock levels, review of the production capacity and the scheduling of the operations.

In addition to MBO's, which were set in January of each year and could well be unrealistic by July due to changing circumstances, there were other periodic events which structured the managerial practices in Rivet Ltd. In particular, the deadlines which the customers introduced into the operations of all the departments were strictly observed.

In Rivet Ltd. the chief means for negotiating these deadlines and targets utilised by the managers was to get all interested parties together and exchange some information both prior to the event and whilst in the process of implementing their missions. The employees on the shop floor were also informed through the Works Manager, supervisors and foremen who attended some of the meetings. There were also bi-monthly meetings for all staff which provided them with this kind of information.

V

What the managers did in Rivet Ltd. had great implications for the Company's direction as they defined and re-defined the problems, and the priorities which would be considered; that is they determined the agendas. The Corporation's general policy intentions set the background for these agendas, but the managers assumed their key role as deciding where the Company was going to. On the basis of the announced priorities, these managers planned for actions and delegated responsibilities and tasks to their colleagues and subordinates. Similarly, the Corporation's management team increasingly recognised the importance of

"strategy planning", which implied that the managers in the Fastener Group would have to spend more time considering problems and options.

In the time of "strategy planning" which started in January, the managers worked closer to their colleagues whilst reviewing all the planning elements. They held meetings which on some occasions continued for several days. These meetings were for consultation and not making decisions. The ultimate decisions about the policies of each department were made by their heads and presented to the Director. The statistics and figures used in their forecasts were the result of various computer exercises. A similar procedure was adopted for the annual "budgeting" which was carried out approximately three months before the "strategy planning".

Considering the managerial practices in Rivet Ltd., the scenario centred on planning for the Company's activities, and a variety of episodes, such as meetings, discussions, telephone calls, reviewing of mail and reports, reading newspapers, were included in the process. At the time when the Director of Rivet Ltd. played the role of the Production Manager, the nature of his work became more episodic and a variety of items were added to his agenda. There were, thus, fixed episodes, such as touring the shop floor once a day and flexible ones such as examining and analysing the budget figures for the Production Department prepared by their computerised systems, an activity which could be placed at any time of the day or any day of the week, but within its defined time-span. Some episodes were created as he operated longer in the Works Manager's role, such as meetings with the shop stewards and supervisors. He demanded a higher productivity level which resulted in some industrial action. Therefore, there were some novel issues to be placed on the agenda.

The ex-production manager had inflicted less pressure on the shop floor and as a result there had been delays in delivery of orders and losses in stock during his time. Nevertheless, these managers seemed to have internalised the details of each episode as they were repeated within certain expected intervals. And the Company's calendar linked these episodes. They learned about the temporal rules in their business; the duration of the events and the intervals between similar/different events over time. For, example, as was previously mentioned, the "strategy planning" activities were initially carried out in February-March of each year to decide the position of the Company for the next five years and how it could be achieved; this included revision of the following year's budget and anticipating performance in May-April time. The reason for choosing January as the planning time was actually because it was "a deadly month" with regard to business deals and orders, i.e. less busy and managers reckoned there were less time pressures. So they could take the opportunity to ponder into their policies.

Certain events had a clearly defined duration known to the managers, such as the time it took to clear an advice note, that is from the time of the reception of the note to getting the goods despatched and out of the store, which varied between 1-2 days. Certain events had quite uncertain durations and intervals, for example, the frequency and the time it would take to develop, introduce and launch a new product. In the case of "type A" rivet it took five years, for instance.

The practices of these managers were also shaped by certain events which they used as indicators: any strike or industrial action which took place in steel and its related industries was an indication of disruption in the supply of raw materials and some consequent production problems. During the production scheduling, events of "contingent character" were considered. For example, it seemed that the production of fasteners was affected by the weather conditions. However, the

weather was a factor which initially these managers had assumed as least influential regarding their business activities. Then they gradually realised that the demand for their fasteners went up with the extent of sunshine (the peak period for sales was between June-July and the demand would remain high until late October).

The managers checked and re-checked the stock levels with regard to weather forecasts and reactions of the construction industry in particular. Thus the fastener business was continuously reacting to such natural elements.

Just as in any other business operation, recession, inflation or stag-flation in the state of the economy affected the manufacturing operations of Rivet Ltd. If and when the situation was labelled as recession it implied for the managers possible withdrawal of some orders, longer intervals between the customers' orders and decline in profitability, lesser utilisation of machinery, etc. Also, inflationary situations required an increase in the price of the products, or a reduction in costs and the maintenance of price levels. The latter was more complicated. In either case the managers were expected to reduce the costs of their departments within a certain period of time, this required the identification of cost-sensitive areas. Anytime the managers in Rivet Ltd. were faced with an event which they could not match against their experiences, that is an unexpected event, they referred to common-sense means which could be utilised in their business. During the recessive period "any large order" was considered as unexpected. For example, the Company quoted for orders from Singapore on a casual basis and did not expect to win the contract. When they did so the managers examined the Company's production capacity which seemed low in tolerance and considered the alternative of sub-contracting - a usual practice in the industry - yet they needed to weigh up the costs which this option would incur.

Another "unexpected" event for the Company was its failure to develop one of the fastener products which required the use of a special chemical. The Company had no expertise in this area so the Marketing Department took charge of the development programme, resisting any interference by the R & D Department. At first the product sold as was expected. But its performance declined when a faulty batch of chemicals were supplied. Thereafter the demand for the product decreased gradually. The Company employed outside expertise to deal with the problem but that required negotiations with managers at all levels.

A surprise event of a different nature occurred when the Company's new Production Manager relinquished his duties due to a nervous breakdown. The Company had invested in his expertise and according to the Director had expected to plough back some "good work" in the years to come.

Each unexpected event therefore triggered certain reactions and activities. The management team revised their approaches and reflected upon the situation and compared it to the anticipated situation. The unexpected results were labelled as "silly mistakes" and caused by "failure to think about and concentrate upon what was happening out there".

VI

On the basis of the preceding descriptions of managerial practices and activities in Rivet Ltd., it may be said that these managers were engaged in identifying "events" which enabled them to master the situations; these events were located within certain time blocks with either fixed intervals and fixed durations, e.g. the shut-down, or variable durations, e.g. the operations meetings, which simultaneously introduced a certain degree of predictability and routineness into

the managers' activities. These events were considered to be of less strategic significance, because they were assumed to maintain the continuity; thus they were used as tactical maps.

The courses of action which had been taken with regard to some past events constituted a reference book which the managers frequently went through and reminded themselves of the outcomes of their selected options. The Company's misjudgement of the situation in the market place during 1979-81, missing signs which indicated recession, was remembered by all the members of the management team. If and when similar signs were detected, contingency plans were devised. Rivet Ltd. was a conservative company and only changed its business policies when "catastrophies" occurred; when the expected outcomes did not materialise.

Forecasting future events, in the short run, took place on a reactive basis. The output per working day, as measured by what was actually despatched, was plotted monthly. If the previous six months had gone on a straight line the situation was assumed as "nice", i.e. agreeable with the existing policies. Additionally, the forecasts of other industries, steel, concrete, etc., were considered. Then, they would look at "isolated incidences" and use "as many techniques" as they could compare performance to that of the previous year and the same month over the previous 4-5 years.

More distant future industrial trends and their possible impacts were also studied. Long-term indicators such as the GDP were considered to be more important because, as the Marketing Manager put it, "they are not just indicators of actual movements of the market place ... but more an indication of confidence ... in a bouyant market everybody buys and puts stock in ... if things are going

down then people start de-stocking". Further, to extrapolate of the growth of their products against GDP, they speculated the future plans of their major competitors on the basis of what had happened previously.

VII

Analysis and examination of their customers' and competitors' behaviour, i.e. environmental trends on the basis of identified events (contingent and otherwise), were amongst the responsibilities of the Director and the Marketing Manager in particular. The Production Manager's outlook was more parochial, in the sense that he detected events which could be located within a short time frame and were connected with the internal environment of the Company. For him the appointment of the new Director of Rivet Ltd. was a disjuncture since the old management practices in which he believed, e.g. the pat on the shoulder to motivate the employees, became meaningless. Yet he had "inherited an old system" within which he had to "co-operate with other people (R & D)" towards the development of a new product, whose function he little understood.

Conversely, the Marketing Manager worked at a different level of analysis. Accordingly, he considered any policy options with reference to what he assumed/expected to be the reaction of their environment. Regarding the long life cycle of their leading products, he explored the avenues that the Company might choose as its survival path within the industry. The ultimate decision, in such a case, was of a political nature and depended on the extent that the Director could persuade the Board members and the Corporation's leaders. There were times that however he managed to "set some deals up" before he informed the management team, in particular when he detected low risk investments, as in the "drilling joint venture". Any other project which might have greater financial

implications would "have to go through (higher) channels" for approval.

The Corporation management team had recognised MBO's as the mechanisms for maintaining the momentum and continuity of the Company's policies and operations. Yet the achievement of these objectives had tactical implications. The search for disjuncture would thus be strategic and the assumed responsibility of those at the executive level. Moreover, MBO's and the timetables which they imposed were the Company's attempt to show to managers how their time could effectively be used.

VIII

The managers' activities in Rivet Ltd. involved learning about the Company's temporal structure and equally, detecting other temporal contexts in which their business activities were embedded. Empirically, there seemed to be little evidence that these managers had long time horizons. Operating within changing environments, short-term options could delay deficits. Nevertheless, what these managers were doing over short periods of time was to fulfill longer-term projects. The long-term projects had "political" implications. The Director of Rivet Ltd. took over his job when the Company started developing "type A" rivet, a new product which was expected to penetrate the market easily. He aimed at keeping an impetus with regard to the development of new products.

It was expected that the Production Manager ought to have assumed and played a more active role in the new product's development process. However, on a day-to-day basis, the Production Manager seemed to be fire-fighting and involved in "mundane paperwork". The stock control system was "impractical" and the main source of the problems. There was no direct administrative assistance provided

for the Production Manager. Since the Company produced a wide range of products, the Production Manager was expected to be familiar with the nature, characteristics and functions of these products. Although his work experience was mainly in engineering, the technical questions seemed too difficult for him to handle. Increasingly, the achievement of MBO's became problematic - so was the production of "type A" rivet. The Director described the problem in terms of the Production Manager's failure in using his time effectively.

For the Director this was a crucial stage in his working experience. Since he was expected to generate profits and revive the Company's relatively declining status. The Production Manager's slow response to customers' demands, according to the Director, could delay the outcomes. Officially, the Production Manager desired to relinquish his work with Rivet Ltd. after a year. He was faced with two choices, early retirement or demotion to a junior management position in another company in the Fastener Group. He primarily chose the latter option and after a year asked for retirement. The Director took charge of the Works Manager's functions temporarily. "Type A" rivet never succeeded as a selling product because its development took five years and it was functionally outmoded by the time it reached the market. The Director sought other means of making profits.

Amongst the Marketing Manager's list of MBO's there was an item which specified the frequency of his meetings with the distributors of the Company's products. But the Marketing Manager's "policy", that is his "way of doing things", differed. He adopted "an easy-going attitude"; that is, visiting the distributors as and when necessary - regarding the time of the year, the demand, etc. For the Marketing Manager "the real world" did not work in the ways that MBO's were set. Meeting with distributors was one way of "keeping in touch with the market". The frequency of these meetings was based on the extent that the marketing man

perceived their products to be vulnerable, yet the distributors were kept in the dark regarding the growing anxiety of the Company.

The categorisation of distributors provided some assessment criteria for the Marketing Department and helped indentify key questions whilst examining the distributors' performance. The issue constituted the major item on the Marketing Manager's portfolio. The investigation into the credit of each of the distributors involved a set of activities which were carried out on a daily or weekly basis by the Marketing Manager; it included making telephone calls to peers in other departments or companies and sales representatives for consultation. Some meetings were held with a varying number of participants and reports were written subsequently.

IX

The managers in Rivet Ltd. developed some personal "stocks of knowledge" of the contexts of their business operations. The knowledge was based on what these managers had experienced over time. Bits of this knowledge were shared by all these managers. For instance, there were memorable events treated as "bench marks" or warning signs by the managers, such as the events in 1980, the "false paradise" and the resultant unexpected de-stockings. There were all types of indicators to remember and monitor in the future cases, such as longer time intervals between orders, etc. The managers' existing definitions of "recession" in their stock of knowledge - the related precautions - were thus changed. The managers all accepted that the recession had started long before it was materialised in the Company's operations and that it should have been detected in the decline of the demand for the products.

A major contributing factor to the survival of Rivet Ltd. in the economically critical period of 1979-81 was their long-term planning. According to the Marketing Manager there were some practical deficiences with the plan and theoretically it contained a limited number of "what ifs", and assumptions. The plan, however, was the "result of the managers 'realising' activities", that is, theorising about the future events, environmental changes, market changes, based on what had happened in the past, reminding themselves of incidences which were labelled as "mistakes", and of their "pulling through" times.

Sometimes the "established" ways of handling things seemed to be more dysfunctional to the Marketing Manager as he felt "situations had to be assessed" in the way the manager saw best, which might not necessarily be similar to the past practices, that is, working within the traditions of the Company did not always produce the desired outcome. An example of his willingness to step outside established practice is provided by the case of "Cap" (a kind of rivet) when the Marketing Manager arranged a deal with an outside company for the supply of resin, the chemical substance required for the development of this rivet. Usually this was carried out by the R & D Department. The "politics" of the development process contributed to this move.

The Board of Directors preferred a "conservative" approach to the market place - defending the existing stakes and being content with a moderately low but steady growth rate. Any deviation from this established approach could raise problems and thus was considered inconvenient. However, Rivet Ltd. was growing at a relatively fast rate. The corporate policy encouraged a slower growth rate and seemed inappropriate to their activities.

In their everyday life, these managers were constantly projecting what was about to happen, taking into account what they thought they knew about the approaches, feelings and attitudes of other firms in their industry. Thereafter, they decided on their future policy intentions. This was illustrated in the Company's determination to "continue with price increases in order to maintain the sales volume" (in the past price increases had not resulted in any decline in their sales volume) as a reaction to their main rival's policy of lowering the prices. Such decisions implied changes in their tactics and not strategies. The changes were thus introduced "depending on the situation that (existed) at that moment in time".

In anticipating future events, these managers developed their own data base, considering the "facts and figures that one reads in the newspapers ... changes in the industry statistics ... changes in the weather ... (and) company policies" and added to these were the inferences from forecasts by other industries. Decisions about future courses of action were taken accordingly. The data base made some decision areas more predictable and some routine actions were initiated.

It was important for these managers to recognise the indicators of how the market place would behave. This knowledge was gained through experience, being with the Company and working closely with its product market. As the Production Manager put it, "one becomes programmed after being with a company to think on certain cyclical routines, prescribed lines ... You've got to know what the company will stand for and what not". But the Marketing Manager found operating within the same environment for a long period could be dysfunctional as it would take the manager further from the market, i.e. the familiarity with the characteristics of the market could narrow the manager's scope. Thus the

manager would "interpret the facts and figures given to him by different services", that is, making decisions by "intuition based on market knowledge", and might therefore fail to question the obtained information and miss the "signs". Membership of various organisations, e.g. the marketing associations, the local golf and rugby clubs, provided these managers with another source of information about the market place.

The managers described their analysis of the environment and customers' behaviour using certain concepts. The concepts contained the definition of various situations and related courses of action. For example, the Marketing Manager described their business as "cold" which meant the demand for their products was slow and cyclical and that the busier months in their business would be determined by the seasonal changes in the demands of their customers.

The fastener industry is not seasonal by nature, however, the fasteners are used heavily in the automotive and construction industries in which demands vary on some seasonal bases. Working on these bases the managers would describe the year as "funny" which implied less predictability, less routine action. It meant that they might be selling less and "going through a watershed". The managers shared the meaning of the concepts. In general it also seemed that what ever these managers conjectured to be happening in the market was extended outward, and brought out in them and their colleagues the required or assumed appropriate reactions. This process involved negotiations since any decisions they made surely had financial and political implications and would "shape their future" and the scope of their activities.

The negotiations on a formal basis were carried out in long-lasting meetings and informally at lunch-time and whilst working on other projects or issues. The

initial understanding of any one of these managers might therefore become invalid as they talked to others. This meant that their initially perceived causal relationships in their environment might have been invalid. For instance, when their product markets were threatened by the cheap imports the managers could have conjectured that any decrease in the prices of their products might not increase the sales volume. Therefore, in such a case the Company decided to increase its prices and maintain its profit level. This was against the initial expected reaction to such a threat. Moreover, the management in Rivet Ltd. linked the price with quality, thus, the sales volume was related to the quality of the product.

The way the managers in Rivet Ltd. went about understanding their business operations regarding their objectives and access to various means and what they were doing can be shown in the schema shown in Figure 6.2.1.

Figure 6.2.1. Managers' Schema: Rivet Ltd.

Aston University

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A modified schema on the basis of Bougon's model (1983)

CASE III: METAL FINISHING LTD.

MANAGING MARKETS AND DISJUNCTURES

INTRODUCTION

In the following section, the activities of some managers in a metal finishing company and the contexts of their activities will be described and analysed. The activities of these managers are interpreted within the conceptual framework of the thesis. In addition further theoretical issues which emerged from the study are discussed.

This case study considers a set of managers in Metal Finishing (MF) Ltd. who where trying to recognise new segments of the markets for their services and who having recognised potential segments were working on them. Hence, there were times of disjuncture involved, i.e. search for new areas of activity and technology. The managers proactively created some demands and worked in the new environments. Thus, it is shown here that:

(a) The portfolios of the managers in Metal Finishing (MF) Ltd. contained a set of activities which were carried out regarding the Company's selected path into the future and its recognised niche in the domain of metal finishing.

(b) These managers developed a set of precepts which included their assumptions about what they could do, given what they were, i.e. what it was within their capacity and resources to do.

(c) Their precepts also contained their understanding of the situations in which their customers were operating; that is to say, they detected events which were related to the activities of their customers.

(d)   The life-long experiences of these managers within the industry shaped the basic constructs in their sense-making activities and in their projections.

(e)   These managers were forecasting the future events and clearly planning for their future actions accordingly. These activities were assumed to be the main aspects of their jobs.

Metal Finishing Ltd. operated within the engineering industry. It provided specialist services for manufacturers of consumer electronic and electric products and for industries such as the automobile, aerospace, giftware and chemicals. Thus, it reacted to the demands initiated by these industries. In their proactive search for opportunities in other markets these managers considered a set of factors, which influenced their activities. Among these factors were the fluctuations in the automotive industry, changes in government policies regarding defence and aerospace programmes, and variations in the price of various metals, etc.

The case study will include analysis and interpretations of some selected events. Prior to interpretation, the characteristics of the metal finishing industry, the contextual background to these managers' activities, will be examined.

BACKGROUND

MF Ltd. was a family-owned engineering firm which was established in 1923. The founders of the Company were two graduates in Metallurgy from the University of "Heart City". They devised a method at that time, whereby Oxide films could be produced in a wide range of colours and protected by lacquering. This was a new method at that time and set the background for introduction of cellulose lacquer

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which led to the expansion of their activities into copper plating, bronzing and oxidising. The founders established their finishing operations initially in small, rented premises above a cafe in the east of Heart City. In later years (1936), they expanded their operations to nickle, chromium and cadmium plating. The business was then moved to larger premises in the centre of the city.

During the Second World War, the Company started its anodising operations and thereafter became engaged in the processing of aircraft parts. As it continued growing in this direction, some of its earlier production processes such as chemical bronzing were considered as obsolete and unprofitable. Therefore, they were replaced by sprayed and stoved finishes which seemed of better quality and were less costly. This emphasised low costs and high output as the basic objectives of the Company.

In 1970, the acquisition of a declining metal finishing firm necessitated the purchase of larger factory premises for the second time. Thus neighbouring factory units were purchased. A quarter of a million pounds was spent on the installation of new equipment, laboratory facilities and a new gold plating plant. The Company also made existing nickle and chromium plating plants fully automatic. The aim was to facilitate the diversification of its activities into a number of fields allied with metal finishing.

At the time of the study between 1981 and 83, MF Ltd. operated in three business areas, decorative, protective and improvement and were hence engaged in a wide range of processes which were of use to a wide variety of industries. For instance, they claimed to be pioneers in anodising and seemed to have safeguarded a number of customers for this purpose over the years, such as the RAF.

The other major processes they undertook was electroplating. MF Ltd. did a variety of plating, for example bright satin or matt, copper, nickle plating. They, however, had detected growth potentials in a newer sub-strata - directly platable plastics - which meant a different (perhaps shorter) preparation sequence for metal finishing. They had, therefore, planned the production operations in a way which allowed for newly-initiated demands. MF Ltd. had also become involved in precious metals, gold and silver plating for both decorative and functional end uses.

The decorative side was identified as the field which had to be manipulated. The demand for gold plated taps, lavatory seats, cutlery and car radiator caps, showed slow but continutal increase. Conversely, in 1979, the rapid rise in the price of silver almost "demolished the silver plating section of the Company". The accounted sales dropped by 70% in two months. The largest market for the functional side of their business was electronics which seemed to be stable, since gold and silver were conventionally used for plating connectors and buss bar contacts. A new method for which the Company had allocated a semi-production plant was powder-coating. Actually, this method is in direct competition with the electroplating processes. MF Ltd. was determined to dedicate a full plant to powder-coating and spraying in its expansion programme for the 1980's.

In general, the metal finishing industry was labour intensive and wages constituted the biggest single item in material costs. It included, varied, specialised processes. The future developments in the industry were likely to take place in the engineering and functional areas, since, as in electronics, the modern technology products needed the metal finishing services. The management of MF Ltd. accordingly had identified that the marketing of their expertise, in particular in anodising, plating, enamelling and lacquering was significant to their success

and essential for "weathering the difficult time". Thus attempts were being made to identify and promote the under-sold areas and redress their positions. Their strategy was to "attack (the market) in order to defend" their niche. Actually, at what was a very depressed time (1979-1983) for the engineering and automotive industries, two of the major customers for metal finishing services, the Company's accounts showed some rises in turnover at various time intervals. Thus, they started planning and preparing for a ten year expansion programme in 1980. Despite the on-going speculations about the recessive mood of the automotive industry, the Company retained its turnover from the industry at 16%. Furthermore, during the hard times for most industries in Britain of 1975, MF Ltd. had secured a significant proportion of the defence and aviation contracts available which were mainly carried out for governmental agencies.

One of the future plans of the Company was to purchase some land and property close to the factory site which was initially considered as the financial security for the Company's operations. It was scheduled that in the longer-term, the premises would be used for certain processes which allowed full use of the new finishing processes.

INTRODUCING THE MANAGERS

In MF Ltd. one of the founders still acted as the Chairman of the Board, whilst the son of his late partner occupied the Managing Director's position. The son of the Managing Director had been "working his way up" through various departments. During the period of study, he was appointed as the head of the Spraying Division, the Company's newly acquired process. This appointment was to pave the way for the third generation of directors in their family. The other members of the management team, the Marketing, Commercial and Technical Services Managers

were shareholders and members of the Board.

1. <u>The Managing Director (MD)</u> was in his late '40's and had been working with the Company for twenty-eight years. He had started his career in metal finishing by working as an apprentice in one of the large local engineering firms. He had "no formal management training" and joined MF Ltd. as the Head of the Plating Division. The death of his father, the co-founder of the Company, created the opportunity for him to occupy the position of the Managing Director. At the time of his appointment, he joined the Productivity Association and became involved in "efficiency debates". As a member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, he showed a great interest in the methods of delivering public speeches, report writing and organising events.

The Managing Director in MF Ltd. had executive authority. The major aspect of his job both formally and informally was to "implement the policies" laid down by the Board of Directors. The other assumed responsibilities for the MD could widely be divided into two broad areas: the production process and marketing (or public relations).

The managers of the Engineering Services, Production Services and Marketing Services Departments operated under the direct control of the MD. He also supervised activities of three process divisions, hence, he determined any necessary process modifications regarding the customers' needs, whilst at all times remaining within the Company's policies. The marketing and public relations activities of the MD mainly included authorisation of exhibitions, press advertisings, and other arrangements for promotion of sales and the Company's image. The emphasis was put on developing relationships with other organisations

and identifying potential customers. The image portrayed was that the Company was efficient in its operations, i.e. it managed to achieve the deadlines effectively.

In general, the MD's job description which was incidentally collated by him, contained the classical functions of management, (for example Fayol's classification), that is controlling finance and budgets, forecasting future plans and activities, directing the Company's efforts in selling and training, and organising the Company's activities towards the achievement of the objectives and targets. As the Chief Executive of MF Ltd., he set the production and sales targets. The production targets were determined according to the workload imposed by the customers and the MD decided on the type, pace and time-span of the operations. The "directing" and "control" activities of the MD were designed to ensure that all employees contributed to the achievement of the set targets.

For the management team, targets were set in the monthly meetings. The dates of the meetings were equally used as deadlines for producing reports on the items (of the agenda) which had been discussed and agreed upon in the previous meeting. Reports were used to consider the progress or problems as regards the issues. These meetings were routinely held and were usually pre-scheduled to avoid wasting time. The MD organised and chaired the meetings. As the Chairman, he raised the issues and led the discussions in the meetings. The outcome of each meeting, that is the feedback from different people who participated, were organised by the Chairman in the form of reports and replies to customers and those concerned with the purpose of the meeting. In the regular meetings of the Board of Directors, the MD could present reports on the progress of the projects related to process developement.

The MD's job description included the budgeting of expenses and forecasting of capital funds. But in practice these were carried out by the Commercial Services Manager. The MD "controlled" the funds and the expenses, that is to say, determined the "ceiling" for an increase or the "floor" for a reduction in funds.

The MD was not serviced by any secretary or personal assistant. He wrote the manuscripts for his speeches, lectures, reports and letters and then typed them himself. The Commercial or Technical Services Managers would read the reports or letters and comment on the content of the reports. The MD refused to employ any secretarial assistance, because as he claimed, having to put down on paper his final thoughts in a short time period was considered as an effective way of developing his mental skills.

With respect to the question of the management of people, the MD assumed his role as "pulling all the strings", "co-ordinating" and thus "giving direction" when "delegating" responsibilities. This approach was a mixture of "giving a free way" (delegating) and ensuring "discipline". The expected outcome of this approach, according to the MD, was "motivated" employees, who would therefore be effectively and efficiently contributing to the successful performance of the Company.

The Marketing Services Manager, who was incidentally the Director's brother-in-law, described him as the "public relations man". This was due to the emphasis that the MD put on the proper marketing of their "expertise". He, thus, played an active role in initiating contacts with potential customers whilst on unofficial visits or meetings and by joining various industrial, commercial and non-commercial associations. The MD, nevertheless, considered himself to be a "hard task master" as he ensured that the "people" worked hard to achieve the set

objectives. In the case of failure no excuse was accepted and employees would be put initially under subtle surveillance and the quality of their performance would be monitored by the MD.

2.   The Marketing Manager was in his late '50's and had worked for MF Ltd. in this capacity for nearly eight years. He came from a middle-class family. His father had run a metal finishing business with a partner during the Second World War, and later became the Mayor of the small neighbouring town. The Marketing Manager had started his career in metal finishing in his father's company within this former period. The difficulties of the immediate post-war years had reduced his chances of entering any institution for higher education. Thereafter, he joined his father's works permanently, working in the "shops and learning" some of the processes. Then he had moved on to take up other types of responsibilities which put him in touch with the outside situation. The death of his father and retirement of his father's partner had marked the closure of their family business.

Whilst searching for a job, he had moved back to Heart City and joined an electropolishing company which specialised in polishing stainless steel and chromium plating. He had worked in that company as the Sales Director for some twenty-odd years. However, when the owner of the company approached his retirement he decided to sell his business to another metal finishing firm who specialised only in chromium plating and not electropolishing, which was his area of expertise. The takeover reduced the status of the company to a workshop and provided no opportunity for him to practice his speciality. He joined MF Ltd. as they took over the electropolishing of his previous company. He was appointed as the Marketing Services Manager, responsible for sales of the technical processes of the company.

On entering MF Ltd. he was familiar with the electropolishing process which he

brought along with him. However, as he explained, he needed to learn the technical details of various processes used by MF Ltd. before he could actually attempt to market them. It was made clear to him that a successful marketing manager had to develop a broader outlook. In his previous occupation he had been involved in technical sales of a limited number of processes in metal finishing.

The job of the Marketing Manager, according to his job description, contained the organisation of exhibitions and handling of press advertisements under the tight control and direction of the MD. There was some assumed discretion for him in marketing some processes, in particular in electropolishing in relation to which he had managed to maintain some of the customers from his previous bankrupt company.

There were, however, some unclear boundaries around the responsibilities of the Marketing Manager, as they overlapped with those of the Commercial Services Manager. For example, the quoting of suitable prices for their services was done by both managers. The Marketing Manager, however, was expected to consult the other managers when faced with problems and advise them on the conditions of their trade.

The MD showed no trust in the managerial and organising skills and abilities of the marketing man, although his approach to customers was considered as satisfactory. The MD dealt with any contract which he identified as a "good prospect" and one which they could not afford to miss. This, as stated by the MD, was because the Marketing Manager's approach to the reviewing of enquiries was considered as pedestrian. Hence, part of this responsibility was delegated to the Commercial Services Manager in practice.

During the period of study, a rumour spread around the Company that the

Marketing Manager was "the easiest option" for redundancy, if and when the Company was forced into such a situation. The MD confirmed this rumour and stated that he considered the Marketing Manager's ill-health, which influenced his performance, as the main reason which would be used in a redundancy situation.

MF LTD. AND OTHER FIRMS

MF Ltd. had established itself as an efficient company through what the MD called "punctuality", that is delivery of services at the agreed time. The management claimed that there had been very few occasions that the Company had failed to meet the production and delivery deadlines. Their punctuality seemed to have secured a niche for MF Ltd. with regard to the customer category and the types of contract. However, MF Ltd. had approximately 0.5% of the total market for metal finishing services in the UK; this was, on competitive level, perhaps insignificant. Not surprisingly their future plan was to increase their market share.

Various metal finishing firms within the same geographical area seemed less productive than MF Ltd. It was observed, during time spent with the Company, that some of these firms offered a limited range of services and operated with fewer numbers of polishers. They used fewer automatic polishing machines and those which were in use were obsolete and frequently broke down. The layout of the offices in the other firms was also different. In some firms the administrative and packing sections were separated by glass screens from the plating and polishing areas. This seemed to have adverse effects on the quality of their services.

Conversely, the machinery and equipment in MF Ltd. were of comparatively

higher standard and more effectively used. Moreover, the offices and the plant were located on separate wings of the building, with links between all floors. The arrangement of the offices of the managers increased their close physical proximity. There were open-plan offices for the Marketing Services Manager and closed offices for the other managers. The Company's human traffic used the passage which separated the Marketing Manager's office from the closed offices. Next to his office and by the entrance to the section the customers' lounge was located where talks and discussions with the customers took place. The office of the Technical Services Manager was located close to the MD's office. As one of the major shareholders of the Company he seemed to be working closely with the MD on various issues. The office of the MD was directly linked with the shop floor which facilitated his visits to the processing sections. The Chairman of the Company and the MD shared a common entrance to their offices (see Figure 6.3.1).

The quality control section seemed to play a significant part in the success or failure of metal finishing activities. In MF Ltd. the quality control section was in the process of expansion, as the Company revised its inspection methods and hence searched for more advanced methods. They were, however, some steps ahead of the other local metal finishers. Some of these firms relied on the tests carried out by the engineering firms in the area.

Comparatively, MF Ltd. had adapted a more aggressive marketing strategy: i.e. the management team approached the potential customers or agencies which could provide them with the initial contracts. The marketing strategies of MF Ltd. alongside its affiliations with local politicians, safeguarded some of its sources of revenue.

Figure 63.1   Lay-out of the offices in MF Ltd.

Steps to Telephonist
Tannoy operator

Commercial Services
Manager

Display
Stand

Assistant

Production Services
Manager

Marketing
Services
Manager

Division
Head

Division
Head

Forman /
Supervisor

Technical Services
Manager

Company Chairman
(Co-founder)

Steps to
Shop floor

Managing
Director

Meeting
Room
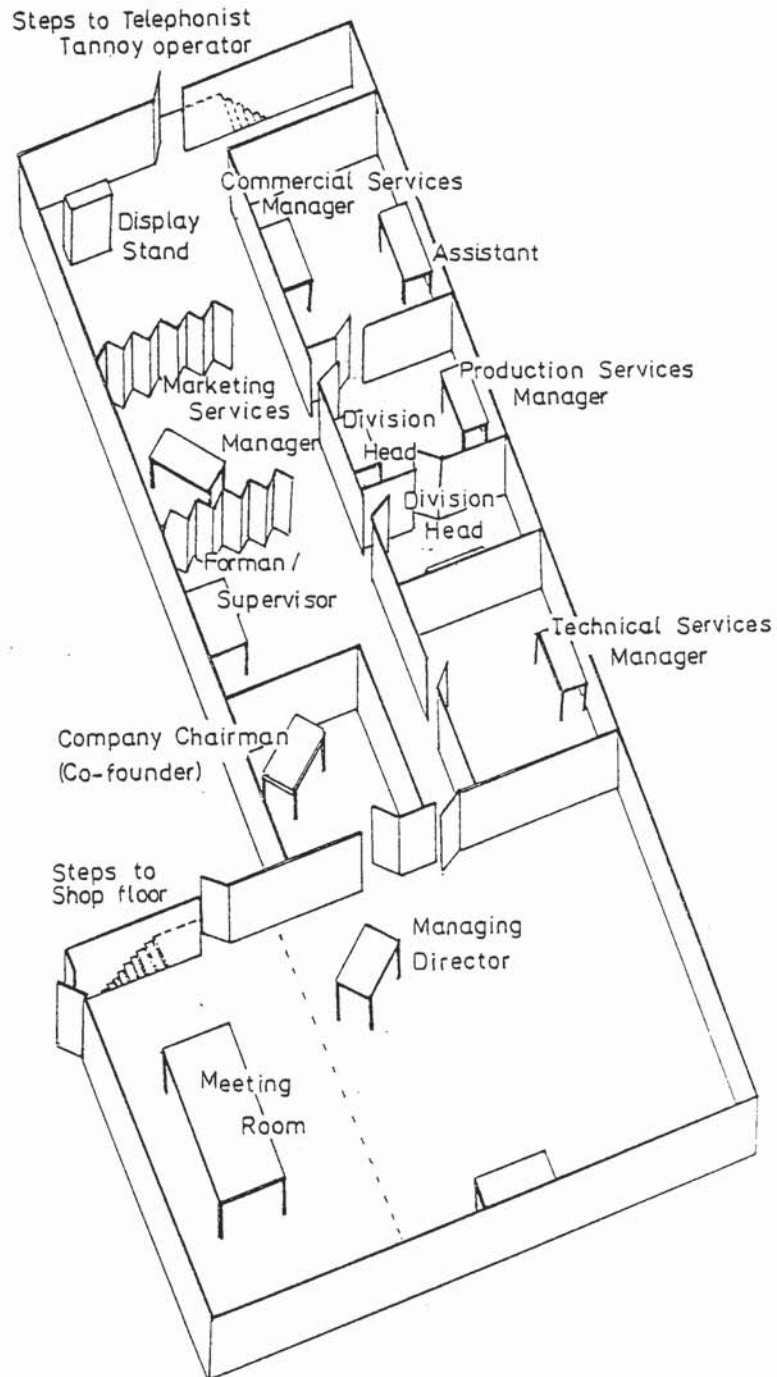
The processes that MF Ltd. offered to other industries therefore could be broadly categorised as decorative, protective and improvement, and included a wide range of consumer and industrial products. The Company electroplated a variety of consumer and household goods, such as door handles, cookers, taps cutlery and lavatory seats. The usual coating applied to these products was a combination of nickle and chromium on steel, copper on zinc alloy, etc. The precious metal plating, i.e. silver and gold plating, were applied to cutlery and sometimes to door knobs. The managers in MF Ltd. identified an expanding market for the decorative processes. This, however, required exploring the market strategies of the producers of certain consumer goods. Moreover, the demands for luxury services varied according to the changes in the wider economic sphere. For example, since the MD had detected signs of economic recovery and expansion, it was decided that the plant for the processes which would provide such services should be expanded.

The expansion of the powder-coating plant, which was on the agenda of the management of MF Ltd, could secure orders from the motor car industry which was already one of their major sources of business. MF Ltd. provided anodising services largely for the industry. The managers in MF Ltd. therefore recognised that they had to monitor the mood and the fashion in the car industry. Powder-coating and anodising were the major processes required. Moreover, there were changes anticipated in the chromium-nickle finished trims and hence MF Ltd. was preparing for substitute processes. However, a major drawback which was recognised was the reduction in the number of cars produced in the UK for the UK market.

The protective aspect of MF Ltd.'s business included customers from the fixing industry. Various kinds of fasteners, e.g. screws, clips and studs, were automatically enamelled. In order to attract orders from the manufacturers of these products, MF Ltd. competed with other local finishing firms. This was actually because finishing, in general, was considered to be a "local industry", i.e. the orders would be attracted from the firms (e.g. firms manufacturing fasteners) within a twenty mile radius only.

During the last war MF Ltd., as pioneers of the anodising process, were involved in the processing of aircraft parts for the RAF, which set the background for some long-term contracts. A similar process was used for defence contracts. The contracts with publicly-owned industries were of significance to the operations of MF Ltd., since they were long-term and profitable. Yet, there had been periods of decline in the volume of orders, which were attributed to the variations in the economic policies of the government of the time.

THE PATTERNS OF ACTIVITIES

The variety of services that MF Ltd. offered required a variety of plants and equipment which ranged from small-plating tanks for precious metals to large automatic transporter plants for nickle and chromium. The plants were placed on three floors. The work was conveyorised and could be moved from one floor to another and to and from two, originally separate, buildings. The conveyor line was sometimes used as the clearing point. There was a "general purpose" laboratory which carried out various experiments on chemicals and processes and was staffed by a few technicians.

The activities of the staff at MF Ltd. were influenced by the operations set-up as

well as the firm's timetable which was common to most firms in the industry. The administrative staff and the members of the management team started work at 9 o'clock in the morning and stopped at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Mondays to Fridays. The MD and his son and the Chairman of the Board worked within more flexible timetables. The Chairman, although one of the active directors, worked part-time on the grounds of his old-age (80 years old). The MD worked for longer hours on some days and his son on these occasions took up the role of his assistant.

The hours of work for the employees on the shop floor varied according to the work demands and urgency of the customers' orders. However, the plant machinery and equipment were in operation at 8 o'clock in the morning until the set targets for the day were achieved. Each plant, however, operated within a different timetable. The supervisors, production controller and maintenance men worked longer hours as necessary. The MD worked on the shop floor if there was a shortage of workmen and when an order was put in by one of their major customers.

The rhythm of the production activities was determined by the nature of the contracts. Indeed, in the early years of the metal finishing industry the works operated around shorter time periods, as orders were received on a day-to-day basis. The targets were set in the morning as the customer delivered the items and would be achieved by the end of the same day when they were sent back to the customer. Gradually the time-span of their contracts was lengthened to a weekly and two-weekly basis. The contracts that MF Ltd. could secure evolved on a similar basis. Thus, the agencies and companies which engaged MF Ltd. in longer-term (few years) contracts were considered as major accounts; the fulfilment of their orders, thus, was considered the priority. The volume of orders and their related deadlines also determined the number of plant which were put

into operation.

The processes and services stopped during the shut-down periods which were: the first two weeks in August, Spring Bank Holiday week (late May) and Christmas and New Year week. All the activities during these periods stopped; even the small jewellery workshop which was rented by a jewellery designer and occupied a corner of the shop floor.

Maintenance work was normally carried out during this period. Cleaning of the shop floor areas, especially in the Spraying Division and around the conveyors, where the polished products were awaiting despatch or would be removed to other sections, was also carried out in the same period. The cleaning, moreover, included emptying and checking the conditions of the tanks. This was intended to identify deterioration in the tanks due to penetration of chemicals. In addition, overhauling of the mechanically functioning equipment, e.g. filters, checking of the electrical contact points, was carried out during shutdown period. These inspections basically were carried out to prevent possible production hold-ups and delays in delivery services.

The impact of the shut-down period on the pattern of the activities in MF Ltd. varied according to the volume of the orders and the time-span which was allowed for their production. If there were backlogs of orders which were to be despatched before the shut-down, the shop floor workers and some members of the management team, usually the MD and/or the Technical Services Manager, would work overtime to ensure that the deadlines were met.

This pattern of activity, however, could be found on occasions when the breakdown of machinery or the failure to detect faults with the chemical processes slowed down the production and delivery of orders. These created days

and weeks of hard work. There were also quiet times which meant "things were going smoothly".

This pattern of activities seemed "untidy", particularly at the production point. The managers in MF Ltd. claimed that unlike some manufacturing firms, i.e. their customers who could schedule their production process, MF Ltd.'s operations were more "like a jigsaw". They would have "to slot things together" to get "the best results", which also meant keeping "the customers at bay" for some extra days.

WHAT THE MANAGERS WERE DOING: AN INTERPREATION

I

In their attempts to run a successful family business, the managers in MF Ltd. monitored the events in theirs and their clients' business environments and adjusted their activities to the outcomes of the detected events. They identified these events utilising their experiences which had mainly been developed within the metal finishing industry. They also utilised their associates' accounts of the nature of the changes in their business situations, their clients' descriptions of the state of their businesses, and the interpretations of events and government policies presented by the media.

A rough and ready picture of the activities of the MD and the Marketing Manager in MF Ltd. showed a patchy, unstructured pattern dominated mainly by discussions, chats and a great deal of physical mobility. These managers worked at offices which were facing each other. The close proximity of the offices induced intensive interactions. It was customary to leave the office door ajar or wide-open. In this way the managers kept in touch with other members of the management team and some of the shop floor people, who occasionally travelled

up to the administration floor to consult the managers on matters related to the projects at hand.

Every day contained a set of dominant activities which maintained the continuity in their activities despite the discontinuities which were introduced by their interactions. For instance, the dominant item on the Marketing Manager's portfolio was "contacting customers". Thus he planned his work with respect to the production load on the shop floor or the Company's slack resources. He also examined the Company's market capacity which often required a short visit to the shop floor to have a quick exchange of information with the foremen, followed by checking of the demand situation as regards the customer. The MD's tour of the shop floor and continuous contacts with the foremen and operators, similarly provided the background for any "process modifications". Such contacts initiated other issues which were then included in his portfolio.

These contacts were part of their managerial life and assumed responsibilities. The Marketing Manager believed that "personal, face-to-face contacts with people" as well as "calling them by the phone" were focal to the successful marketing of their services. For the Managing Director these contacts were the means of "directing" and "controlling" his colleagues in matters of sales, production, recruitment and welfare. Moreover, the development projects of the firm required live contacts and publicity in order to attract potential customers. This included arranging interviews with metal finishing journals, marketing journals, etc.

Often for the managers in MF Ltd., choosing an episode as dominant, implied a more predictable structure for the day. The marketing manager's visit to their customer's place of work required certain preparations beforehand, i.e. what brochures, or what samples he had to take with him. After each visit he composed

a report on the outcome of the visit. The rest of the day was allocated to some other pre-planned activities, e.g. going through reports presented by other managers in the company on production or commercial issues, or reviewing the available background information about a future potential customer. Articulating their customers' positions seemed the routine and a rather taken-for-granted aspect of the Marketing Manager's work and thus maintained the continuity of his activities.

II

The Managing Director of MF Ltd. set time deadlines and production targets for the shop floor and the members of the management team. The deadlines were based on the Company's contracts with a variety of customers. The contracts thus determined the workload for all the departments. Consequently the work targets were set on the basis of the deadlines. The capacity of the machinery and the productivity level of the employees were taken into account whilst these targets were determined; once the targets were set they had to be achieved. The time deadlines of various contracts were known to the members of the management team and were recorded in their diaries.

The delivery dates, i.e. the deadlines, also determined the weekly pattern of these managers' activities. A "hectic week" was one when a number of deliveries had to be carried out and consequently the breakdown of machinery and equipment or quality control problems due to overloading became inevitable constraints. The week was called "exciting" when a group of employees, including the Managing Director, worked overtime, sometimes until midnight, to achieve the production targets. In most weeks Fridays were quiet and allocated to sorting out correspondence and backlog work and reading reports.

For the Managing Director of MF Ltd. punctuality was the primary means for their survival. It was described in terms of the achievement of the targets within their fixed time periods. It constituted the basis of the MD's definition of leadership, i.e. managing people. In other words, in his view, an efficient manager could manage people by managing their time and "rewarding their achievements" consequently. Frequently in his discussions and conversations with the members of the management team the MD emphasised the effective use of time. However, he thought that executives, in his situation, do not usually "think of time as 40 hours or 35 hours in a week". Given this approach there would be no time limits or such fixed frames as regards their managerial activities, therefore, the concept of effective management of time was irrelevant to his managerial activities. The "9 to 5 working hours" which applied to members of the lower echelons implied that the person had to "cram as much as he (could) into that working day". As regards the delivery targets the management of time was central to the job of the managers at lower levels.

For the Managing Director the day was "planned", if events and activities were predictable and routine. However, this implied that his time was clearly allocated to various episodes in his diary, otherwise "he could not forsee events from one minute to the next".

MF Ltd. had its own specific timetables regarding its business situation. These timetables were set by the MD and his management team, by which blocks of time in days and weeks were formally allocated to certain activities and episodes. The managers arranged the rest of their own time. For instance during the period of study the Marketing Manager had allocated two hours of most mornings (10:00 - 12:00) to visiting the customers, or the MD spent an hour (10:00 - 11:00) each day

touring the shop floors. The MD had chosen this time of the day for his tour because it allowed the operators to start their operations and get involved in the processes. The management team had an informal gathering at lunch time in the private dining room, whilst food was served by the waiters. Lunch usually lasted for an hour (13:00 - 14:00). The MD had allocated blocks of 30 minutes to an hour everyday or sometimes every two days for discussing the Company's credits and other related matters with the Technical and Commercial Services Managers. Similarly, he allocated some times in the afternoons "interviewing" the foreman. These sessions were arranged with regard to matters of supervision or reprimand.

There were certain fixed events in the Company's annual timetable, and known to all managers, e.g. the monthly Board meetings (see later) and the quarterly auditing of the accounts. The auditing exercise which was carried out by the MD kept the labour costs, in particular wages, in line with productivity and performance levels of the company.

A semi-fixed event in MF Ltd.'s timetable were the budgeting sessions which were scheduled variably between February and April. The outcome of this exercise determined the future direction of the company. During the budgeting and auditing exercises the MD worked closely with the Technical Services Manager whose firm had been taken over by MF Ltd. some years previously and the Commercial Manager who was responsible for the accounts in practice. Various informal meetings were thus arranged in which the MD and these managers discussed alternative courses of action as regards their financial capacity.

The other significant structuring episodes in MF Ltd.'s timetable were the shut-down periods, the dates for which were fixed. The pattern of the Company's activities changed as the holiday period approached, especially if there were

failures in the achievement of targets and deadlines.

The fixed, semi-fixed and occasional events which were located in MF Ltd.'s special annual timetable were determined against the calendar and clock time. They were the identified "temporal rules" of the Company and all employees learned about them gradually as they worked in the Company. The managers described the timetabled events as the routine episodes of their everyday managerial life. Here "routine" implied episodes of a less problematic nature, containing attainable objectives. Conversely, the MD considered the timetabled events strategically significant because they were set with respect to the firm's policies and plans. These events influenced the role relationships and the extent of interactions amongst these managers.

The production staff had developed their stocks of knowledge about the technical-temporal rules of the production process. For instance they knew that different polishing and plating processes took different legnth of time, or, that some products such as nuts and bolts (smaller items) were put through the plating process in bulk, whereas cameras, doorhandles, etc. went through the process more slowly. These technical and temporal rules, thus, induced the pattern of the operators' activities.

The Managing Director, Technical Services Manager and the Division Supervisors were familiar with another temporal rule, that was how long it took to alter a finishing process completely. Determining the time period for such switches was a technical as well as a strategic question. However, traditionally, it took between three and five years. For instance, it had taken the Company three years to develop a semi-automatic powder coating process into a fully automatic plant; they could abandon their old chemical process after five years of gradual

modifications. Any different time-span would have resulted in undesirable outcomes. In the former case if a shorter time-span were considered there would be the problems of adaptation and learning for the employees in addition to other related costs.

In general, most employees in MF Ltd. were fairly familiar with these events and episodes, and understood the consequences that they would have, in terms of their work patterns. Detection of these periodic events was considered to be part of the routine activities of the managers in MF Ltd.

Furthermore, certain months of the year were marked in the Company's calendar because of their impacts upon the pattern of their activities. For instance, February was a crucial month as it was then that the reduction/increase in the firm's investment was determined with regard to their performance in the previous year. May was always considered as a "difficult month" for the metal finishing sector because there were fewer working days. June and July were also considered as significant months, according to the Managing Director, since the direction of the Company's trade was decided by the volume of orders which they received in these months. Indeed, in the previous year their metal finishing activities had faced a downturn at this time of the year which the Managing Director attributed to their firm's disappointing performance in the first quarter of the year.

The managers in MF Ltd., and in particular the Managing Director, kept up-to-date with the happenings in the Company's surroundings and through the identification of contingent and periodic events. For instance, in his attempt to secure orders from one of their permanent accounts, the "Timex Company", the Managing Director "kept in touch" and stayed "close" to this client by "reading the

press ... seeing what's happened to their share price ... by generally keeping (their) feet to the ground ... or rather (their) ears, about anything that might happen ... building relationships with Timex representatives ... and finding out ... the realistic assessment of their capabilities".

It was important for MF Ltd. to keep in touch with events as regard Timex, since within twenty-four months a certain quality control problem involving products for Timex recurred. The "finishing" of the products were below the quality standards which were set by their client. In the process of quality inspection the rejects were identified and sorted out, but this led to the delivery of the products being postponed. Simultaneously, the MD contacted the representative from Timex and invited him to a meeting in order to discuss the quality control question. Previously the managers in MF Ltd. had discussed the matter internally in several meetings. In one of these meetings, however, it was resolved that the people in Timex had to be invited to "talk the problem through with (MF Ltd.)". The problem was nevertheless related to the lacquering process which was one of the Company's more successful activities. But because of its growth they did "need to manage it differently, and manage (the quality) problem differently". Such incidences had a great impact upon the scheduling and design of the plating processes.

These managers were also engaged in coding of the events in the wider economic and political spheres as described by the mass media or chamber of commerce. However, they seemed to have disregarded the disjunctures as regards their business operations. For example the rise in the price of silver in the late 1970's "had a disastrous effect" on the Company's silver plating activities and almost "demolished (their trade)" as the MD put it. This was an "unexpected" event in that MF Ltd. had not experienced (or anticipated) such situations previously.

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Conversely, the MD claimed that "unexpected" did not exist in his vocabulary. Thus, he had been "accustomed to the unexpected", or he always "expected the unexpected to happen", thus was prepared to be surprised! For MF Ltd. the "silver event" was an example of hurtful organisational learning which was based on a past event. The managers remembered the events which led to unfavourable outcomes. These events were thus used as "signs" or indicators whilst the managers planned their future projects.

According to the managers in MF Ltd., the metal finishing industry, unlike some Other industries, was less affected by stag-flation, or perhaps more accurately the the activities of MF Ltd. were not affected. The managers believed that the metal finishing industry could not be characterised in terms of rapid growth/decline. They recognised longer-term trends considering the variations in the nature of their activities. The MD had detected some longer waves in the Company's activities that "every twenty years (the Company's performance) tend(ed) to go up" then it "stay(ed) static for three years ... that is in terms of profits ... then up ... then steady". The recession years were located in the steady phase.

Any decline in their trade, however, implied a reduction in orders or perhaps shorter-term contracts or longer intervals between the orders of the customers. MF Ltd. had not experienced such events since the flow of orders remained more or less unchanged. However, identifying such disjunctures had certain implications with regard to setting up alternative courses of action, such as "going out and searching for orders". The Marketing Manager was less involved in identification of these events and disjunctures. He virtually followed the path selected by the MD.

Considering the Managing Director's job description, planning was the central aspect of his job. In practice this aspect of the MD's job was interpreted as spending a great deal of time detecting expected/unexpected events and analysing various courses of action which could be taken accordingly. He assumed his role as the director included the foreseeing of future events and thus "planning for the Company's activities for twenty years ahead". Hence, MF Ltd. adopted an "aggressive marketing" strategy in order to attract the remainder of the market share, i.e. 99.5% of the metal finishing market.

Thus there were plans designed for different time periods with various time-spans. The short-term plans were tactical plans and were devised to maintain the Company's status quo; for instance, one plan used aimed to secure another year of contract with the major customer. The fulfilment of the plan required some minor changes in the production processes and arrangements of some trips to the location of their customer by the Marketing and Technical Services Managers.

The purposes of the mid-term and longer-term plans ranged from "broadening the scope of their activities to investment in properties". The Company had also planned to "go to high technology and ... attract business (which was) of a size appropriate to (their) physical limitations". Furthermore, it seemed that the processes which used water and created some pollution were becoming unattractive because of legislation, statutory requirements and other possible restrictions. MF Ltd. thus, had planned to adopt and install drier processes such as organic or powder coating. This plan was carried out within a period of three years.

The "master plan" that MF Ltd. had designed was expected to make economic use of their neighbouring property (land) which they had purchased. The MD recognised two alternative uses for the property: it could either be added to the production area to facilitate the development of the processes, or as the MD put it, the Company could "act as a landlord" and "create a craft centre" and become the selling agent for those crafts people who occupied the premises. The latter alternative required the financial support of some other institutions with respect to the work background of the potential users. The former alternative could not be carried out if their annual profit at the time of development took "a dive".

Moreover, there was the "20-year plan" which was dominant on the MD's portfolio. This plan was related to the Company's long-term investment, i.e. the Company planned to install a boiler plant which would last for 20 years. Hence, the 20-year plan was designed to look after "the strategic items" regarding investments. Certain issues had to be examined with respect to the outcomes of these investments; for instance, if the investments were made then "what (would) happen to the price of oil, coal, etc. in the 1990's ... and to what extent would these sources be available?", etc.

Planning in MF Ltd. also involved creating demands for some of their services. This became a possible alternative considering their precious metal plating and decorative activites. The business could be expanded by initiating demands for various household goods which could be gold-plated. The MD seemed also to be in the appropriate circle of contacts to do so, i.e. using his associates in his localgolf club, the Party and people in the Chamber of Commerce. Thus, he made some attempts to publicise his ideas.

In the protective side of their business some processes were getting obsolete, for

example, chromium plating. The competitors of MF Ltd. were providing similar services at cheaper prices. Therefore, the Company's plan was to replace this process which also was seen as a means "to optimise their capabilities" in a way which could "produce satisfactory results".

The managers in MF Ltd. were continuously engaged in devising their contingency plans, which were tacit and not documented. For instance, when the price of silver increased, the Company in a short period of time replaced silver by copper to safeguard some profit margins. This switch from one kind of metal to another made no difference in terms of the production process. This way the Company could marginally cope with the crisis. The same substitution approach was used in times of rarity of the other raw materials.

Conversely, the Marketing Manager argued that in sub-contracting (metal finishing services are mainly provided by sub-contracting) planning for future actions was difficult. The business depended upon the flow of orders; the time intervals between the orders and duration of the contracts was therefore crucial. The longer the duration of a contract was the more possible became the planning of the production and marketing activities. However, planning activities, in particular on the marketing side, implied "the efforts which would bring in more work" and thus would induce more profits.

Indeed, the portfolios of the managers in MF Ltd. contained the detected prospects, the tactical maps, short-term and long-term plans and problems. There was a division of labour at the managerial level. The role of the managers and technicals supervisors were clearly defined and their tasks were allocated according to the operations plan. The MD, in practice, initiated the items on the managers' portfolios. The members of the management team hence assumed their

roles to be detecting events, prospects and problems which were discussed and put forward to the MD in their meetings and encounters.

<div align="center">IV</div>

Meetings in MF Ltd. seemed to be the structuring episodes regarding the managers' work. The managers organised their work activities around scheduled meetings. They attended and arranged meetings with various people in the Company to discuss a variety of topics such as the Company's problems, retirement of staff, follow-up of contracts, the up-coming recovery period and the future intentions of the Company. Some of the meetings were scheduled and fixed within the Company's timetable. For instance, the meetings scheduled for discussing the Company's budget were held annually in the winter period (mid-February). At times of logistic tightness, these meetings were held bi-annually whilst the accounts were checked quarterly by the MD and Commercial Services Manager.

The Board meetings were scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month and often lasted for an hour. These meetings were theoretically chaired by the co-founder of the Company, but in practice the MD set the agendas and chaired the meetings. The discussions in these meetings mainly circled around budgeting and planning questions, the arrangements for changes in the production processes and shut-down periods.

The MD collated detailed minutes for each Board meeting. The minutes included "a list of actions against each manager's name". In the next meeting the relevant managers had to present a progress report. These progress reports were used by the MD to put the managers under pressure, by exposing their inefficiencies

publically and by "getting them to feel ashamed". Thus they would "feel more determined not to get into the same position next month". For this meeting, the participants would receive reports on financial matters and the market situation two weeks prior to the meeting which provided them with some "time to reflect on the situation".

The unscheduled meetings were frequently initiated by the MD and then placed on the agendas of the members of the management team. The participation in these meetings was more fluid, but had a flow of interactions. The purpose of some of these meetings was usually to discuss and exchange information regarding the problems which were recognised and defined by the MD. For instance, a couple of meetings were arranged, during the period of study, to consider the question of quality control in the Company. According to the MD these meetings ensured their "integrity". Moreover, they provided an opportunity for him "to bring together all those people who were likely to be involved with (the task of) satisfying the customer" and particularly his son who was expected to consider the problem.

The MD also arranged weekly meetings with the Marketing and Commercial Services Managers, during which they reviewed the orders and enquiries from various companies. The Marketing Manager chaired these meetings. This was a deliberate decision made by the MD in order to organise the Marketing Manager's activities. He was expected to appraise the orders and prepare summary notes on them which were then discussed in the meeting. Often he had failed to do so. The unscheduled meetings, in particular, indicated a low degree of integration of people and tasks in MF Ltd.

In MF Ltd. the layout of the offices provoked a variety of interactions and

encounters among the managerial and non-managerial staff and led to the loading of information onto those involved. This information included items about the customers' requirements and production operations which frequently used as the inputs for decisions regarding the Company's development projects. The MD had deliberately arranged the offices unconventionally in order to "keep (everyone) in touch" with the everyday events. There was the Tannoy System installed in the Company which was meant to facilitate the tracing of people's whereabouts. In this way the MD could keep himself "informed of the pressures, (and) problems". It was like "playing a concerto".

In addition there were consultation meetings in which the MD would brain-storm one of the managers and/or would demand his comments on a report or letter that he had already composed, "hoping that when they do a similar letter or report, they might show it to (him)". It seemed that initiating this kind of "gift relationship" was the main purpose of most meetings and interactions in MF Ltd.

V

The managers in MF Ltd. detected events and operated within identified temporal rules in their Company and industry, in their attempts to protect a niche which was 0.5% of the market. They reckoned that there was scope for development since some engineering firms had been leaving the industry and seemed to have preferred sub-contracting for their finishing requirements. They conjectured about the state of the economy and devised maps which contained permutations and combinations of alternatives. These maps were not documented yet were transmitted in meetings and encounters and constituted their managerial stock of knowledge.

Their "hurtful" experiences such as the events in the early 1980's were included in their stock of knowledge. At the time of this study the Company was making good profits and had plans for investment, "the success in the business was the motivation for investment" but heavy taxation was delaying the plans. Simultaneously, however, the managers realised that "the trade was going to collapse and they suddenly (had not been) as profitable in the previous 12 months". This meant they "needed to go for more orders". The problem then was that they were too cautious in their investments. Past events, e.g. when investments at such a time had undesired outcomes were remembered and used in their sense making of the present situation and whilst they realised future events.

The managers in MF Ltd. had worked mainly in the metal finishing industry, therefore, had intimate knowledge of the nature of the processes and the industry. The Marketing Manager had worked in electropolishing for decades. He joined MF Ltd. at the time of the recession and had "had to educate himself" regarding the other processes. His stock of knowledge contained his war-time experiences in his father's business and in another metal finishing company which had operated with a limited number of finishing processes. Thus he considered metal finishing business activities to be local, and that he (and the other managers) needed to know particularly about the local firms and their demands. At the times of low demand he searched for customers in the local newspaper. Figure 6.3.2 illustrates the Marketing Manager's repertoire of responses.

Conversely the MD had worked for some years in some larger companies before joining their family business and believed that moving along such a track would broaden any manager's outlook. His membership of various organisations provided him with some "understanding of other professions and other types of life". He also theorised about future situations in their industry based on accounts

Figure 6.3.2 The Patterning of a Marketing Manager's

Repertoire of Responses (MF Ltd.)

ENVIRONMENT
The conditions
within which
the company
was operating

Development of
responses for
perceiving environ-
mental situations &
for taking action

Retrospection &
reflection thus,
learning about
events & trajectories

Negotiations /
meetings thus,
sharing of
experience
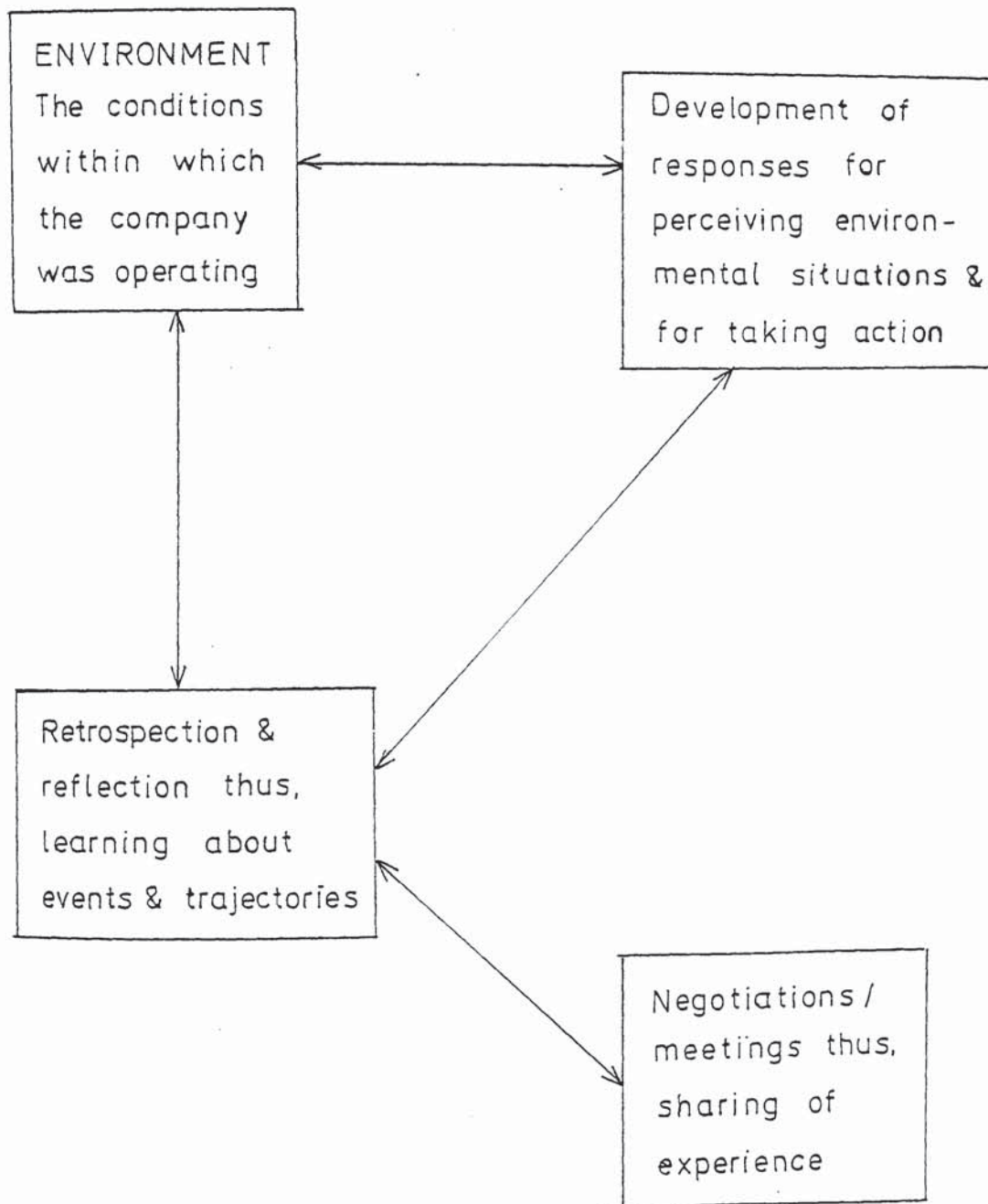
presented by the Financial Times, with respect to the state of industry or national economy. He did not approve of the Marketing Manager's reactive model of marketing and insisted on more pro-active marketing strategy. However, it was frequently noted that MF Ltd. was operating on the basis of sub-contracting and hence was dependent upon other industries for their survival.

The MD's experience and information-gathering activities formed a set of axioms which he used to describe a situation or to make decisions. For instance, regarding their managerial strategies, he believed that "if (an approach) works it is obsolete" which indeed emphasised the point that there could always be "a better way of doing things". Therefore, there should be cautious reliance on past successful experiences. Or, considering his coping strategies, he argued that "a good manager is the one who can say 'no' to a prospect" even in troubled times. In other words, under favourable circumstances a rational choice for a firm may be to defend and secure their existing niche (market share) and to be less pro-active. What managers did in MF Ltd. may be summarised in the following schema (Figure 6.3.3).

Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

Figure 6.3.3   Managers' Schema: MF Ltd.
[Modified on the basis of Bogoun's (1983) Schema]

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE

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MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

NUCLEUS: THE SUITABLE DESIGN SYSTEM FOR ASKFORD DGH AND THE 1990's

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INTRODUCTION

The following case study discusses the activities of a set of health planners and administrators in a district health authority (DHA). It attempts to

(a) depict the recurrent nature of the work of these actors. Thus it shows that the planning activities of the officers in the DHA were organised around a set of assumptions which had developed within the "cultural" values of the NHS and the context of administration and planning activities initiated and sustained by the DHSS and its design blue-print and manuals.

(b) illustrate that the design blue-print had a structuring influence upon the activities of these actors. Therefore, the application of their "interpretative schemes", which had developed accordingly, to their practices were considered as a routinised activity and sedimented in time. It is illustrated that these schemes simultaneously contributed to the very understanding and representation of their roles in the process of planning and design of a district general hospital (DGH).

(c) show that these actors, equally, developed "strategies" and "rules" (within the same context) which provided them with some room for maneouvre and thus the opportunity to transform and break the mould of the "established" approaches to design and planning of a district general hospital. Their transformational approach implied re-moulding of the context of their activities. Thus it is argued that the activities of these actors and their role sets (i.e. medics, district officers, hence the State) included their intervention into the "present" in order to reconstruct the future.

The DGH was designed to provide health service for the inhabitants of a new town

and its surrounding areas in England. The Stages I and II of the plan and design of the hospital were submitted to the DHSS during the process of this study and were approved by the DHSS. The DGH was planned and designed according to "Nucleus" principles instigated by the DHSS. The Nucleus building system was chosen by the State to accelerate the process of design and commissioning of the DGH and to reduce the time and cost elements in the DHA's capital programme.

INTRODUCING KEY ACTORS

The major actors and key informants in the process of this study were:

Nurse Planner was in his mid 50's and had started his career as a student nurse and qualified in psychiatric nursing. He, than, worked in the army in a nursing job. Later he joined a hospital in the north of England as a staff nurse. He was promoted to the post of chief male nurse after 5 years before he joined Cropshire DHA in 1972 as a senior nursing officer. In 1974 he was appointed as Nurse Planner.

His job specifically was related to service planning, capital planning and coordination of those operational services which had nursing implications. He thought that the natural progression in his career was to be appointed to the post of district nursing officer, yet the post was offered to an officer from another district as the holder of the job reached his retirement. At the time of study he was promoted to Regional Nurse Planner.

General Administrator (Planning) was in his mid 40's and had joined the DHA in 1980 when the Stage 1 of design of Askford DGH had been submitted to the DHSS. He had worked as a planning officer in one of the regional health

authorities in south of England. His job included planning for operational services and development of information and intelligent systems in partnership with the Nurse Planner. He convened the MCT meetings and represented the District Management Team on the Project Team at the Region.

District Personnel Officer was in his mid 40's and had been in his post since 1978. Chiefly he was involved in drawing the personnel policies of the DHA within the RHA and the DHSS policy intentions and coordinating the implementation of these policies. He had previously worked as the personnel director in a company within the private sector.

District Nursing Officer was in his early 60's and had worked within various strata of the NHS for 32 years. He was appointed to his post in 1974. He was qualified as a psychiatric nurse in the early years of his career. He was involved in teaching nurses and had a postgraduate degree in public sector management. He had been involved in planning and commissioning of several hospitals.

Personnel Officer was in his early 30's and had been with the DHA for approximately 5 years. Previously he had worked in personnel division of various health authorities in the west side of the country. His job included provision of reports on the labour market within the district, evaluation of reports on social trends in the area etc. At the time of study he was promoted to the position of Unit Administrator in one of the hospitals in the region.

Assistant Treasurer was in his mid 30's and had been with Cropshire DHA for approximately 3 years. He had been involved in auditing exercises in HMC and later in capital planning at one of the RHA's in the northern part of the country. At Cropshire DHA he was involved in the development of the Financial

Information Project (FIP). His main task as regards the DGH was to evaluate the financial consequences; sources of revenue for the hospital and hence the applicability of the revenue to various options.

General Administration Officer (Planning)   was in his late 30's and a mathematician by training. He had worked at the regional level as operations research officer, applying various computer based techniques for handling strategic planning. At Cropshire DHA, where he had been working for over two years he was involved in the development of the Financial Information Project (FIP) and development of routine population/bednorms types of calculations.

General Administration Officer was in his late thirties and had started his career in the planning department of a hospital in the north of England. In the later stages of his career he had become mainly involved in administrative tasks of a general hospital. He had been a member of the committee for planning and design of Askford DGH since the early 1970's. At the time of study he was appointed to the post of Unit Administrator in a hospital in the region.

Planning Officer (Child care provisions) was in his early 30's and had joined the DHA in 1978. He was mainly involved in service or capital planning for the district in general. His role in the process of planning for Askford DGH was that of supporting the General Administrator (Planning).

These actors were members of the Manpower and Commissioning Team for ADGH and in the process of preparing for commissioning of the DGH they maintained contacts with other interest groups through assigned sub-groups.

The case study (which was carried out between 1981 to 1984) will include analysis

and interpretation of the events which provided the grounds for these actors' planning decisions and other activities. It is divided into two sections. Secton one provides an overview of the observed and reported events, development of the plans, negotiations between the involved agencies as regards the planning and commissioning of the DGH. It will commence by examining the background to the development of the new town and how the need for building a new DGH in the area was recognised and defined by various institutions and actors. Then the reasons for selection of Nucleus as the hospital planning system will be described. Section two includes an interpretation and analysis of these events and negotiations and outlines the intended actions of these actors in transforming the established planning practices and procedures and reconstructing some of the events within their identified contexts. Yet attempts are made to avoid degenerating this description into a morass of managerial political machination.

SECTION I

DEVELOPMENT OF "ASKFORD" NEWTOWN

"Askford" was designated as a new town in 1963, covering initially an area of approximately 10,000 acres which was expanded to 19,000 acres in 1968. The main purpose of designating this area to a new town was to capture the "overspill" from the neighbouring Midland city. The town was expected to flourish on the basis of its past connection with the Industrial Revolution. It was designed to be encircled with motorways linked to the national system. The population target for the town was set at 250,000, initially to be attained over a generation.

Askford was expected to provide an integrated foundation for an effective urban life. It developed to the circumstances of the time, i.e. the mounting pressure of

housing shortage forced the government to venture a new series of new towns (the first group were built in the 1950's). The "overspill" towns such as Askford were used to achieve a redistribution of population between major cities as well as revitalising the areas with modern industries.

The Development Corporation for Askford did not escape this pressure and according to the Corporation representative at the DHA, it was driven by its housing programme rather than industrial development. A housing estate was initially built and instead of absorbing the overflow from the Midland city, it became a cheap housing area for people who needed to be housed and were not necessarily from the neighbouring industrial city.

A scheme to guarantee homes with jobs was launched by the Development Corporation to attract skilled workers. This led to a dramatic upsurge in the job scene and the town fulfilled the mission that it was destined for, after ten years. Within the same period the population target for the new town was revised since the original set target seemed unattainable. As the result of the revision, the projects for building houses and factories were held up; yet halfway through its development life the movement of industry into Askford had been reasonable as regards the national average.

In the initial structure plan of the new town, a district general hospital (DGH) was included which would have the catchment target of 250,000 people. The building of DGH, the health administrators claimed, was considered to play a major role in boosting the employment prospects in the area, especially for the local female workforce. The informal discussions about the hospital started some six years after the designation of Askford as a new town. The actual design and planning of the hospital nevertheless took place some years later.

Usually, when new towns were designated funds are allocated for various social services, i.e. housing, education and health. However, the work for Askford DGH was not expected to begin even twenty years after the new town's designation, not until sufficient funds were provided. All the parties involved, i.e. the residents, the officers in the Development Corporation and "Cropshire" Health Authority were sceptical about the prospects for the hospital at its initial stages of planning. The actors suspected that by the time the hospital would have become operational (1990) its catchment population would far exceed its capacity.

ASKFORD DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL: THE DEVELOPMENT

The design of the building and planning for the functional content of the hospital originally started in 1972. The DGH was planned for 800 beds. The changing economic circumstances, the government policy to economise on public expenditure led to a revision of the planning system and its functional content and a move towards a more economical design concept. However, if the initial state of affairs had remained unchanged Askford DGH would have been operational by 1977. Nevertheless, in 1977 the planning department of the Midland Regional Health Authority (RHA) and Cropshire District Health Authority began revising the "A1" submission.*

This revision necessitated a supporting statement on the subsequent "re-organisation" and "possible closure" of some existing hospitals in the area, if the new DGH were to become operational. An estimate of the financial resources

Foot Note

* See Capricode Building System.

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CAPRICODE PLANNING STAGES

Summary of Stages in Planning

STAGE 1 OUTLINE PROJECT INTENTIONS -	Additionally - for schemes selected for DHSS approval to Stage 1:	
1A Relationship to Area and Regional Strategy (HBPN 2) Preparation of outline project policy	in consultation with DHSS (RPD)	✓
1B Briefing of Project Team		
1C Outline Management Control Plan for whole project		
1D Assessment of Functional Content (HBPN 3)	in consultation with DHSS (RPD)	✓
1E Site Appraisals	in discussion with DHSS (FB)	✓
1F Cost and Phasing (HBPN 6) Preliminary costing, using Departmental Cost Guide for whole project, based on anticipated phasing. On-costs to take account, where practicable, of site conditions and expected phasing costs		
Consideration of contracting procedure		
Estimation of revenue costs (where possible with anticipated extra costs of particular phasing or, for example, deep planning)		
1G Approval	(i) submission of outcome of Stages 1C - 1F to DHSS (RPD) (ii) formal meeting with DHSS (if necessary) (iii) approval by DHSS (RPD)	✓

Stage 2

STAGE 2

PLANNING - PROJECT AND FIRST SCHEME

2A Management Control Plan
Firm up project summary plan produced at
Stage 1C. Subsidiary plan for first scheme
up to start on site. Bar charts or network
diagrams for following schemes (if any)

2B Site Selection
if not already made

in discussion with
DHSS(HB)

2C. Planning Policies
(HBPN 2)
Whole hospital; departmental, as necessary
to assess areas including additional
accommodation and additional engineering

2D Selection of Building Shape
Prepare preliminary site development plan

2E Development Control Plan
(HBPN 5, DN 5)
Based on 2C planning policies, 2D preliminary
site development plan, provisional schedules
of accommodation and preliminary sketches of
major space-consuming departments for first
scheme

2F Confirmation of Functional Content
Final check before client's brief in respect
of functional content is frozen

2G Budget Cost
(HBPN 6)
Up to date assessment of project and final
assessment of individual schemes, areas and
costs based on information provided by DCP

Revenue estimate (first scheme)

2H Selection of Contract Method
EEC Directives 71/305 and 72/277

2J Approval

(i)   submission of
      outcome of
      Stages 2A-2H
      to DHSS(HB)
(ii) formal meeting
      with DHSS (if
      necessary)
(iii) approval by
      DHSS(HB)

Stage 3

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Stage 3

DESIGN AND COST PLANNING

(Relevant phase or scheme only)

3A Notional Cost Plan
Based on an apportionment of the Budget Cost total between blocks of work and broken down into elements

3B Detailed Design Brief
Departmental policies (H3PN2)
Schedules of accommodation (BNs and DNs)
Activity and room data
Major group 2 equipment list

Note "Client's brief to include information in 3B is now frozen"

3C Sketch Plans
DNs, room data sketch designs

3D Equipment Schedules
ENs

3E Check that accommodation provided in the design matches the approved client's brief

3F Detailed Design
Production Material
(and cost planning)

Engineering Detail
(and cost planning)

Final MDB schedules

Preparation of OJ Notices
(when applicable)

Bills of Quantities and engineering documentation

3G Pre-tender Estimate and Summary Cost Plan ∮

3H Approval *

3J Preparation of Tender Documents

Stage 4

CONTRACT AND CONSTRUCTION

Note: Tender invitations at commencement of Stage 4 (EEC Directives 71/305 and 72/277)

4A Contract
Details of tenders and cost analyses ∮ (H3PN6)

4B Construction

Stage 5

COMMISSIONING

(to start any time after Stage 3E)

Team Appointment and Briefing

MCP including closures or changes of use

Preparation of Revenue Estimate (details to RHA)

Preparation of Operational Handbooks ≠

Fixing of Establishment, Staff Assembly and Training

Preparation of Final Equipment Schedule and Orders

Equipment and Supplies Assembly and Storage

Engineering Commissioning

Cleaning

Opening, Public Relations and Publicity

Stage 6

EVALUATION (of finished scheme some 9 months or so after being brought into use)

≠ sometimes referred to as Commissioning Manuals

* by DHSS for schemes selected for its approval to Stage 3

∮ submission of information to DHSS (see Appendix 3)

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which might thereby be released was provided.

The administration in Cropshire DHA continuously emphasised the need for reappraisal of the functional contents of the hospital and the financial resources, due to population growth and demographic movements. There were some doubts raised because of variations in the the projected catchment figures to be used as the basis for allocation of beds to speciality wards. However, the establishment of viable units for all specialities, as regards the phase I development of the hopsital seemed unlikely. Some of the specialities were omitted in the first phase (i.e. obstetrics) as Cropshire DHA could not justify financially the existence of an extra unit in the county by the opening date (1987/8). These considerations were confined within the concepts of "Nucleus" which was used as the planning (or building) system for the DGH. The DHSS had stressed its applicability to new town sites. The revision of the functional content, more or less, reflected a "sequence of theoretical processes" undertaken by the planners to arrive at a model suitable for the next ten years. The theoretical model contained bed norms which were greater than the norms considered as reasonable by the RHA. The provision of long stay beds, for instance, was dependent upon the effectiveness of Askford day hospital services and the Local Authority's provisions. But in the absence of such expansion the existing hospitals in the area could cover the needs.

The implications of the services provided by other hospitals upon the extensiveness and effectiveness of the services which Askford DGH would provide, were examined by the officers in the DHA in order to generate a more "realistic" basis for the "theoretical" model. With regard to the older hospitals (some of which were 100 years old) the planners considered these premises, buildings as potential "off site" centres, or annexed.

Gradually, yet with some delays, the development of the DGH became an item on

the RHA'S agenda. It was, then, to be considered as one of the schemes in the Cropshire District Health Authority's mid-term Capital Programme. This initiated the establishment of a "Project Team" which would draw up a "Management Control Plan" (MCP) in line with the DHSS "Capricode" planning guidance. The planners and administrators in Cropshire DHA worked according to the MCP, within its recommended time frames, and floating times. Ironically, the first slippage (five months) occurred because the DHA planners failed to complete revision of the "A1 submission" plan within the time deadlines. The reason for the delay was attributed by the actors to the low staffing levels for undertaking the planning exercise.

The MCP anticipated the start of the site work to be in the summer of 1982 provided that all the "Capricode" planning stages were complete by then. The question of financing the project was always considered with caution. The health authorities, in practice, were not allowed to publish dates of starts for major capital developments not more than one year in advance. Thus, the "hospital project" remained in a state of limbo.

Amidst the controversies which arose, there was the question of an appropriate site, one which would be accessible to the expected catchment area and also located in appropriate surroundings. The site initially selected (for the 800-bed hospital) was rejected as it was in close proximity to an aluminium smelting plant and thus exposed to fumes and pollution.

The search carried out subsequently by the officers in the RHA, DHA and ADC identified two sites: the site in the northern part of Askford which had no services problem (e.g. drainage) and could be purchased at a lower price, and the southern site which had foul and surface drainage problems and the required area had to be

acquired at different stages and at a higher price. The second site, however, had the advantage of being close to some housing estate on the edge of a semi-rural landscape.

The identified sites were examined by independent building consultants whose operations included digging trial pits and bore holes. The "southern site" had a greater preponderance regarding the water conditions. The consultants concluded that the "northern site" had more advantages and its cost implications were limited. But the General Administrator (Planning) showed interest in the site which was closer to the housing estate, both from the recruitment angle, i.e. there would be less travelling expenses, and revenue savings on hospital transport but irrespective of the initial cost of preparing the land.

After some further deliberations the semi-rural site (i.e. southern) was chosen for the DGH.

RATIONALISATION OF RESOURCES

During the course of planning for the DGH, the officers in Cropshire DHA were advised by the DHSS to adopt a parsimonial approach in their allocation of resources. This also implied that the possibility of any funds arising from the DHSS's resources was remote. Phase I of the DGH could not be operationalised unless its recurring and running costs, staffing and non-staffing costs were funded. One of the options for the officers in the DHA, was to consider the closure of some of the existing cottage hospitals. There were controversial debates raised not only by the closures but also by the initial rationale for the building of a new hospital in an area where there were sufficient numbers of hospitals and health centres serving the needs of the catchment population.

According to the actors at Cropshire DHA the new DGH, equipped with modern technology, could provide a wide range of services and hence could easily replace the old cottage hospitals in the district.

The announcement of closures by the DHSS raised some resistance from those who were connected with these hospitals, i.e. their employees and the members of the medical profession who worked in the region. There was a re-shuffle of the hospitals listed for closure. It was then decided that some of the services provided by some of these hospitals were retained. The cost-benefit analysis of reducing the number of beds/services in these hospitals or closing them was at the core debates among the administrators and politicians. For the health administrators the reduction in services of these hospitals instead of their closure meant an increase in expenditure. They, therefore, had to search for some other kinds of saving which would also lead to service planning penalties. A more significant implication of reduction in services was for the Stage 1 submission and the costing assumptions of the ADGH which were based on certain revenue assumptions. There was the need for a review of these assumptions. Nevertheless, the DHA officers decided to stand firm with their proposed closing of two of the hospitals, which were 100 years old, since they would incur heavy maintenance expenditure by the time "ADGH" became operational.

Cropshire Health Authority faced another challenge as regards the building and operationalising of a DGH. Here the advantages of developing a DGH were compared against the extension of one of the existing large hospitals, i.e. Royal Hospital (RH). The representatives of the medical profession in the area lobbyed the officers at the RHA for the Phase III development of the RH as the more

rational option. However, the expansion of the RH was rejected by the DHSS on the grounds of optimal hospital size, i.e. the government was "unhappy" and thus reluctant to allow any further expansion of a large hospital. Nor were they going to regard any commitment to subsequent phases of Askford DGH on similar grounds. Thus during its Phase I, ADGH would have 300 beds including acute, geriatric and psychiatric wards.

Cropshire DHA sought the DHSS's approval of their A1 submission through extensive lobbying. The officers thought that their demand, i.e. building ADGH was legitimate. Over the years the local population had been exerting pressure for development of Askford's own hospital. Some people in the area had to travel eleven miles before they could reach a health centre. The DHA proceeded with the design and planning of Stage II irrespective of the probability that the absence of formal approval of Stage I could halt further design work on the ADGH. The Stage I submission was granted approval a year later. It normally took the DHSS six months or longer to approve of any submission.

STAFFING: SEARCH FOR SKILLED MANPOWER

Amidst the question of revenue funding and costing of the DGH was the consideration of fundings for the recruitment, training and transport of the future staff of ADGH. The administrators in Cropshire DHA recognised that staffing could pose certain problems. In order to minimise their exposure in such circumstances they identified a greater role for Askford Development Corporation. This collaboration, they claimed, resulted in an "innovative" computer-based manpower study. During the course of this study, the labour market in the area, in particular in the new town itself, was examined by the Personnel Department in the DHA:

(a)   to produce a detailed staffing picture (i.e. what skills, what ratios) and

(b)   to constitute a programme of "phased recruitment" and training of the staff for the DGH.

As part of this programme the members of the "Manpower and Commissioning Team" (MCT) in Cropshire Health Authority put forward proposals for ways of recruiting from the local sources, i.e. staff of other hospitals. The implementation of the programme also included use of facilities in RH for training of para-medical staff. The officers perceived no problems in recruitment of the ancilliary staff since the local labour and the existing hospitals were expected to provide the required number of staff in this category. According to the members of the MCT, the programme was a means to enhance the DHA's potential opportunities in attracting the required classes of skilled labour. The new hospital was supposed to offer better prospects in order to be able to compete with the existing hospitals in absorbing these skills. Furthermore, the problem of recruitment of nursing and para-medical staff was raised by the District and Regional officers in their discussions over aborting the expansion programme of RH. Thus it was argued that Phase III of RH development would be operational in advance of the opening of the DGH and would therefore absorb the skilled work force (e.g. nurses) and impose an obstacle in the process of commissioning and opening of the hospital in Askford. The attempts for the recruitment of the medical staff developed within a context which offered little support for the building of a new DGH in the new town. The potential and projected services to be provided by the hospital or even its initial opening were planned within uncertain dimensions. A "working group" consisting of the medical representatives on the Management Team in Cropshire DHA and its neighbouring authorities and officers in the RHA was set up to consider "positive steps" in the

recruitment of medical staff based on the assumption that their attempts would not present any "abnormal problems". Their tasks included briefing of the consultants in the existing hospitals in the area on the extent of the required services, the timetables and commissioning questions.

The crucial aspect of Askford DGH development project was the allocation of financial resources within the framework set by the "rationalisation" debate which was the main criterion regarding the approval of the proposed fundings for the planning and commissioning of the DGH. A major source of finance was considered to be Askford Development Corporation whose "raison d'etre" was to facilitate the provision of services of all kinds for the inhabitants of Askford. The DHA managed to obtain the Corporation's financial assistance for the proposed training schemes.

Askford DC resented any delays in the commissioning and opening of the DGH, because any delay was interpreted as their inefficiency in implementing their policy intentions and thus increased the uncertainty and vulnerability of their development exercises or even the status of the Corporation. Therefore, they increased the scope of their activities in this respect by initiating contacts with potential markets and offering financial supports to relevant institutions. The Corporation became a firm believer of a scheme which was initially put forward by the manpower planners (i.e. the personnel officers) in the DHA and in the context of a "provision of local employment policy", and hence aimed at sensitising the local labour market.

The Corporation and the RHA initially refrained from making any contribution towards the travelling expenses of those trainees who would have to travel to work. However, this question was resolved later by the Corporation's contribution. Moreover, on the basis of their mutual interest, a computer-based

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manpower planning for the DGH was undertaken by Cropshire DHA (i.e. the Personnel Department) and the Corporation (i.e. researchers on social situations in Askford).

"MODERN TECHNOLOGY" IN HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

In order to determine the required manpower for the new hospital, there was the need for measuring the workload which would be generated by the provision of services. Furthermore, the type of services which would be provided by the hospital implied a change in the pattern of services in the area. The appraisal of manpower options had to be done with regard to this pattern. Each option contained ratios and norms of workload with some manpower and financial implications and required close scrutiny. Actually, costing of the effects of the expected change was the core of this exercise. The option appraisal took place with respect to the DHSS's "guidance" and was presented in a system called Financial Information Project (FIP). The system easily contained any revenue or cost savings.

Prior to 1974, appraisal of options in this manner was non-existent. The system was introduced in 1977 as part of the DHSS planning (or building) system, i.e. "Capricode". Briefly, FIP was supposed to be used for the calculation of service levels and related staffing requirements and thus make accurate costing more possible.

The following Figure summarises its main ingredients:

Figure 7.1 CALCULATION OF SERVICE LEVELS
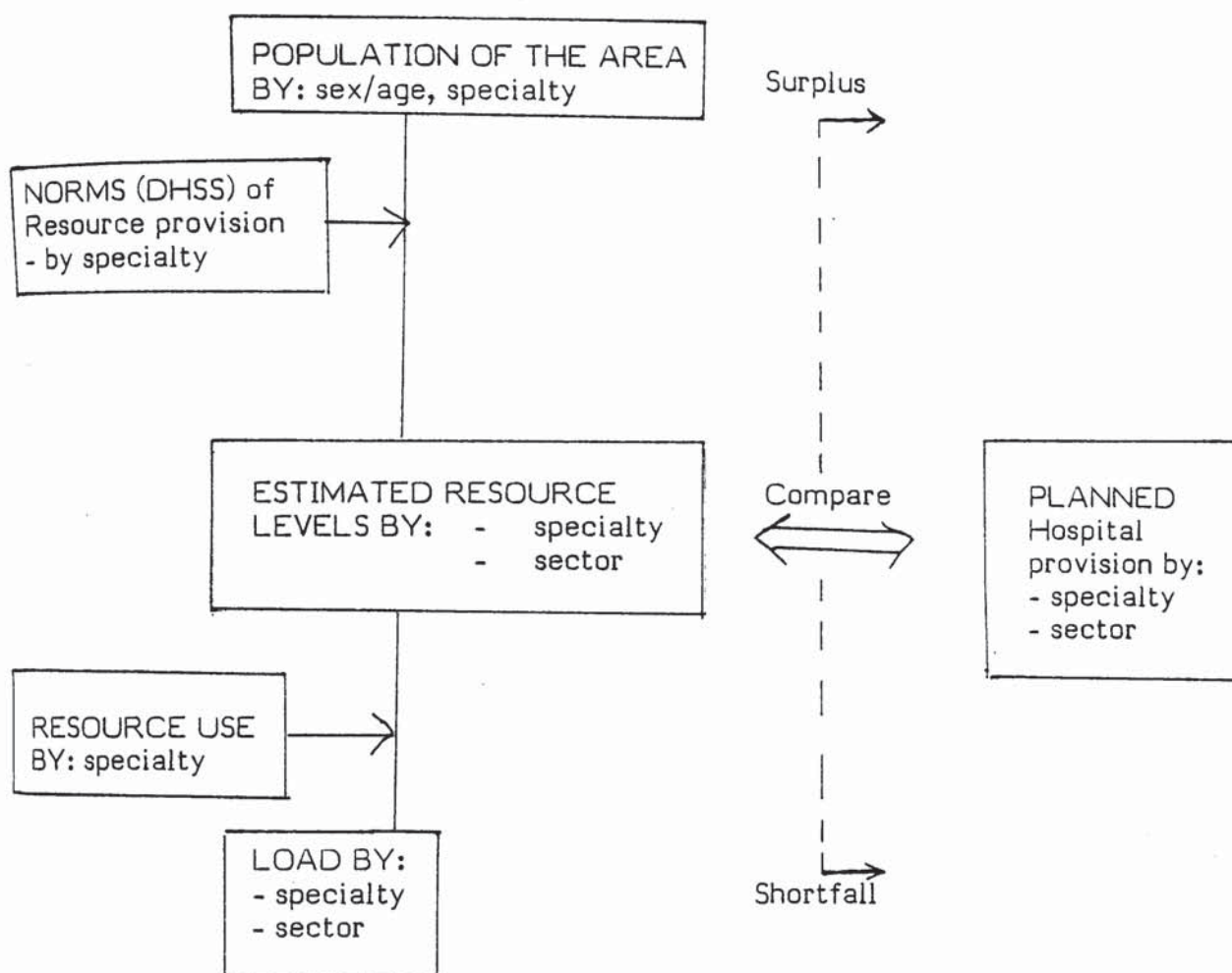
Several health authorties were encouraged by the recommendations of the Korner Committee on Information Services to introduce computer technology. The computing skills which were necessary for examining the detailed requirements for a particular hospital were scarce within various health authorities, according to the administrators at the DHA. Furthermore, all the administrative details, such as number of beds, average length of stay, had to be taken into account. Figure 7.2 shows the basic steps in calculation of staffing requirements:

Figure 7.2 CALCULATION OF STAFFING LEVELS

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ DGH PLANNED         │
                    │ SERVICES/RESOURCE   │
                    │ LEVELS              │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
┌─────────────────┐          │
│STAFFING NORMS   │          │
│& assumption     │─────────▶│
│FT/PT            │          │
└─────────────────┘          │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ STAFFING REQUIREMENTS   │              Surplus
                    │ BY:  - department       │              ┌────▶
                    │      - grade            │              │
                    └─────────────────────────┘              │
                              │                              │
┌─────────────┐               │                              │
│Grades       │               │                              │
│breakdown    │──────────────▶│                              │
└─────────────┘               │                              │
                              │                  Compare        ┌──────────┐
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐  ◀──────▶      │Proposed  │
                    │ ESTIMATE STAFFING       │                │Staffing  │
                    │ BY:  - department       │                └──────────┘
                    │      - grade            │              │
                    └─────────────────────────┘              │
                                                             │
                                                             └────▶
                                                             Shortfall
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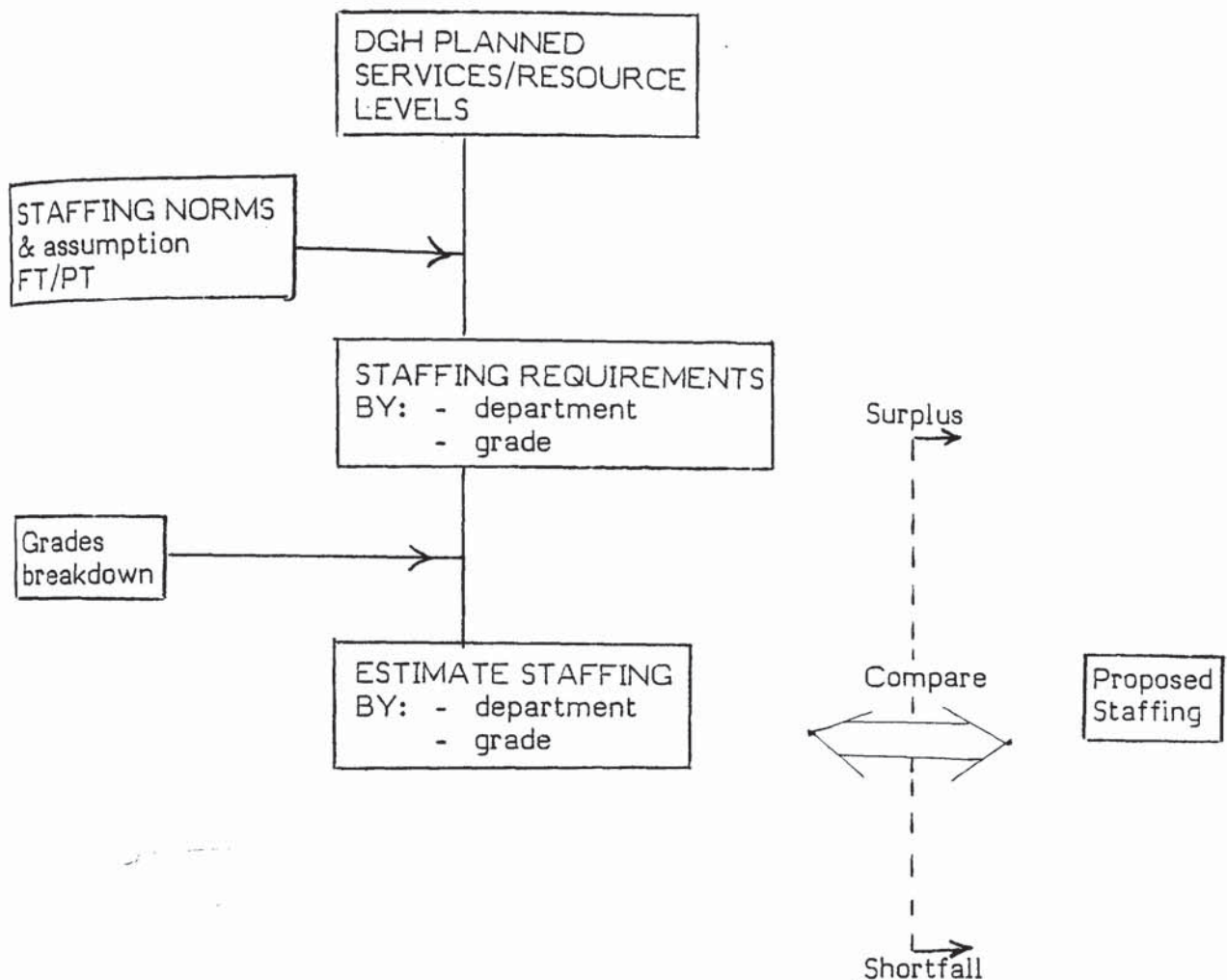
For instance, the central question in the development of Askford DGH had been to decide "exactly what specialties" would be catered for within the DGH. And the treasurers preferred a "scientific" way of doing the appraisal which implied getting back to "NEED" debate, i.e. "to find out exactly" what was "required by the local population". In the absence of such administrative details they had to rely on the "subjective judgement" of nursing or medical officers, administration and treasurers and their estimates of the required number of beds.

According to the planning officers, the introduction of FIP was an indication of

the direction of future policies of health authorities, that is, encouraging the provision of costed options for and by the authorities in their planning of health services, instead of, as practised in the past, relying on chief officers' guesstimates. The treasurers, however, considered the exercise as a kind of "financial modelling" and thus it was possible to apply different parameters to the basic model. The task was to convince the team of officers in the District and Region that the costing analysis used for option appraisal was valid because it was based on "hard fact". The basic models accordingly could influence the way some decisions such as closures or service planning, could be taken by administrators. There was also the need to start with population figures as the base line (see the Figures). Having the parameters, the planners were equipped with a number of "scenarios" for development of a long term planning basis.

The planners in DHA claimed that they were one of the pioneering groups in using the system; that they had the skills and the administrative details available. They argued that the advantage of the system would be its ability to reduce uncertainty (increase objectivity) in the financial decision-making process.

The other computer-based system was Patient Administrative System (PAS). This system provided "administrative information about patients and their passages through the hospital environment". In other words it assisted the authority and the hospital administrators in the day-to-day control and management of hospital resources and provided the statistical data which might be used in long term planning. The system was mainly concerned with patients master indexes, out-patient appointments, in-patient admissions, discharges and waiting list management. The officers perceived that the "system" could not have an immediate implication for Askford DGH and its planning, at least not until it became operational. Its role as regards the costing and funding issues was thought

as peripheral, yet the question of producing the relevant information within financial limitations had to be considered.

The planning for recruitment, training of the staff for the DGH, the option-costing exercises and consideration of the prospects of utilising the PAS once the hospital was opened took place within the frames of the Nucleus concept which was considered as the suitable design (or building) system for ADGH.

NUCLEUS: THE SUITABLE DESIGN SYSTEM FOR ASKFORD DGH AND THE 1990's

Up to 1967 under the impetus of the 1962 "Hospital Plan", planning in the NHS had always been capital led and hospital-oriented largely. The "Hospital Plan" related the development of hospital services to the development of services for prevention of illness. It also formalised the concept of the district general hospital and suggested population-related bed norms for increasing the equitable distribution of the NHS resources. Despite the changes in the wider economic system which affected some of the basic assumptions in the Plan, the population-related bed norms remained unchanged in the NHS planning system. In the case of Askford DGH the question of bed norms and strategies was at the core of debates of the MCT. The closure of some wards and hospitals in the area implied re-distribution of beds and services. Yet the need for such changes and the maintenance of quality of services remained to be justified by the new DGH.

However, "the Plan" based the hospital services of the future on "a network of DGH" providing a wide range of treatment and diagnostic facilities. This argument set the background for building of DGH's for new towns which were blooming in the same era, the prediction of high population growth rate for new

towns justified the need for more beds. The planning and design of Askford DGH had developed within the same context. The original project for a large hospital was later abandoned.

The government of the time had claimed that the "oil shock" and general financial situation of the 1970's had forced them to adopt austerity measures and tighten up the expansion of public expenditure. For the DHSS this meant the hospital building programme had to come to terms with a lower level of capital investment. The implications for the authorities were in terms of less revenue for large schemes and that meant more effective use of existing buildings, the improvement, development of the services of the existing hospitals, etc. The concept of a large (1,000 bed) DGH, perhaps indicative of the 1960's prosperity, was modified as a result of time and costing pressures. Considering the situational demands and government policy intentions, the Department of Health searched for a "flexible hospital planning system". A design system for a "small intensive use" hospital which could be viable in itself in the first phase yet capable of expansion later (even ten years) was thus developed. This design/planning system was termed "Nucleus".

In general, the main objectives of the Nucleus design concept were:
- to provide a choice of content for the first phase which would contain 300 beds;
- to minimise the nursing cost yet maintain the standard of services, through multi use of space and by appropriate functional relationships avoiding fixed equipment,
- to "cater for a range of sites" and
- to plan for 2 storeys utilising natural light and ventilation.

Nucleus design strategy was basic and the concept did not make the experience developed on the basis of other design works namely "Best Buy" and "Harness" redundant. Indeed, it is a representation of culminated research studies into the question. There are elements of scaled down Harness discernible in the "template" format of Nucleus; clustered as it was along a dominant "Hospital Street". In the Harness programme all the departments were tied in "⊞" shape. In the Nucleus hospital, the building units were in cruciform "✚", and inside they could be divided into two "⊤" shapes usually used for two wards or 4 "L" shapes used for operating theatres, etc. The cruciforms were attached vertically to the hospital street corridor. The formation of these units accordingly produced "chequer board of squares" which were used as courtyards. The design details were available in "data packs" which contained a guide of operational policies, key architectural line drawings to scale and engineering diagrams complete with specifications. The time saving attribute of the Nucleus design might have been related to the existence of this mass of background informative material (see Figures 7.3 & 7.4).

When first the Nucleus concept (i.e. design material) developed it was anticipated that the users (i.e. authorities) could take the "data pack" material and work this through to tender documents and construction stages. Some "local trimming" was expected to suit particular circumstances in individual hospitals.

At the time of planning for Askford DGH, a number of Nucleus projects (e.g. Pindersfield Acute Unit) were undertaken and some were completed by the early 1980's. The degree of involvement of the DHSS in the planning of these hospitals varied. Yet some of these projects were to test the "data pack" material and its viability. However, it seemd that some users simply translated the Nucleus data into tender documents with no change (e.g. Maidenstone). And in some others
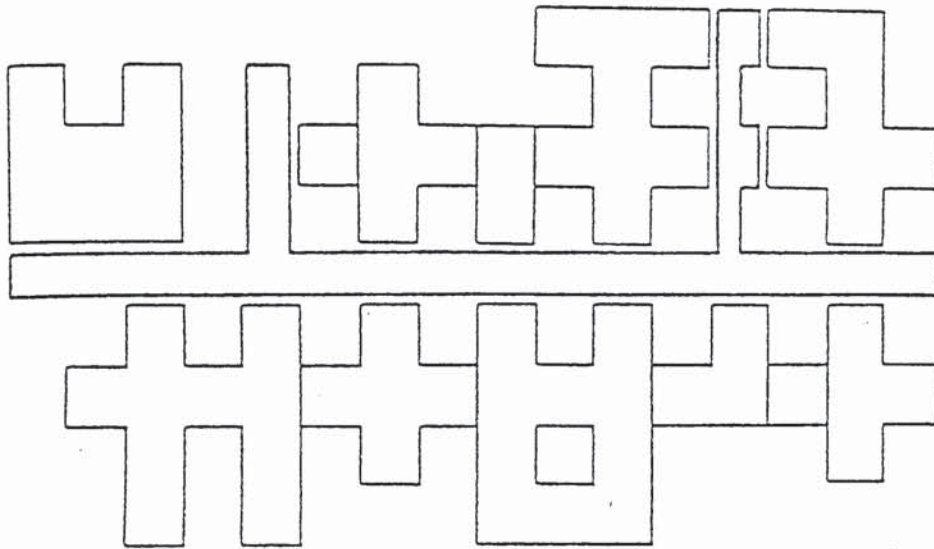
The basic "Harness" concept is a linear hospital street to which standard and non-standard units of accommodation with different configurations, planned on a I5m square grid, are attached with relative freedom but geometric consistency and enclosed courtyards that provide natural light and venyilation.

Figure 7.3   The 'Harness' Concept of Hospital Design

whole hospital

The whole hospital can grow in two directions: the
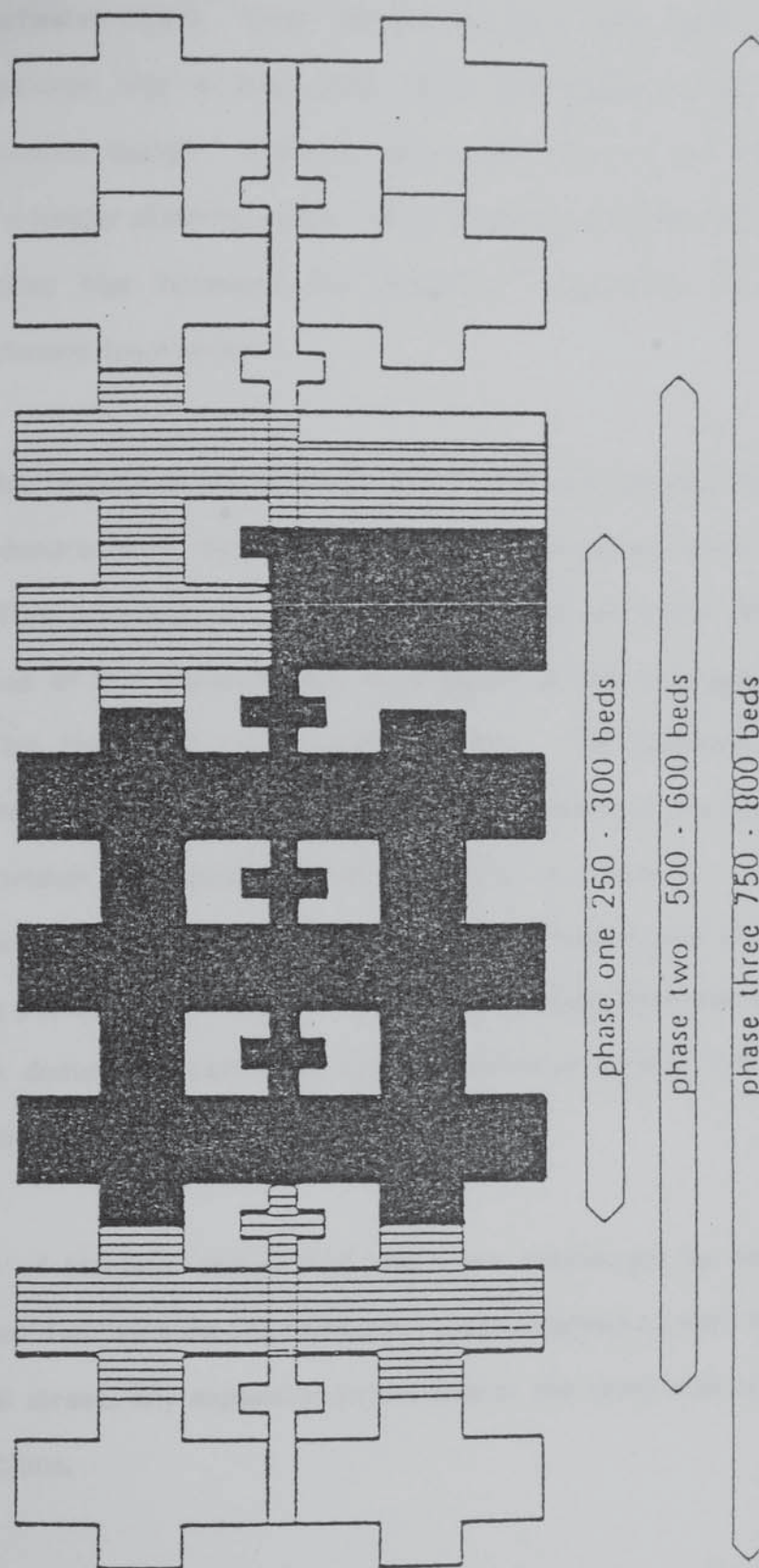service centre expands concurrently or independently

phase one 250 - 300 beds

phase two 500 - 600 beds

phase three 750 - 800 beds

Figure 7.4 Nucleus Hospital: Phases of Development

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Nucleus policies were abstracted from the pack and used to generate a particular design (e.g. Colchester DGH). These variations in the ways users had translated the Nucleus package was a step away from the Department's intention of standardising hospital design. However, any modification in the standard design system implied a longer planning cycle. With regard to Askford DGH the planners claimed that they had increased the length of cruciforms and designed its Geriatric Department from scratch.

The controversial feature of the Nucleus design was its "template" format (Figure 7.5). All the departments, except for service departments, were subjugated to this format. This principle provided a logical shape and clear communication. The inadequacies of the departments, as a result of this subjugation, were the price to pay for "Nucleus" type standardisation. The planners detected the inadequacies from some individual projects, for instance, there was insufficient space and provision of facilities for teaching in Phase I. However, the Department had argued that the "tyranny of the template" was compensated for by the phasing potential of the Nucleus design. Indeed, Nucleus Green Pack, a four-inch thick document, contained cross-referenced details, but there was no clear instruction for use included.

The flexibility of Nucleus design had also been challenged by some designers. They had argued that because the templates were interlocked with the fire escape into the central street, any expansion in the size of the templates could be against the fire regulations.

The data pack or the ready-made briefing materials provided the health authorities with means of coping with cost limits in the times of logistic tightness. Various health authorities have argued that the Nucleus design reduced

A Nucleus Hospital of about 300 beds and associated
departments would comprise 12 of these cruciform
templates, probably on 2 floors, with a 2 storey
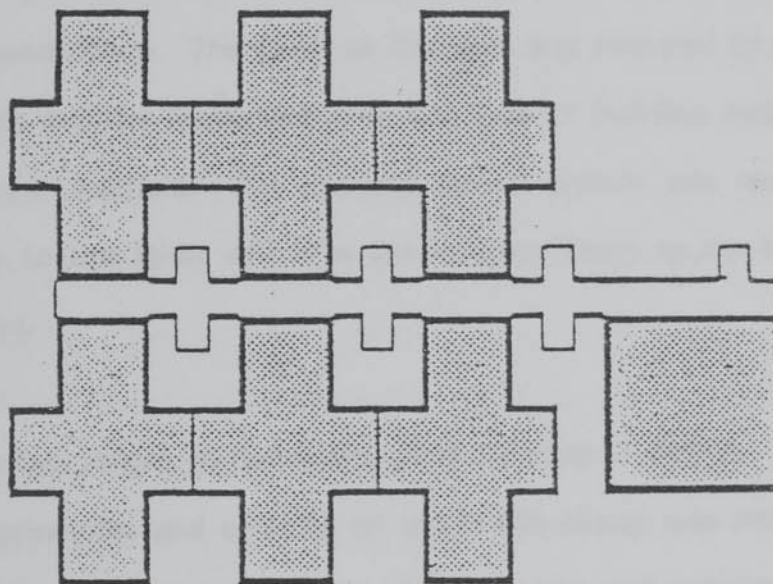services zone ; as illustrated below.

Figure 7.5 Nucleus Template

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the local debates on departmental design and content.

THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION OF NUCLEUS DESIGN FOR ASKFORD DGH

The need for building a hospital for Askford was presented by the district planners in a context which highlighted the deficiency of the health service and the socio-economic deprivation of the area. The aim of the Authority and Development Corporation was to provide acute services for the people on the east side of the county by building a hospital equipped with modern technology. This was identified soon after Askford was designated as a new town. As the economic climate changed in the 1970's, the process of design and building of a DGH for Askford slowed down. The DHA as the user was required to negotiate with the RHA officers and the Department on the type of building design which would be acceptable for Askford. The Nucleus design system was recommended by the Department to the RHA and thus the Project Team as the building system for Askford DGH.

There were two stages in the approval of the type of design. The initial stage in which the principles and criteria on which the design was based were discussed. This was followed by considerations of the details, and required modifications and adjustments. The issues were discussed in meetings of the Project Team in the Region and the planners and administrators in the District.

The Region's architects (in their meetings) interpreted the Nucleus Principles for the participants, i.e. whilst providing a basic core of DGH patient services, the Nucleus system was expected to make maximum use of existing facilities and services. Therefore, the provisions would be by "activity space" rather than specific rooms. In this way the advantage of sharing accommodation between and

within departments would be increased. In addition, the aim was to minimise the administrative presence in the core of the DGH.

Pursuing another type of design for Askford DGH, i.e. "Best Buy" which was geared to 600 beds as the ultimate number, was rejected. The officers in the DHA claimed that adaptation of "Best Buy" meant re-designing in a one-off fashion. This was "time-consuming" and considering the cost restraints the final outcome of the design would require to be based on a nucleus principle, i.e. breaking down the constituent parts of Best Buy and re-assembling them on the basis of Nucleus. This would be repetition of the work of the DHSS Design Team.

In preparing the schedules of accommodation for Phase I of Askford DGH, the pattern used in Newham Nucleus Hospital and the additional accommodation provided in the Royal Hospital in the same county were considered. Phase I of Newham Hospital was based on a limited scale and the provision of acute services would be complemented by another hospital in the vicinity. This programme actually required more capital. The viability of a Newham-type solution was examined by the planning officers and thereafter, the Nucleus seemed the feasible solution for Phase I development of Askford DGH. Nevertheless, the officers assumed that the acceptance of the Nucleus design standard did not imply that it had to be used in the prescribed fashion.

Consequently, Nucleus was defined as a "beginning" which meant to receive additions if it fell short of the DHA requirements. The DHA's reaction to the Nucleus solution was one of agreement which also implied commitement to planning Askford DGH within the related cost limits. The Stage 1 functional content for Phase I of Askford DGH was costed at £8m. Since any rise in the cost allowances level was unlikely the alternative was either to reduce the standard of services or include less patients services in Phase I.

At this stage the planners had not done any detailed analysis of the Nucleus operational policies. Their agreement was made subject to this analysis and to the issue of satisfactory departmental relationships which the Nucleus solution was expected to provide. However, the RHA in these initial stages refused to consider Phase III development of the Royal Hospital. It was, hence, argued that "re-planning" was a time-consuming activity.

The officers in the DHA planning section, whilst utilising the experience of Newham, discussed the details of departmental relationships in the Askford DGH with the offficers in the RHA. The basic logical relationships between certain departments were thus considered. For example, they discussed the situating of the X-Ray, Accident and Emergency Departments, or Pathology Laboratories and Outpatients Department on the same floor, or siting the Children's Departments on the first floor next to surgical accommodation (as in Newham) or on the ground floor next to the playground, etc. Certain preferences for sitings were declared by the medical representatives which were gradually considered without objections.

When agreement on the details of the design work was reached, the RHA recognised the need for identifying the details of the development activities. This was in addition to the Management Control Plan (MCP) and required the setting of target dates for various activities; for example, it included a time deadline for purchasing the appropriate site.

The officers in the DHA were aware of the financial implications of their commitment to a Nucleus package. They required revenue funds for ADGH, and maintaining the standard of the existing services as well as developing support services of the Royal Hospital which could be used for Askford DGH. The Stage 1

revenue cost consequences submission, however, had been estimated within the standard "Capricode" norms. The officers insisted that the flow of funds had controlled the choice of design principles for the ADGH.

One of the basis merits of the Nucleus was the opportunity that it offered the planners for adding or contracting units, and altering parameters according to local needs or identified priorities.

MODIFYING THE NUCLEUS DESIGN FOR ASKFORD DGH

Members of the planning team in Cropshire DHA claimed that they challenged the principles of the Nucleus design which were laid down by the DHSS. Such a challenge could not be assumed as an easy task. Since any modification in the standardised design initiated by the DHA or RHA required DHSS approval before it was incorporated into the system. The DHSS had the powers to reject any proposed modifications or disregard the timetables through delaying the approvals. The modified pieces of design had to be approved by the RHA and the Project Team before being implemented. The RHA officers owned the technical know-how on the design merits. Yet, the DHA planners and administrators were in the position of defining the local needs, the type and standard of required services.

Against this background, the officers claimed that they effected a number of modifications to the Nucleus. At the time when re-planning for ADGH started, the Nucleus design package was at its early stages of establishment yet, it was presented in a form that could be taken up and amplified by any design team. The planners in the DHA said that they "copied all the details" of the standard pack from ADGH. Equally, they claimed that they had departed from the standard

design when they considered the positioning of some of the departments (for example Central Treatment Areas (CTA)).

As regards these alterations, the planners in Cropshire DHA initially evaluated the experience of the Royal Hospital with regard to CTA. The Central Treatment Areas was defined as a unit where the nurses took the patients off the ward for treatment. This was a provision for all patients. The actors at the time considered the environment for altering the concept of CTA as "Top Notch", i.e. they could put their "re-invention" into practice. The Nurse Planner articulated the argument against the prescribed details of the CTA. His arguments were based upon technical and professional understandings. However, they faced some difficulties in the process, in particular, the nurse planner, who thought he had to compare the position of the CTA against various aspects of training of the nurses. An implication of any modification was with regard to the argument that CTA would restrain nurses from monitoring patients' progress and of the nurses also. Yet this was an experience to be adventured, argued the nurse planner. According to him, as a "clinical specialist" a sister was expected to have a clear idea of the nature of the physical treatments which were available. She would not, however, be working on that area of speciality so she would have to rely on the information she was given. Furthermore, CTA would generate traffic problems since it required continuous movement of beds and nurses about the hospital from wards to the treatment area.

Additionally, in the DHSS's design blue-print, the CTA was located on the ground floor which meant the patients in wards on the first floor would have to be taken down by the lifts or other means. Thus, in order to overcome the training and traffic difficulties the planners in Cropshire DHA thought of designing "local treatment areas". Yet, such technical arguments also had implications in terms of

the reduction in sisters' authority.

The "Department" was approached by the officers on the merits of these argumentations. Any challenge of or resistence to the origional principles of the design pack by the DHA (or RHA) could increase the uncertainty (or failure) of the hospital project. There was, however, the question of cost allowances and within such context inclusion of two Central Treatment Areas in the Phase I devlopment of ADGH was considered.

However, the ambiguity of the concept of CTA and its purpose was echoed by other contemporary Nucleus users, who eventually refused to accept it. Some users (DHA's) recognised its use for minor operations (e.g. Maidstone, Kent). The planners in Cropshire DHA claimed that the variations that they introduced into the CTA was thereafter included in the "Nucleus Pack" and thus increased the significance of this Department in the Pack.

The functional content of the Phase I submission of Askford DGH included the Geriatric ward on the first floor. In the Standard Nucleus design the Geriatric ward had been classified as a "priority clinical Department" being located on the ground floor and was included in the functional content according to local needs. Therefore it was not a constant ingredient of the first phase Nucleus hospital on a new site. The Nurse planner in Cropshire DHA claimed that he actually designed the Geriatric ward, because there was not any design parameters/details in the Standard design pack. The Department had thus adopted the DHA's design and inserted it in the "Green Pack".

As the Cropshire planners were given the opportunity to modify some parameters in the basic Nucleus design system they concluded that the size of the crucifix had

to be bigger and altered the originally proposed dimensions, thus increased the size of the templates lengthwise for some wards.

It was known that any changes in the basic design concepts, proposed by any DHA's might not necessarily lead to any sanction by the "Department". The planners in Cropshire DHA negotiated over the modifications through the members of the Project Team at the Regional Health Authority. In order to obtain the approval of the DHSS, they needed the technical expertise of the Regional Officers which, they argued, could put them in a better bargaining position. However, the ultimate sanction which could be put into practice was the withdrawal of funds or delays in approval of funds and the officers in Cropshire DHA were not immune by any means.

PLANNING AND THE RECOMMENDED TEAM APPROACH

Over the years, the DHSS has communicated the dimensions of its policies and priorities to the authorities through various health notices and circulars. The "Patients First" recognised the value of planning in the NHS and for the authorities because it would enable the administrators to organise the provision of health services effectively.

After the early 1980's re-structuring of the NHS, any DHA (previously Area Health Authority) comprised the "basic" planning unit providing services within its plans. It was asserted by the relevant Health Notice that the planning decisions "should be left to local discretion". There were two main components of the planning system which had remained untouched in the DHSS's revisions and rearrangements; (a) the "strategic" plans which would be prepared by District and Regional Officers every five years, taking into account 10-year prospects in health service and (b) the "annual programme of action" which was prepared for

two years by the District Administrators in advance yet alongside their strategic plans.

The DHSS hence had put forward a set of principles which were expected to make the planning efforts of the District Officers more effective, i.e. the emphasis was put on a consultative and collaborative planning process, thus involvement of various staff and professional groups. Thereafter planning became a "part of management function", a continuous process rather than ad hoc. Askford DGH was the major project considered in Cropshire DHA strategic plan for the 1980's. Their strategic plan, nevertheless, contained the improvement of the standard and the extent of the existing health provisions. The statements in these plans and their adopted process for achieving the set targets were replications of the DHSS planning guidelines.

Askford Hospital project was carried through by a set of teams, i.e. a design team, a project team and a manpower and commissioning team. According to the manuals on procedures for building a hospital, teams were significant elements in the hospital development process. These manuals which were produced by various research institutions for health planning (e.g. King's Fund), contained guidelines on the structure of these teams, their membership and how their activities were organised, regarding the NHS culture. These manuals were included in CDHA's stock of knowledge on planning and building of hospitals and all members of the team had access to them. The membership and activities of the teams involved in the design and planning of Askford DGH are examined below.

Project Team*

The "Project Team" composed of representatives of different professions who were involved in hospital design, building and hospital administration, nursing and medical activities. The "Project Team" (PT) held meetings on the development of Askford Hospital on monthly bases. The items on their agenda, on some occasions, required the representation of Askford Development Corporation to negotiate on certain commitments and of some medical consultants who provided the "Team" with some expert advice on particular design questions, e.g. hospital traffic. The DHA was represented by the Nurse Planner and General Administrator (Planning) in these meetings.

The "PT" was assigned with the mission of carrying the "project" forward from the original design brief, translation into drawings, through the procedural stages, i.e. setting the target deadlines, and timetables. Accordingly, they became responsible for ensuring that the plan for development work was executed within the limits of the approved costs and the pre-determined (agreed) time spans.

In the early stages of the design of the DGH, the "Project Team" were concerned with operational policies, the details of services and schedules of accommodation regarding the functional departments of the DGH. Their main task was to examine the financial implications of the proposals put forward by the Cropshire officers and thus make decisions about the disposition of capital monies. As the project moved closer to tender, the control and management of funds for the building became a focal consideration.

Foot Note

*Actually, the information presented here is based on the observation of their meetings and the study of the minutes of previous meetings.

The "Project Team" operated on decision lines which were bounded by the RHA's policies. The policy decisions were obviously based on the assessments of the adequacy of the services and the prospects of increase in the demand for health services. For instance, there were other hospital building projects on the RHA's agenda during the same period. Hence, the Regional Officers had to determine the size, number and type of buildings within the boundaries of the Department's policy intentions.

The professional membership of the Project Team for Askford DGH had interpreted the Nucleus design principles and decided upon the details, i.e. the initial functional content which were communicated to the planning officers at Cropshire DHA. As regards the recommended planning procedures by the DHSS the role of these officers in launching the hospital project was considered as peripheral but, they claimed to have more actual involvement in the design process.

The Project Team worked on the broad assumption that Askford DGH was ONE of the hospital building projects which was being organised at the time. Hence they decided on the scope of its services according to the Nucleus "fixed" clinical content, the number of wards, operating theatres and their location. These decisions were the outcome of detailed and prolonged discussions, involving the professionals on the Project Team. The nature of issues and the length of meeting varied in different development stages of the hospital project, for example, when the MCT was set-up in Cropshire DHA there were more detailed discussions over the construction and tender contracts, the problems of drainage on the hospital site, height and distance of doors, the kitchen windows, the hospital sign provisions, refuse disposal and viability of the incinerators, the lighting of the car park, the residential accommodation, the type of communication facilities for the

residents and so on. Whilst examining these issues, architects, the Nurse Planner and the Administrator (Planning) referred to events which some of the members of their profession had experienced. For example, in considering the design of the kitchen windows, the Nurse Planner reminded the participants in the meeting of the dangers of virus which were cultivated in pathology laboratories and the possibility of their contaminating the environment through passages and thus considered the prospects of devising a filtering system in the research laboratories, etc. Any decision which was made on the basis of these extensive interactions was included in operational policies and had implications for the details of building design and thus for the architects in the RHA. The planning and design activities were scheduled. The administrators and architects compiled the timetables and details of resource allocation. Some of the timetables were altered several times, for example, the starting time of the building works on the site.

The adoption of the Standard Nucleus Design had required the commitment of the "Project Team" on the initial service planning, design of the building and costing. The approval of the Phase I submission was followed by the establishment of the MCT, which worked alongside the Project Team and its role was considered as significant in the integration of a Nucleus type "culture" into the area.

Planning Teams in the DHA

The DHA acted as a "semi-autonomous body" whilst handling the corporate strategies of the DHSS. The members of the District Management Team, thus, assumed their role as being concerned with "change" through implementation of "strategic plans" and thus concentrating on the policies with respect to re-structured services. Similarly, the second-in-line officers (i.e. mainly members of

the MCT for Askford DGH and the key informants here) developed a set of frameworks and operating principles.

The District Management Team (DMT) had recognised as one of its objectives the use of computer technology for accelerating the administrative process. This included development of a computer model for appraisal of projects such as opening a major clinical unit. The Patient Administrative System was supposed to assist the DHA in their rationalising of medical records and related patient data systems.

The DMT had set their strategies, with reference to their objectives, in 1978. These strategies followed the strategic patterns which had developed prior to the re-organisation of the NHS in 1974. The adoption of "PPBS" by the NHS in 1960 had led to "deliberate" ministerial policies which emphasised "Cinderella" services, i.e. geriatric and psychiatric services. This orientation also set the background for the services provided by a Nucleus hospital. However, the DHA's customary approach, as regards hospital building, had been to plan for the services primarily and then apply for the capital. This approach occasionally failed considering the achievement of their objectives. The direction of the DHA's policies changed in the late 1970's and the operators were faced with logistic tightness. The officers in the DHA, in particular, the members of the MCT argued that in a system like the NHS the "identification of the markets for the services" was central to its operations. However, the District Strategy had set a different direction in this context. The functional content of Askford DGH for instance was planned on the same lines as that of the Royal Hospital, i.e. the priority was attached to Cinderella services. The policy of the government of the time was to utilise "the family-oriented" attitudes among the people, thus the care of the elderly could be left with the members of their family.

Planning for services required an understanding of the care groups. Thus the "Planning Team" was established in the DHA and was expected to operate on the basis of a planning system which was put into practice in 1976. The main role of the Planning Team was advisory and not decisional.

The officers in Cropshire DHA claimed that the re-structuring of the NHS management system had had the least effect on their planning activities. This claim illustrated their "confidence in the continuity" of Askford DGH project. In other words the "routine work" of the DHA remained unchanged.

Approval of the Phase I submission of ADGH paved the way for the establishment of the Manpower and Commissioning Team whose objective was defined as ensuring that the hospital opened "properly and on time".

ACTIVITIES OF THE MANPOWER AND COMMISSIONING TEAM

The MCT was established in order to finalise the design details and examine the structural options for the hospital and its manpower. In the early stages of its establishment the members of the MCT arranged their meetings on a monthly basis and organised their activities accordingly. Over a period of two years (1981-83) as the financial policy of the DMT changed and delays were imposed on the opening date of the ADGH, the frequency of the meetings of the MCT decreased.

The MCT comprised of the second-in-line officers in the DHA who had worked within the NHS system for a long time. Some of them were qualified nurses who climbed the managerial ladder in the district and regional health authorities in different parts of the U.K. Some of the younger members joined the NHS with management and planning experiences which they had acquired in private and

commercial organisations.

The variability of the MCT membership was inevitable. The degree of involvement of various professional groups was fluid and varied over a period of two years. The DMT officers took part in the MCT meetings and provided information, advice and reassurance with regard to the items on the agenda. For instance, at the time of financial crisis, the presence of the treasurer was more noticeable. The involvement of the medical consultants decreased as delays on the building projects were imposed.

The MCT worked within the framework set by the Nucleus standard design, i.e. within the Nucleus Standard policies and design aspects. Their regular meetings were held for discussions over these policies and their appropriateness to the Askford DGH situation.

The regular meetings of the MCT were chaired by the General Administrator (Planning) who co-ordinated the activities of the sub-groups and some of the working groups; for example, the Computer Working Group which developed the PAS for the Authority. Membership of the Team implied some joint responsibility for and commitment to the assigned tasks.

In its inauguration meeting the MCT developed a"working plan". The tasks that the Team assumed for itself accordingly were executed through "sub-groups" to each of which at least one member of the Team was attached as convenor. The sub-groups developed "task lists" on annual basis. The items on the agenda of the MCT meetings circled around the activities of these sub-groups. There were time deadlines set by the MCT and PT for various tasks of the sub-groups in order to ensure the progress of the ADGH project.

The sub-groups worked as a task force for maintaining the viability of the DGH project and provided the technical/specialist know-how required by the MCT to fulfill its objectives. They reported back to the MCT monthly. Then the MCT on the basis of these reports submitted bi-annual reports to the DMT.

The tasks and research activities of different sub-groups were interlinked, i.e. the proposals put forward by the Recruitment/Training sub-group had certain implications as regards the tasks of Finance, Research & Information, Technology, Public Relations and Consultation sub-groups.

Over a period of three years (1980-83) the Team considered a variety of issues ranging from feasibility studies regarding housing. for the DGH staff to the examination of the impact of new technology on the scope of the DGH services.*

The Recruitment sub-group produced a manpower study document which contained guidelines for recruitment of staff or ADGH. The initial aim of the hospital project developed in the context of "provison of local employment" policy. Thus, the impacts of the jobs which would be created on the pattern of activities and attitudes of the staff (e.g. nurses in the existing hospitals in terms of their training needs were considered). The Team also examined the course of adopting a persuasive approach as regards medical consultants. The officers thus developed a network chart which could have "immediate graphic indication of the consequences of any change in the manpower sequence of events". It was expected that some of the DGH staff would be transferred from those hospitals,

*Foot Note

Some sub-groups engaged the members of the Team into detailed discussions about their activities and future operating plans. In order to improve the performance of the MCT after a few months, it was agreed that the sub-groups worked mainly at policy requirements, action proposals and detailed plans.

which would be closed, to Askford DGH and their contracts of employment would be renewed accordingly.

As the project approached its hand-over date, the issue of training of nurses and some technicians became the focal concern of the MCT. The funding of the schemes reached a critical point as the RHA delayed the approval of finances. As part of their search for other sources of finance the MCT approached Askford Development Corporation and inquired about the possibility of their financial support. It was granted.

The MCT carried out the manpower planning for ADGH on departmental basis, i.e. determined the supply and demand of staff for each group of speciality. The requirements of different departments were estimated on different bases, for example, the plan for the Pathology Department required a more sensitive method and configuration. Here the problem with estimation arose from the undermined output ratios. According to the Personnel Officer, in the later stages of the process the ratios for some departments were guessed. The members of the MCT, however, set out a manpower strategy which had some political implications as regards their activities. A major anticipated problem regarding manpower planning was recruitment of medical staff.

The Personnel Officer in the Recruitment sub-group occasionally presented papers on "who can be employed and trained" for Askford DGH. The objective was to convert unskilled local labour into nurses and technicians. Thus, a major claim of one of the papers was that the ideal employee to occupy a nursing position would be "a woman, married to a local landowner, since she would stay in Askford instead of leaving after her training period". Hence, the first step was "spotting the people who had the potentials". Training of the local recruits would save the

DHA the transport cost which often was the cause for postponement of selection of trainees. Some suitable candidates had already refused the training and employment offers due to non-provision of transport expenses. The MCT also considered the training of health managers for acquiring "the appropriate style" regarding the NHS culture.

However, the prospect of life in Askford new town became grim and the employment situation was grave. The officers found attracting and motivating recruits a difficult task. The perpetual delays in the start of the site work and thus the actual opening of the ADGH dodged the recruitment issues in the meetings of the MCT. However, a contingency plan containing a line of people was devised in order to resolve the question of turnover of the trainees.

One of the problems which the Recruitment sub-group envisaged was persuading medical consultants to work for or to have their contract arranged with the new DGH. According to the Chairman of the MCT (i.e. the General Administrator (Planning)), the Consultation group was established to enable the DHA "to sell Askford DGH to the consultants" and highlight the advantages of working for a "modern" hospital. Some meetings were occasionally arranged by the General Administrator with potential job candidates. Initial speculation by the members of the sub-group revealed the reluctance of some of the "medics" to work for the new DGH. The MCT attributed this attitude of the medics to the fact that the DGH was not physically realised. The Public Relations sub-group found the solution in publicising the construction of the hospital, details of its progress and future prospects.

The question of publicity and public relations was raised in the first gathering (1980) of the Working Group on Askford DGH in when the title of group was

changed to Manpower and Commissioning Team. The public relations policy was developed in order to "set out the way" by which the Team would maintain the interest of people in the ADGH project. The Regional PR officers were approached for assistance in publicising the development of the project. The RHA agreed to contribute to any "long-term" PR programme (i.e. 5-6 years) that the MCT thought of devising for the DGH.

"Publicising" was described as the attempts made by the MCT members in taking "every opportunity to speak to local community groups about the hospital". The PR activities therefore included arrangement of events (e.g. exhibitions) in the shopping centre of Askford, familiarising the people (i.e. future recruits) with the type, structure and organisation of the hospital through distribution of relevant literature and newsletters. The Development Corporation produced the background information on the social trends and future prospects of Askford. The Corporation provided the technical aids for their publicity activities. One year after its establishment the PR sub-group circulated newssheets in and around where the DGH was going to be built. In order to widen the scope of their publicity activities, the MCT sent newsletters to various organisations (e.g. BIM, Rotary). The tasks of the convenor of the sub-group and the RHA's stance in this matter were clearly defined.

Initiating interest in people (e.g. local residents, consultants) with reference to a hospital which would have started operation in some six years' time seemed rather a premature attempt. However, the MCT members argued that considering "rationalisation" of the services in the county and the need for staffing of the DGH smoothly by the opening time, the PR activities were an essential part of the commissioning process. In the third year of the establishment of the MCT, the outside bodies showed interest in the DGH project as the initial site work had

started in 1983.

In their negotiations for funds and in their attempts to establish a specific identity for Askford DGH, the MCT officers emphasised the use of modern technology in its everyday administration. Thus, examination of the impact of technology on the DGH structure and policies was put on the MCT agenda. However, the Technology sub-group in the earlier period of the commissioning often had "nothing to report" since the convenor of the group searched for an appropriate definition of the term! The underlying assumption for establishing this sub-group was to enable the MCT "to control and plan the information technology for the DGH". The officers had limited experience in this case. Hence, they speculated some consequent changes in the styles of management in the NHS regarding "the reality of Year 2000". Moreover, the Nurse Planner argued that the technology of the new DGH "had to be designed with people in mind, i.e. nurses, patients and administrators". Thus the MCT approached different institutions for expert advice on this matter.

The most uncertain (yet the major) issue for the MCT to tackle was the funding of Askford DGH Project, because in the same period the DHSS started planning for "efficiency cuts" which implied financial squeezes on the health authorities' budgets, in particular on their development projects. The revenue consequences of the DGH was approved whilst the closure of some of the old cottage hospitals in the area were considered.

The staffing programme which was put forward by the MCT had taken into account the growing rate of unemployment and the characteristics of the "labour market" in the area in addition to the allocation of financial resources. The officers said that they had to "tinker around" to find services which could be

deceased. The MCT, yet, continued with their "capital planning", irrespective of the grave financial situation. The revenue crisis necessitated the revision of their staffing cost.

The members of the MCT were kept informed of the activities and programmes of the Project Team through the membership of the Nurse Planner. The details of the second and third stages of submission and provision of certain facilities, i.e. stores and laundry which were discussed in the Project Team meetings, were reported back to the MCT members. The decisions which were made in these meetings about future actions clarified and determined the steps which could be taken by the Commissioning Team. However, as the frequency of the Project Team meetings decreased, more uncertainty was introduced in approvals of the submissions and schemes.

INTERIM SUMMARY

Commissioning* of Askford DGH was a major exercise for Cropshire DHA. It involved a large number of actors and initiated considerable changes in the organisation and distribution of health services in the district. The concept of "district general hospital" (DGH) originated in the 1962 Hospital Plan. It was described as a large, complex hospital which served a large population and required a complex management organisation. The concept became popular

Foot Note

* Commissioning was the process of bringing a new building into use. It could start any time after the design and cost planning stages. It included the appointment of a team and development of a Management Control Plan which contained a list of hospitals which were closed or their use changed. There were preparations for revenue estimates, in addition to the staffing and training requirements. Finally the opening activities, i.e. public relations and publicity which were carried out closer to the opening date.

mainly because of the 1960's social forces. In that era there was an "engineering approach" to medicine which considered human beings as complex machines. The DGH was thus considered as the "health factory" because it contained high medical technology. According to the MCT members, this system met the status needs of the medical profession. It also served the interests of the State in financing the NHS and in increasing the efficiency of the non-medical areas.

During the 1970's, "managerialism" grew in the NHS and various management techniques were adopted from industry. In the last part of the decade the deterioration of the economic situation necessitated economies of scale in the NHS just like the mergers which took place in industry. Hence the experience of health authorities in the 1960's commissioning large DGH seemed outmoded and as the planners put it, the government message for the 1980's was "small is beautiful" and the Nucleus design system was considered as the solution for the logistic tightness they faced. The commissioning of Askford DGH had started against this background. It also contained the question of design of the organisational structure of a hospital which would be built on a green field site.

In the process of commissioning of Askford DGH the officers treated the Nucleus planning system as an end in itself, hence the Nucleus concept was adopted as the frame of reference for service planning and fundings. However, the DHA experienced the limitations of the Nucleus system, i.e. it lacked storage capacity for supplies. The alternative that the planners sought was to place the storage on the site of one of the existing hospitals.

According to the conventional approach to commissioning the appointment of the members of the MCT took place at the commencement of the building contract (i.e. Stage 3 or 4 of "Capricode"). In the case of Askford DGH the officers in the

DHA and RHA claimed that they had departed from this practice and the MCT was established following the approval of the Stage I submission.

According to the planning documents the accountability of the MCT members to DHA and the Project Team was often determined through the adoption of a standard hospital design. Any modification in the standard design enhanced the involvement of the Project Teams in the commissioning process. The initial assumption underlying the Nucleus concept, i.e. its dimensions, could be invariably changed over time and the design of Askford DGH was carried out during the evolution of this assumption. Additionally, some other modifications were introduced.

Due to funding problems the commissioning of Askford DGH included a set of "de-commissioning" activities, i.e. closure of ward units and hospitals in the county. The selection of hospitals for closure was largely a "political process" as the DHA correspondence with other bodies showed, and involved the interference of local MPs during the 1983 election and required extensive negotiations with various interest groups.

During the course of commissioning, the primary forecasts of resources were revised as the funding circumstances changed and efficiency savings were imposed. The officers had to draw a balance between capital expenditure and revenue consequences of the DGH. Although the MCT established a Finance and Approval sub-group, the financial appraisal activities were not actually integrated into the commissioning process. The MCT became involved in financial debates; however, because of the General Administrator's membership of the Resource Allocation Working Party (RAWP).

COMMISSIONING PROCESS: AN INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

In this section an interpretation and analysis of the activities of the actors, i.e. second-in-line-officers, in Cropshire District Health Authority is presented. The analysis has shown that: ·

(a)   the significance of the actors' role-sets in the process of planning for the DGH which resulted in frequent "mutual intellectual loading",

(b)   although Askford DGH was designed to be built in a "green field" site, its organisational characteristics (i.e. culture) possessed pre-histories,

(c)   the actors frequently referred to their "stock of knowledge" which included details of the planning process of a hospital as presented in the Nucleus design pack and other DHSS documents, their past organisational experiences within and without the System,

(d)   the Nucleus design system had structuring and regulating impact upon the actors' planning activities hence enhancing the routine aspect of their tasks, through sct parameters and time spans,

(e)   the actors challenged established planning practices (thus the routinised side of their tasks) and proposed modifications of the details of hospital design, hence, attempted to remould the local labour market, to reconstruct the power structure with respect to their role-sets,

(f)   in their challenge, the need for building a new DGH was considered (hence justified) in terms of introduction of new managerial practices and concepts in the administration of the hospital. In this process, however, provision of "diagnostic and cure" services overshadowed preventive services and health education.

1.   Meetings and Roles-Sets

The process of commissioning Askford DGH could be described in terms of actors' "mutual intellectual loading" activities, i.e. it included the planners' long-term, continual negotiations and discussions over the underlying assumptions of the Nucleus Planning System, their interpretation of these assumptions and selection of approaches to various problems.

The MCT for Askford DGH acted like a clearing house, i.e. in their meetings usually the Chairman (i.e. the General Administrator) reported on the outcomes of their "persuasive" activities and their attempts in selling the ADGH to medical consultants and the sub-group convenors reported on their activities. Thus, certain points were noted by the Chairman which sometimes led to setting of assignments or tasks which were to be undertaken by the members. Accordingly the minutes of the meetings, as the secretary of the meetings put it, were treated as "action sheets". They determined the activities of the members of the sub-groups. The minutes were the MCT's tribune and were used in their interactions with the members of the Project Team and the Askford Development Corporation. They put the activities of the MCT members into acceptable and legitimate perspectives and sustained the momentum of the process of commissioning.

The MCT used their regular monthly meetings in order to maintain and persuade a united front with respect to proposed developments and revenue implications. The

meetings were the forum for the major actors who informed others of the latest changes and the news about the approvals or rejections. They provided the opportunity for the officers as (a) to clarify their stance against the members of other groups, (b) to decided on their "philosophies" and "strategies" as regards the DGH project which also involved (c) identifying tactics for handling interest groups.

The meetings were expected to increase the understanding of the members with respect to the nature and characteristics of the "labour market in Askford" which was considered as the main source of the required staff. This issue was crucial regarding their selection of more economical options and in affecting the "motivation of people already in jobs". Indeed the attempts of the MCT members were directed towards re-moulding of the labour market in Askford, i.e. "indoctrination of the people" as the General Administrator put it. This aim was translated by the Personnel Department into the syllabus for the training courses. The convenor of the Recruitment sub-group claimed that (whilst presenting his report on Askford manpower), they (the DHA) could "train them (the staff) for any style of management", i.e. their preferred type of management. There were various questions raised by the actors in their meetings regarding the labour market in Askford, for example the attitudes of people and the way the MCT would handle them, etc. The General Administrator initiated the idea of scheduling some additional meetings at the time of crisis and for "sorting out bits and pieces".

The debates in the MCT meetings elaborated the gaps in the members' preferred approaches to manpower issues. The Unit Administrator (the convenor of Public Relations sub-group) was concerned about the implications of implementing "off-the-job training" schemes with reference to ward sisters and thus their reactions

to such programmes. Yet, as regards the same issue the General Administrator considered the reactions of the "Biggies", i.e. the Heads of Departments in Royal Hospital, because if the DHA showed any interest in recruitment of their staff, they wanted to know "what's in it for them?". The members of the MCT had to agree on the way they could "win medical staff in, who, where, when and how (they could) tackle those who (were) not in Askford?".

The recruitment of the medical staff dominated the MCT debates on staffing because they were identified as the key target group for selling the DGH. The aim was to get them on the DHA's contract in order to make the situation more controllable. Hence, "lobbying" them, "selling the Nucleus idea" and "introducing the DGH as an entity" were the recipes "to stop the fight". Clearly, the second-in-line officers assumed roles in opposition to the medical staff who were identified as the most powerful group and one which could pose threat to the momentum of the commissioning process. These issues were frequently raised in the MCT meetings and were used by the planners to modify the members' positions.

One of the major issues extensively discussed in these meetings was the delays in the approval of the main building contract which were reported by the Chairman of the MCT meetings or the Nurse Planner, who also attended the Project Team meetings. Thus, the participants discussed the stance of the MCT regarding these issues and decided to adopt the policy of resisting "any delays (postponement of the opening day) of more than six months". Reporting of the events were noted and the outcomes of the events were speculated, but this did not imply that a substantive decision might follow in the MCT meetings mainly because the MCT operated as a working group and was not set-up to function as a decision-making body.

In meetings of the MCT there were detailed discussions over the difficulties that each sub-group faced whilst in the process of fulfilling their assigned tasks. For instance, the officers discussed the content of the newsletter (the means for publicising the DGH) and its format which had to satisfy a wide range of readers, some of whose reactions were "strategically" vital to the continuity of the DGH project.

Moreover, in these meetings, a set of tasks were allocated to sub-groups regarding their objectives. The actors, thus, examined various ways that these tasks could be handled and consensually selected the appropriate approach. The MCT was assumed to perform a reactive role in this respect although the officers considered the commissioning stage as a phase in management of health services which required the extensive involvement of the users, i.e. the health and unit administrators, because in this way the continuity in the provision of health care services could be ensured. However, the actors argued that the MCT's role, or rather its activities, had influenced the direction of the DGH project. Thus they thought that their selected approaches were effective.

The MCT, just like any other team in the health service, were required to work on "consensus" basis. This was described by the health circulars in terms of developing some common understanding of the health service issues. An effective working relationship had thus to be established in order to facilitate the achievement of the targets and the deadlines which were set in the Management Control Plan. In most of their meetings the MCT for Askford DGH reached agreement on various issues within the time-frame of the meeting. They argued strongly on certain issues (.e.g. consultation with other interest groups) and their impact upon the progress of the hospital project. Yet, they "agreed to differ" and avoided any disagreement which could hinder the commencement of the

construction activities and might be interpreted as disunity in the MCT.

Each MCT meeting lasted between one and two hours. The minutes reflected an adequate distribution of time to all items on the agenda. However, such issues as recruitment and training and their revenue-cost consequences over-shadowed health education, technology and public relations items. This was because in the "Capricode" planning system manpower planning followed the physical design of the hospital.

The agendas for the MCT meetings were prepared by the Chairman. They followed a standard format and included a set of items regarding the tasks of the sub-groups and hence structured the discussions. The agenda was used by the Chairman to sustain the momentum of the meetings flow and continuity of the discussions with respect to the hospital project and its related activities. For instance, he controlled the amount of time which was spent on each item by leading or interrupting the discussions to the next item on the agenda.

The attendance of the members of the team was fluid and varied with reference to the items on the agenda and difference stages of the project development. Attendance of the principal actors at the MCT meetings became less frequent as they speculated that the RHA might not apply for the tender contract. Their speculations were raised by the cautious approach of the RHA to "approval and finances" and the delays which were imposed by the DHSS. Studies of commissioning processes have often related the frequency of attendance to the motivation of the members of the commissioning teams. They have described motivation in terms of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards which members seek individually. Thus the purpose of the process, i.e. building of a new hospital would be rewarding if it fulfilled the "in-order-to" motives of these actors. However, it

is argued here that decline in attendance reduced the significance of the concept of "team", i.e. a set of actors who worked together towards maintaining the continuity of health care provisions, which was emphasised by the DHSS.

The MCT for Askford DGH claimed that they had the choice concerning the frequency and duration of their meetings, the matters for discussion and agendas. However, it seemed that these questions were mainly concerned with the internal structure of the MCT and had minimal effect on the allocation of resources. Therefore, those members of the MCT who had higher status, according to the second-in-line officers, (i.e. the medical consultants) were more influential regarding their perceived choices.

2.   "Green Field" Site and Organisational Past-Loadedness

The actors some of whom had already commissioned some large hospitals, attributed the particular characteristics of the process of planning and commissioning of ADGH to its being designed for and built on a "green field site". Accordingly, they emphasised the innovative organisational culture which could have been developed. However, it is argued here that such organisational cultures are developed within a well-established and traditional system, i.e. the NHS, and thus possess antecedence. In the following section, the activities of the MCT will be examined with reference to Miller & Rice's (1967) systemic model of organisations. The model is chosen because it illustrates the process by which the design of both building and organisational structure take place on a green field site, i.e. it considers the extent of involvement of the actors and the way the task of design is interpreted and fulfilled by the actors within the context of established practices. It is shown that in the case of Askford DGH the process of design was structured according to the Nucleus assumptions set and popularised by

the DHSS and thus, the officers' claim that the green field site enhanced their choice situation was inadequately substantiated.

On the basis of Miller & Rice's model the MCT for Askford DGH could be described in terms of a "temporary activity system" that is a group of managers in the health service who were brought together to accomplish the task, of building and commissioning a new DGH. The Team would be resolved when the task was completed since there would be no further "raison d'etre" for the Team. Hence, the MCT operated as an "open system" responding to a set of environmental stimuli. The structure and functions of the team were devised on the basis of the task it was set up to accomplish. The actors identified these boundaries which appropriated their approach to the commissioning of Askford DGH.

The DGH was planned to be built on a green field site but within the frame of reference set by an old-established institution, i.e. the NHS. The National Health Service as a system had evolved over the years and contained the cultural and structural characteristics of various professions which operated within it. Moreover, the development of the health system in Britain had followed the industrial pattern. Introduction of the Nucleus hospital design, efficiency cuts and savings, rationalisation of resources and cost-benefit analysis of the hospital projects implied a growing profit-making orientation within the NHS. These elements, the tradition of the NHS and the government policy intentions for the 1980's actually determined the direction of the commissioning activities. Therefore, the novelty of the type of building and organisation design which the actors attributed to the "green field" site was reduced.

However, the Nucleus design "Green Pack" was translated into drawings and parameters by the RHA designers and architects who were not the ultimate users

nor were they involved in decisions about the allocation of resources. The Nucleus planning/building system determined the shape of the building, the use of space and resouces and thus the organisational relationships and types of manpower. Therefore the design stages in the sequence which is put forward by Miller & Rice's model, i.e.

(a)   the design of the structure of the building: determining "what" of physical resources and technology, and

(b)   the design of the organisation: determining "who" of human resources, what training for occupying the designed roles

could be carried out in a parallel fashion. Yet in the case of ADGH, the manpower planning was carried in succession to the phase 1 of the building design.

However, the hospital was not built yet. The design blue-print was there, so were the various groups of staff categories. The actors were constructing and matching the organisation and building structures of the DGH on the basis of the anticipated future events. This was an ideal situation (as Miller & Rice, 1967) because in principle it ensured the integration of the activities of the staff and the resources. Yet, the workability of the designed operating system was unknown.

The decision to build the hospital was initiated by Askford Development Corporation and the officers in the DHA but its approval was outside the boundaries of their discretion because of its wide financial and status implications. Moreover, its location and timing were of political, economic and social concern and were thus dealt with by the officers at higher levels at the RHA and DHSS. Therefore, there were time lags between various stages of the hospital project.

The composition of the MCT was also similar to that described by Miller & Rice as a "management committee" in the setting-up process of an organisation. Thus it consisted of "advisory groups", i.e. "sub-groups" which included the membership of "practitioners", some of whom were appointed as convenors for the groups. However, the relationships of the actors in the MCT followed the NHS conventional model and that of the professional group to which they belonged. The membership of a temporary management organisation did not extend their discretion or reduce their accountability. These relationships are shown in Figure 7.6.

The operations system and functional contents which were developed for Askford DGH were not expected to create any snags in the matching of human and physical resources, hence the DGH would function at the required level of performance. The actors claimed that their manpower plan, i.e. organisation design in Miller & Rice's terms, enhanced the chances of a successful commissioning and reduced the number of unanticipated constraints. However, the Nucleus Standard facilitiated the integration of building and organisational design activities but it had failed to achieve its planned living standard considering those hospitals which were operational. The experience of those health authorities who had launched a Nucleus-style hospital showed that it was an inferior design standard and thus suitable for a crisis-striken area.

The involvement of the planners in the DHA (i.e. the key informants) in the design process was confined to their membership of the Project Team through whose machinery they introduced a number of modifications in the standard design package. They considered the design of the DGH as a technical matter which required expert technical knowledge. The Nurse Planner was the only person who interpreted the design parameters, dimensions and conveyed the image of a

Figure 7.6   Model of Hospital Planning and Design Process

Aston University

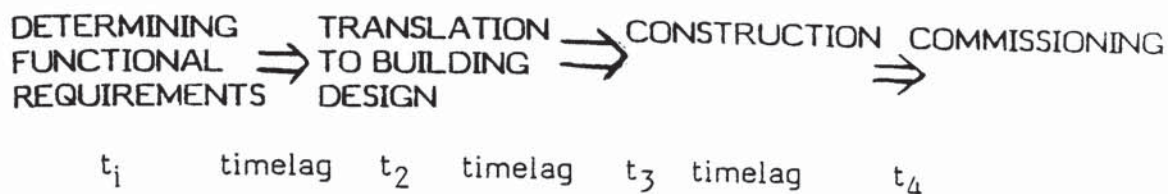Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

Adapted from Miller and Rice (1966)

Nucleus hospital to other actors. He utilised the design blue-print as the terms of reference for understanding the Nucleus operating systems. Moreover, the officers' visit to some completed Nucleus projects initiated the reconsideration of some physical characteristics of the DGH. Nevertheless, the systemic model of Miller & Rice disregards these references which actors use in the setting-up process.

The content of their model also fails to take account of the structure and function of a standardised building design. The physical design structured the work practices and determined the degree of commitment of the potential staff of the DGH. For instance, the Central Treatment Areas introduced some new dimensions of control in the nurses' jobs. The planners were familiar with Nightingale's image of a hospital where the wards were the nurses' territory and thus were designed to serve this purpose. In a Nucleus-type hospital there were "staff-bases" used for nursing purposes and meant to facilitate the patients' care. Similarly these bases were used to control the nurses' activities. The internal design of a Nucleus hospital, additionally, allowed configurations of wards and offices and thus, a more effective use of space and less circulation space. These configurations implied extensive administrative control.

According to Miller & Rice's model, the design process is controlled through the defined physical and human requirements of the system which in essence reduces the need for any alterations in the later stages. As regards the design of Askford DGH, construction of the building on the basis of functional requirements was considered as problematic. Their model disregards the time lag that exists between the stages of determining the functional requirements, the design of the building, its construction and commissioning.

DETERMINING   TRANSLATION ⟶ CONSTRUCTION   COMMISSIONING
FUNCTIONAL   ⟹ TO BUILDING ⟶   ⟹
REQUIREMENTS   DESIGN

t_i timelag t_2 timelag t_3 timelag t_4

In the case of Askford DGH there was a seventeen year timelag between the submission of functional requirement, the preparation of design drawings and the actual construction of the building. The MCT thought of adjusting the operating systems during the construction process. However, the retiring Nurse Planner, perceived the process to be less smooth because he believed that "the concept of functional requirements would be out of date by the time it gets to the building architects ... By the time you construct it, it will be out of date ...". Moreover, "because people cannot visualise changes ... they (the architects) ask you what do you want? So you describe the functional requirements ... Then later on you play about with relationships, space in various departments. They produce the first draft ... The users or planners comment on it ... etc. The problem is the use of the current concepts of requirements (i.e. 1975) when the hospital is built it will be out of date ... before it is open (i.e. 1987/8).

Furthermore, one of the planners reckoned that the actual "physical design has marginal effect on the staffing and the type of staff required. The main determinant (thus) is patient workload ...". Therefore, the Personnel staff decided "to put out a lot of figures and come up with something" which made "sense to them ... total numbers of staff, staffing structure, phasing of appointments for a particular department".

Conversely the principal actors in the MCT shared the view of the Nurse Planner that Nucleus Standard design had provided them with "pre-constructed operational objectives and policies" which in effect would determine the "behaviour of the

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people". The physical design was thus considered as the behaviour design and not just "static drawings". It was the means, for instance, for visualising "the movements of people" and examining the scope for alterations of dimensions. This view evolved on the basis of the Team's investigation of the behaviour and performance of the staff in the Royal Hospital. The commissioning experience of the Royal Hospital, its people and its problems constituted the "quick reference" for those officers who had been working with the DHA and in the area for some years. Furthermore, the newcomers in the DHA had their own "district specific" references about the relation between the hospital building and organisation design. These references frequently altered their definitions and interpretations of their task boundaries. Miller & Rice's description of the design process underplays this dimension.

3.   Stock of Knowledge

Throughout the commissioning process, the Team members worked on the design and planning issues whilst continuously referring to (a) their own stock of knowledge as regards planning for a hospital, (b) the NHS established patterns of thought and approaches and (c) Nucleus Standard design package (d) various consultative and advisory documents were provided by the DHSS and other research bodies which described the "terms of reference" for the members of the MCT. All the members of the MCT and its sub-groups potentially had access to this stock of knowledge and knew their tasks and spans of discretion in the planning process. Their involvement in the process evolved within the boundaries of these guidelines. The terms of reference for the MCT included: (a) "network building", i.e. establishment of formal links with other teams and groups; (b) "disseminating information", i.e. keeping the DMT informed about the difficulties and progress of the project; (c) "co-ordinating" the interdependent activities and

estimating the expenditure regarding different schemes; (d) "selecting" an approach for handling any arising issue, thus (e) "seeking" to establish a united front. However, there were individual and local variations in the actors' earlier planning experiences within the NHS. Some actors played a supporting role in the process because their repertoire included only a few planning experiences. For example, this was the first time that the Convenor for Research and Information sub-group had been involved in the planning of a DGH. The sub-group "provided information (for the Team) delving into certain aspects in greater detail ... looking at the requirements in terms of population, available bed norms ...". Its aim was described as "a forum for co-ordinating and obtaining of any information ..." which implied less extensive involvement in determining the norms and strategies for Askford DGH. However, the past experience of the convenor of this sub-group in the NHS was related to handling of a geriatric unit in a small hospital and "pure planning" in another district where he was responsible for capital and service planning.

The planning and commissioning of Askford DGH was equally a novel experience for the other Assistant Planner. His previous experience on planning was at the regional level which required "much more overview" and he did not need "to get down eagerly to the individual hospital level ... it was much more looking at the District total provision and how that matched against what (the District) had ... and getting a broad framework ... developing a methodology which would allow the RHA to identify a framework within which the District might take its own individual planning decisions ...". Regarding his role in the planning and commissioning for the DGH in Askford, he was at the "receiving end", i.e. the RHA provided them with the "detailed recommendations" and the requirements. He, nevertheless, found it necessary to "modify" the thoughts he had developed previously at the regional level.

As regards the principal actors in this case (i.e. the MCT members), their past experiences of commissioning hospitals justified their membership of the MCT and their role in the planning process. They used their "experiences", i.e. "the fairly wide knowledge of many elements that go into planning" which they had developed over the years when there was no "official reference", claimed the Nurse Planner. He said that within the context of his experience he was "able to read architectural and engineering drawings" and thus make "contacts with the architects and works engineers ..." and discuss the possible modifications in the standard design details. However, it was a "normal" situation for everyone who had worked for several years in the health services as a planner to become involved in the building of more than one hospital. Obviously, planning for services was an inseparable element of the job. The knowledge they so developed was the "only salvation" that an officer had whilst climbing up the hierarchy. Without such experiences, i.e. taking part in planning for a DGH, the officers' "comprehension of the health situation" would be limited. Hence, if they "had the experience, their judgements could be of better quality" argued the Nurse Planner. That it was like "in the Army ... if you have an officer who's come through and has some dirt under his finger nails, at the end of the day he probably will be able to make better value judgements, than an officer who has been to a military training school. I think it's the parcel of experience which will be beneficial to them".

The officers' experience of commissioning of the Royal Hospital had a great impact upon their understanding of type and nature of services which were considered for Askford DGH and the problems which they might face. There were disasterous events remembered of when the commissioning of the Royal Hospital took place. For example, it was discovered at its opening day that the Audiology Department did not fit into the originally specified requirements. There was the

need for updating the layout of the Department at an extra cost. However, such a re-adjustment was considered as a typical incidence and to a certain extent predictable. This problem was also attributed to "changes in needs" that often the "administrators and planners failed to accommodate for" argued the District Nurse.

The process by which the health care provisions were planned for Royal Hospital provided another useful reference for the officers in the DHA. As the District Nurse explained "two years before the Royal Hospital was opened (they) assessed (the design of) the Coronary Care Unit and set the standard. So before the hospital became operational and as soon as it was handed over by the contractors, the changes and modifications had to be carried out ...". Therefore, it was rational to assess carefully the design characteristics and criteria and allow for some room for certain modifications which might have to be introduced just before the opening.

Furthermore, the staff characteristics and their performance in the RH provided the "formula" for Askford DGH manpower plan. The Personnel Officer claimed that they used the "production and labour (levels) at a given point in time in the RH, to predict what level of staffing (they needed)".

These actors' familiarity with the NHS recipes for activities such as capital planning, nevertheless turned the planning exercise into a morass of routine and mechanical considerations and so became the initial manpower planning which was based on a paper called "preparing manpower plan" which explained the how and what of the plan. There was no documented or publicly announced sanctions for non-compliance of authorities to the set standards but approval of funds for different plans, proposals were linked to the extent that the norms were

considered.

4.   Intended Discontinuity

However, as the planners challenged the established planning practices and modified some aspects of the standard building design system, the processes of planning became longer which resulted in delays in approval of capital costs and thus some reappraisal of the hospital project. The planners on the MCT claimed that the design of Askford DGH was an innovation in its own right and irrespective of their copying of the parameters in the Nucleus "Green Pack" and the DHSS policy norms. They had made a set of modifications through the Project Team. But Askford DGH was not a new development in hospital building design, i.e. the Nucleus policy was followed fully and the shape of the hospital remained as Nucleus. Yet they considered their approach as "Nucloid", by which they meant departure from the Standard design. They knew that they "could not mess about too much with (the design of) the clinical part of the building". The DGH for Askford was not different from any other hospital yet, it "was smaller and contained departments that (the MCT) had already dealt with ...". Moreover, with "Nucleus you have got various restrictions. You've got set patterns for how the ward layouts should be". But it was not "a simple process", said the Unit Administrator. He was involved with the details of the hospital design and admitted that his "previous design activities" at the Regional level had some bearing upon some modifications (e.g. Treatment Areas). Actually, "the concept of hospital that (they) all conformed to more or less was the same", said the Chairman of the MCT, but each hospital was unique as it was built with reference to the local "organisational culture and situations".

As regards the content of the Standard design pack, Askford DGH was mainly a

reproduction of the given standard norms. Thus, their copying had made the task of planning a routine activity, i.e. "following procedures and achieving targets within certain periods of time", said the Nurse Planner. They claimed that their copying had shortened the process of planning, whereas in practice, the process was lengthened because they had to identify the local needs and variations and then insert them in their appropriate phases. Moreover, the design "yardsticks (were) incomprehensive, (the officers had) got norms for nursing but no norms for functions such as X-Ray Deparments ... (and) there are variations across the county", argued the District Personnel Officer. The actors had tried "to test ... the assumptions given in the light of their knowledge and experience and in order to establish (in particular) the performance norms" Actually, the officers' assessment of the stock of approaches to building a DGH which provided by the DHSS, varied according to their assumed roles in the process and their area of speciality. For instance, the Personnel Officer, who was a member of the Recruitment sub-group, claimed that the familiarity with the planning process was not a pre-requisite and indeed if "one thought about the hospital, one thought about its manpower, one did not have to be an experienced manpower planner as long as one knew that (1) they (the hospital) need staff, (2) they need that type of staff, (3) how they can be found and (4) how many of them". However, the Management Control Plan determined the tasks and the relevant time deadlines. The attainment of deadlines was compulsory and required discipline, organisation, in addition to clear guidelines. Thus, in order to manage the planning process more effectively the officers sought the means in the Management Services approaches. Hence the Management Information Services people were co-opted in the process and they set-up some critical path analysis to minimise the impact of the disjunctures in the process as regards the uncertain future of the DGH.

Furthermore, the MCT developed an "Action Plan" in order to cope with the

increasing logistic tightness and as a means to improve the "quality of management decisions". This was also an attempt by the MCT officers to "bring in total discipline" and avoid the problems of team work and time loss. According to the Nurse Planner, this approach worked because "in hard times people respond to it ... and there is security in it ... because they are told what to do. The instructions are clear, measures and parameters are given ... just like the Army. In the Army everyday, every individual reads a piece of paper, i.e. the agenda for the day". And the Nucleus standard design pack provided this agenda and thus the "security" for the officers.

Indeed the Nucleus template contained the basic assumptions about what a hospital looked like and what functional contents it contained. The basic template was moulded by the NHS culture and had to be maintained. The Nucleus template had a structuring effect on the planning officers' activities. But they had also developed a set of constructs as regards commissioning of the DGH. For example, there were constructs related to the labour market, i.e "know your people" which meant identification of the future staff and the interest groups. Or constructs which were related to the logistics or anticipation of disjunctures thus reconstruction of some events, i.e. for projecting "resources and service requirements into the future". There were constructs which were to do with organisation of work and agenda settings, i.e. setting "action programmes and timetables", etc. Thus structuring the manpower and commissioning process, which was referred to as a "mechanical process" maintained the continuity of the actors' actions.

For those actors who had worked at the Project Team level, Askford DGH project was considered as "kid's stuff"! This expression meant to illustrate the insignificance of the project in comparison to previous large ones. It was a major

event for the DHA yet a negligible one in a wider spectrum. For the MCT actors the DGH project was "the challenge to the management of all times". These reactions were based on the length of time that the officers had served in the NHS which equally affected their understanding of the functions of a health institution.

5.   Remoulding the Structure

Since the Nucleus was a flexible planning and building system, the structuring and design of the organisation of the DGH provided the officers with the desired leverage for "breaking the mould" in the NHS. The actors often considered the "status quo" or "continuity" in the context (i.e. political context) of their activities as a constraining element in the process of commissioning. They argued that "the power (rested) upon those who had the power for some while", i.e. "the medics". The MCT whilst labelling themselves as the "little Machiavellies" searched for the ways by which they could "change the existing power structure". The General Administrator said once "an evil little Machiavelli would like to be in a position of total power either single or with those people that (one) trusts around here ... obviously (because) they have got the right kind of values (like those) people who do the recruitment for Askford DGH". This was the given reason for challenging the "established patterns of thought" in the NHS. The Team in principle considered different ways of changing the balance of power. As second-in-line officers they could not influence the selection of the medical staff, i.e. the consultants in particular, for the hospital. They were not on the interview panel, because they had "no power". The "Authority (had) no control over the consultants and the extent that they (were) using the resources" said the Administrators. "Every consultant generated expenditure of £ x million individually and yet they (were) not managed. Just like any other profession the Consultants' aim (was) to ensure they (were) paid by the State ...". The MCT members thought of

introducing certain sanctions into the DHA's staff rulebook which could be authorised by the DMT and would control the "unacceptable" behaviour of medics to an extent.

However, the planners had to refer to the DHSS' health circulars which introduced some radical changes in the ratio of consultants to junior doctors, i.e. "one to one", a target which they were expected to achieve by the opening of the hospital. The Personnel Officer devised various options and costed them on the basis of their "orthodox staffing structure". Similarly they did "a preliminary study of what the doctors do ...", then was undertaken and "fed into the DHSS" and "figured out what this stone was and what ripples would be in terms of other people's roles and other people's tasks". They argued that because Askford DGH had got "no hang-ups, no tradition, nothing, no culture", they could create a novel situation where there was no "lines of demonstration based on professionalism". The District Personnel Officer opposed this "dirty word" (i.e. professionalism) which was used to describe the consultants' attitudes. The Personnel Department thought that they could influence the process of recruitment by emphasising the expenditure generated by the consultants' uncontrolled practices and their disagreeable professionalism. However, the popular belief among the officers was that "you could not get anywhere if you could not simply influence people by preaching that ... it is all for the efficiency of a hospital" or arguing that "it is for saving the Authority's money". The argument would fail. As the Personnel manager put it: "if you did go in the (process) with Taylor (i.e. scientific management) you'd get nowhere". The alternative thus was "to go in with some sort of behaviourist approach".

The MCT agreed upon a gentle approach to the question of power because they believed that "part of the resistance ... the initial armour was already broken" and

"once (they) created change in the culture" argued the Nurse Planner "it did not matter what (target they) wanted to achieve". Thus, as managers they were prepared to use themselves as "change agents". However, the question was to what extent their theorising about their domains of action and responsibilities and their speculations about the reactions of the professional groups created more room for manoeuvre. Their preferred situation; their ideal power structure could have become a reality if their proposed staffing structure had been approved.

The actors claimed that their activities, i.e. responding to the demands and constraints imposed by the structure of the NHS were not of routine nature. Although they "could simply sit passively and say what were the norms in planning for a hospital ... got out the Ministry's book ... there it was ...". But, they were "not doing that, (they) were challenging the norms". Indeed despite the established rational structure of the NHS which controlled their moves expectedly, the MCT officers attempted to alter their zones of maneouvre.

6.   Bargaining Perspectives

The need for building a hospital in Askford was initiated on the assumption that as a new town, Askford had to be self-sufficient regarding the health care provisions. The high rate of population growth and an anticipated wide catchment area justified the proposition of building a DGH for Askford which was put forward by the Development Corporation.

The financial crisis of the 1970's added a "political" dimension to the initial argument. The planners in the MCT speculated and reflected upon the changing events in the wider political system and their impact upon the survival of the hospital project. Planning and commissioning of Askford DGH had provided the

opportunity for the administrators at Cropshire DHA to re-establish their claim for wider spans of discretion as a pre-requisite for their effective management of resources. Hence firming up their stance in the decision-making arena with respect to the "powerful" professional groups (e.g. medics) became their priority in the commissioning process.

During this period the re-organisation of the NHS and re-structuring of its management introduced some new elements which were taken into account by the actors in their planning for the health services. These included new management styles and working practices. There were also computer-based systems for evaluating the revenue implications of health projects. For example, FIP and PAS were in the process of development, independent of Askford DGH project, yet they influenced its staffing and costing exercises. They were expected to have a great impact upon the administration of the ADGH when it opened. Consequently, the actors in Cropshire DHA (hence the MCT members) included the adoption of modern technology in their planning debates since they recognised that the government policies evolved around such concepts. Hence, the DHA became the show place for these projects.

In addition, these actors clung to concepts which implied change in the working practices of the professional groups. One of these concepts, to which the actors frequently referred yet refrained from closer examination, was "Nursing Process" (NP).

The Nursing Process was described as the process of determining the client's problems, making plans to solve them, initiating the plan or assigning others to implement it and evaluating the extent to which the plan was effective in resolving the identified problem (Henderson, 1982). It was a step-wise problem-

solving process and had evolved over the years as the emphasis on the aspects of health care changed. The "process" emphasised the "science" of individualised nursing care and was meant to establish an independent and unique professional role for nurses.

However, the members of the nursing profession under the Midland RHA were concerned with further development of the concept. In the NP the nurse's response to the patient's needs would be directed by "clinical judgement". This judgement might be derived from their theoretical knowledge or their experience, but it could also be intuitive and influenced by their values and prejudices. Thus the nurses' "clinical judgement" would vary with implications for patients care.

The NP was already put into practice in the Royal Hospital and according to some of the nurses, it was nothing novel in nursing except for the term. However, some of the co-opted members of the Project Team who were involved in nurse recruitment and training programmes thought the concept was alien to the culture of the NHS as it originated in North America. Furthermore, such a scientific approach to patient care could reduce the extent of care. The planners at the DHA considered the implications of the NP with regard to training of the nurses and development of the knowledge and skills they needed for each step, i.e. observation and communicating skills for identifying the problems alongside planning and managing skills of the prescribed solutions. The skills were expected to improve evaluation of the outcomes of the nursing intervention.

The disapproval of the practising nurses to the process originated in the changes (i.e. changes in the language of their reports) which threatened the established status of the nurses. The NP provided a clear picture of the activities of the nurses and thus was a control mechanism which could be utilised by the RHA for

maintaining the desired performance standard.

The problem-solving aspect of the process and its planned approach to the patients' care implied that the information which an individual nurse developed about a case was shared by the other nurses and doctors. This was interpreted as the invasion of the nurses' domain of care which would reduce their independance and the power they had developed by monopolising the nursing wisdom and patients' care arrangements. The MCT members admitted that the nurses, ward sisters were "queen" in their little domain and perceived that there were limited room for the DHA officers to change any aspects of the patients care.

The nursing staff of Askford DGH would start on these grounds and operate according to the planned nursing practices, i.e. share their intuitive approaches, past experiences and the outcomes of their interpersonal skills with other groups. The MCT considered the concept of NP as the appropriate approach to the patients care, thus, the integral part of Askford modern DGH.

The image of ADGH as a "modern" hospital was heavily publicised by the MCT members. They used the term "modern" to describe the characteristics of health care facilities, i.e. administrative technology and practices in the DGH. This was the consensually validated way of "selling the hospital" to interest groups and the potential hospital staff. Despite the actors' portrayal of a modern DGH, the need for building a new hospital in the area was frequently questioned by the medical consultants. According to some of them, who worked in the RH, there were sufficient health care provisions, i.e. number of hospitals. Thus, building a new DGH was considered as an unjustified expenditure for the RHA.

A similar question was raised when the closing down of the smaller and older

hospitals became inevitable due to imposing financial crisis. The list of hospitals was compiled through the planners' "option appraisal" activities. The quality of services and performance standards of some older hospitals were evaluated against the potential services and facilities of Askford DGH. These options "were appraised in terms of catchment population, the capital cost and revenue implications ...". Then they listed out "all the advantages and disadvantages of each option" before they decided on any development activity. The practice of option appraisal was introduced after the re-organisation of the NHS in 1974. According to the Nurse Planner initially "there were some elements of option appraisal" in their planning which were not formally prescribed. However, he argued that "being a planner one automatically looks at options ... in order to minimise the error of judgement". The option appraisal activities were described by the MCT members without its political context. Indeed, the selection of the older hospitals for closure was not solely based on normative assumptions, i.e. their outdated technology or low standard of health provision. These hospitals were located in different parts of the county. There were local pressures and speculations by the MPs who were interested in securing the votes of their constituencies. The final list of hospitals was compiled following the negotiations between the interest groups. Actually, the prescribed systematic approach to option appraisal initiated these negotiations.

So far attempts have been made to illustrate that the planning and commissioning of Askford DGH included a great deal of bargaining over competing objectives. The members of the MCT, the DMT officers and other interest groups bargained from their perceived preferred situations towards a collectively modified choice. Simultaneously they attempted to change each other's preferred situations and outcomes, in order to extend their zones of manoeuvre. However, in their challenge of the prescribed hospital design parameters they re-invented these

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parameters. This maintained the state of equilibrium in the commissioning process. The following discussions will further illustrate these actors' attempts with reference to various issues and in initiating their preferred decision situations and events.

For the second-in-line officers (i.e. members of the MCT) the ultimate goal was to have the DGH built and commissioned on time. Throughout the planning process any reference to "health service" implied provision of "diagnostic and cure" services and thus preventative services and health education became a peripheral concern. This orientation was reinforced by the NHS culture which was shaped by a medical model and was said to be a "sickness service" (as Townsend, 1982). Health education conversely required a different kind of interference by the health authorities in the people's lives, and was based on familiarisation of communities, and people with various aspects of health in everyday life. Thus, health education was related to taken-for-granted malpractices. Hence the Health Education Officer on the MCT argued that the provision of health service had to be concerned with preventative services, i.e. "how people can learn about health ... or ... how (they) can maintain physical and mental health" by knowing about health.

For the planners in the DHA health education meant planning for development of different facilties. It was thus described as a means of conveying the "health message" through use of posters which showed, for example, a healthy diet. Incidentally, the investigation of the health inspectors had showed that the catering departments in the existing hospitals provided services which were below the required dietary standards.

A further step in the development of health education was neutralising the "halo

health effect" that the hospitals had created. The MCT members argued that the part that a hospital played in preventing illness had to be increased because usually "provision of information and treatment" by the hospital (reduced) pain". This image was continuously refinforced through the direction that the NHS had taken which emphasised "gratification of a need", i.e. being cured, instead of "encouraging people to seeing health as a positive value" argued the Health Education Officer.

The MCT examined these issues with respect to staff requirements. Hence it was suggested that there was the need for staff with "diversified skills and expertise in behaviourism and journalism". Because of the prescribed peripheral role of the health education in the development of health care, the officer at Cropshire DHA hypothised that at the time of financial crisis and cuts in the health service, the health education services would be written off first.

The planners, nevertheless, were not interested in considering the inputs for advanced health education services. They concentrated on "the bid" for a technical officer and thought that in the later stages of the hospital development some clerical and support staff could be recruited. Consequently, inclusion of a health education centre in the DGH was considered, and the issue of health education was put on the agenda of the MCT. The MCT argued that establishment of a health education centre was necessary because of the large population in the area and Askford DGH had the capacity and was the right place to house it.

The scheme was justified in terms of revenue consequences. However, if the project had been rejected, according to the DHA, it would have been because of the difficulties in funding it, i.e. the question of cost-effectiveness and whether it could have been developed on the basis of private or public fundings.

Nevertheless, the MCT thought of using Askford DGH as a vehicle for pursuing the developement schemes. This was an "overlay" as regards the health provision.

The actors argued that the impact of the financial crisis could have been minimised if there had been changes in the political scene. Electoral changes had often resulted in changes in policies of health care provisions. The MCT reviewed the policies of different political parties carefully and utilised them whilst lobbying the interest groups and the MP's.

The planners and administrators described their membership of the MCT in terms of a "power game". Consequently, they attempted to change the players' positions, where and when they collectively perceived as appropriate. They held regular meetings to disseminate information about their perceived status in this game. When they assumed that they had gained the backing of the interest groups or their proposals were approved they announced that "the ball (was) in (their) court" and that they were going to play it right.

The common purpose which was attached to the MCT's actions, was to ensure that the DGH was commissioned on time. The publically known reason for existence of the MCT enhanced the co-operation among its diverse membership, which fulfilled their tacit object of the game, i.e. chanelling the power relationships in their preferred direction. Thus, for the planners, the MCT meetings provided the forum for presenting their philosophies. Equally, it refrained them from acting without the Team's consensus.

The actors' strategic activities evolved around the known rules in the commissioning process. It was understood that conforming to the norms ensured the progress of the DGH and as the Nurse Planner put it "there would be no

frustration if one adjusted one's ideas" to such norms.

The explicit rules were dictated in the Management Control Plan. Consequently, tasks were allocated to each member of the MCT, and time deadlines were set for various schemes and planning activities. The actors' roles and responsibilities were clearly defined in the context of an hierarchy. Debates in the MCT meetings and the consequent resolutions reinforced the expected behaviour.

Each of the meetings of the MCT presented a recurrent pattern of behaviour which was maintained through the agenda and was illustrated by the ways the events were analysed, the ways the information was disseminated and the way the meetings were chaired.

The MCT members were located at different hierarchical levels and thus assumed a varying degree of discretion and power under different circumstances, in different settings and when interacting with the non-members. Their span of discretion, however, was confined by the limited influence that they exerted upon the direction of some of the decisions (e.g. approvals and finances). Thus, they operated within these boundaries.

In addition, there were some tacit rules, for example, they were expected "to accept the power of the medics" in the end. Actually, their repertoire of responses did not include any recipes with respect to reducing the power of the medics. They had developed a less defensive strategy regarding this tacit rule. Thus, their negotiations took place on a different note. Their main concern was to strengthen their network building activities and search for those groups who supported the DGH project in Askford. Yet their strategy was adversely affected by the delays in the construction activities. Their next move was to "explain the facts" to the people and avoid "spreading disappointment" among them. Their aim

was to enhance the demand for a new DGH in the area by "keeping everybody at it", as the General Administrator described.
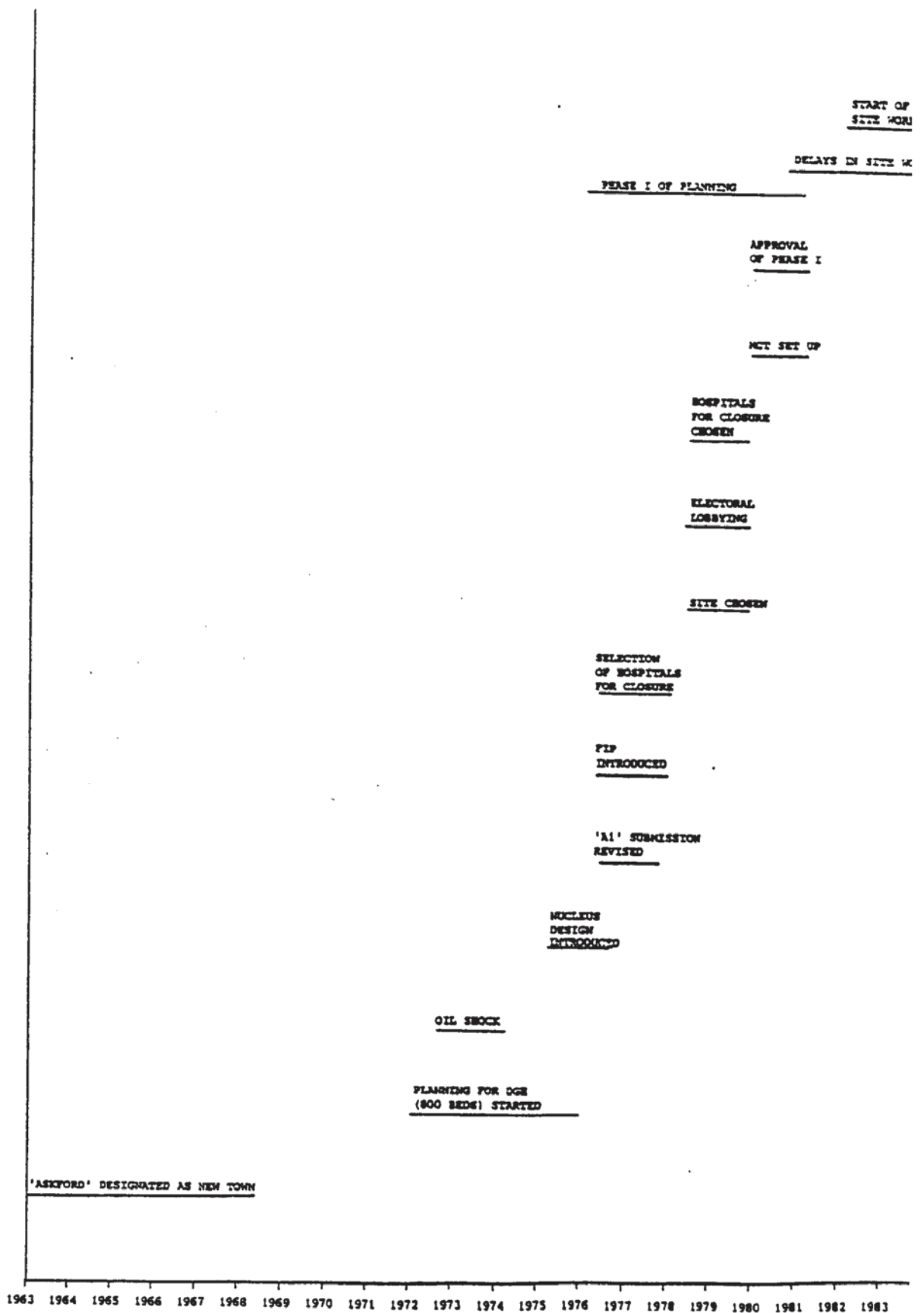
The staffing structure which was proposed by the MCT was an attempt to re-mould the internal labour market in Askford. This was assumed as a break in the continuity which was maintained by the health administrators' practices. Nevertheless, the continuity was maintained since these actors complied with the rules in order to strengthen their position in the system.

The strategies which the MCT members adopted in the commissioning process served their collective and individual interests. If the hospital were built and commissioned according to their proposed plan the "prestige" of Cropshire DHA would increase. All the officers in the DHA shared this belief. Equally, they assumed that their proposed modifications of the parameters in the hospital design package, their proposed training schemes and staffing structures (hence the hospital project as a whole) provided them with the "vehicle for promotion". Incidentially at the time of study the Personnel Officer was promoted to the post of Unit Administrator and the Nurse Planner to the post of Regional Nursing Planner.

The correspondence between Cropshire DHA and some MP's in the area illustrated the extent of uncertainty with regard to the DGH project. For instance, the MP for Askford had written to the Chairman of Cropshire DHA that "there (had) been the odd press report and rumour ... about the DGH and DHA's capital programme ..." and had asked to be updated because he "hated to see any stoppage especially just before a general election!". Such induced reactions, the MCT members thought, could bring about the desired outcome, i.e. the DGH was built and commenced its operations on time.

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Figure 7.7 Sequence of Events in the Hospital Development

START OF
SITE WORK

DELAYS IN SITE WK

PHASE I OF PLANNING

APPROVAL
OF PHASE I

MCT SET UP

HOSPITALS
FOR CLOSURE
CHOSEN

ELECTORAL
LOBBYING

SITE CHOSEN

SELECTION
OF HOSPITALS
FOR CLOSURE

PIP
INTRODUCED

'A1' SUBMISSION
REVISED

NUCLEUS
DESIGN
INTRODUCED

OIL SHOCK

PLANNING FOR DGH
(800 BEDS) STARTED

'ASHFORD' DESIGNATED AS NEW TOWN

1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADGH: "Askford" District General Hospital

ADC: "Askford" Development Corporation

CTA: Central Treatment Area

DGH: District General Hospital

DHA: District Health Authority

DHSS: Department of Health and Social Security

DMT: District Management Team

FIP: Financial Information Project

MCP: Management Control Plan

MCT: Manpower and Commissioning Team

PAS: Patient Administrative System

PT: Project Team

RH: Royal Hospital

RAWP: Resource Allocation Working Party

RHA: Regional Health Authority

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of this chapter is to evaluate the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of managerial practices. The insights which are afforded by this thesis stem from its focus on the "temporal - embeddedness" of managerial work and its critical examination of claims and counter claims of what managing actually entails. These critical analyses are developed within the perspective proposed for studying managerial work.

Therefore the secondary objective is to demonstrate the implications of this perspective for management theory, thus, for studying managerial practices and management education.

The chapter commences by a depiction of the focus and argument of the study. It then shows how the thesis has critically evaluated the "paradigm" of orthodox management theorisings yet has relocated their claim within an alternative paradigm. Following this evaluation is an exposition of the superficiality of managerial concepts, vis-a-vis management practice and management education. Finally, it is shown that the focus and proposed perspective enhance the capabilities of an organisation (and its management) in attaining and sustaining effective utilisation of its resources.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Throughout this research, development of a perspective for studying managerial practicies has been the underlying focus. Thus, 'recurrance' has been adopted as its core theme which includes managers' attempts to re-construct future events and disjunctures and to reproduce imprinted organisational templates. It has therefore examined managers' routinised and habitual practices and their situational attempts to depart from established structures within their

organisations. Accordingly, its critical stand point has emphasised the temporal-embeddedness of managerial work which has been largely neglected by the predominant management theorisings. The structuring function of time as regards managerial practices has therefore been adopted as the primary focus of the thesis. This focus evolved through a process by which managerial concepts, puzzles and queries were examined and anchored to the empirical work of the thesis. The theoretical framework of the research at the outset was designed to examine managerial work along the intentional-intuitive continuum. As the framework evolved a set of working assumptions were developed concerning managers' actions. For example managerial work involves search and identification of the organisation's niches and theoretical survival paths and further, this search is embedded in the temporal context of the organisation, so are managerial practices. Figure 8.1 is an illustration of the focus of the thesis.

With respect to the conceptual framework of the thesis, the activities of four sets of managers in four different settings have been studied. The interpretation and analysis of this empirical work has been presented in the form of case studies. Each case study has been an attempt to depict managers' actions with regard to their situations. The concepts of "recurrence" is emphasised and discussed in each case. The cognitive, temporal and intentional situations of managerial work are thus integrated within this frame of analysis. The case studies have illustrated that the thesis is interdisciplinary and comprises a blend of organisation and management theories.

RECURRENCE

Here, "recurrence" as the key analytic theme has been used to argue that managers' actions are cognitive and hibitual. Therefore it has been shown that

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Figure 8.1   Focus of the thesis
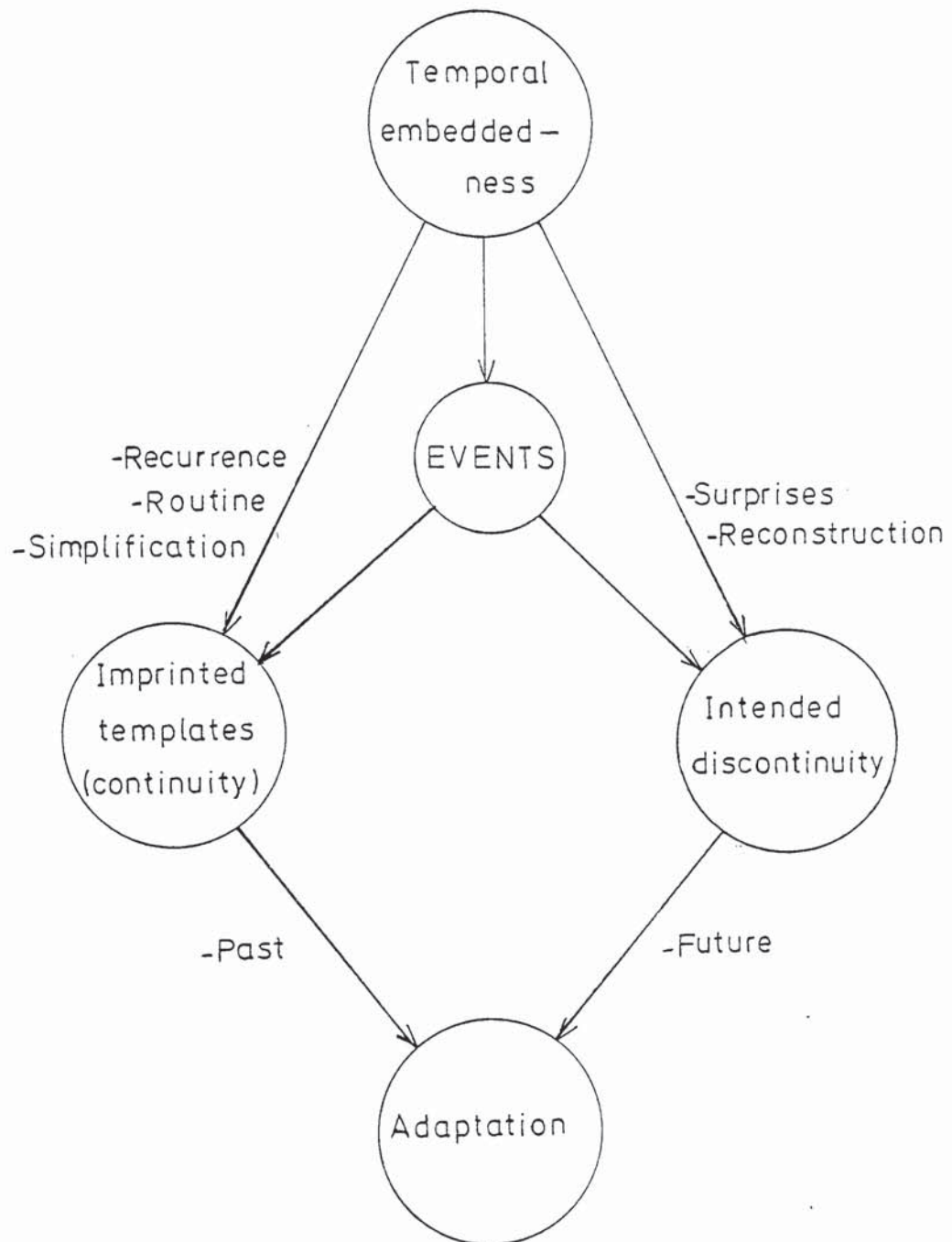
managers build individual and collective models which are located in the time continiuum and describe the structure and forms of things in their surroundings. These models are retained or abandoned whilst managers test the "working hypotheses" included in them in practice, and consequently the models operate as culturally imprinted templates. They include the "knowledge" about events and situations which managers develop and is transformed in times. The imprinted templates, thus, are constantly edited by managers. The editing activities are sometimes deliberate or inserted; for example in case four the health administrators and planners attempted to edit the time-space framework of the medical consultants. These methods of editing often are not stored in the organisation's repertoire of means of sense-making. Furthermore it is argued here that if managers are not aware of alternative temporal-cognitive rules underlying the contents of their activities editing rarely takes place.

However, managers vary the extent of their editing according to their interpretation of the situation. Consequently they may decide to discontinue some practices or re-constitute some others. The resultant enacted situations may be included in their repertoire. For example in case four, the health authority administrators, deceased their regular meetings as regards the commissioning activities when they perceived that development of the hospital project could be disrupted. However, within the same context these administrators re-established the ratios which were used as the basis for human resources utilisation in the hospital.

EVENT-SPOTTING

It is also shown in this thesis that the editing activities of managers are based on a set of detected events which constitutes the definition of the situation and

determines the context of their activities. This sequence of managerial action is shown in Figure 8.2.

The analysis of the empirical work of this thesis has shown that managers, irrespective of their organisational settings, search for a variety of events which can be placed within trajectories. Each trajectory reflects the relevance of events in various situations, and contains temporal units in terms of intervals between the events, duration and periodic recurrence of each event. It is therefore asserted that "events" must be considered in analysis of managerial work.

CONFIGURATIONS

The configurations that managers develop on the basis of detected events, also include various ways that managers think they can tackle an issue and allocate resources for resolving it (ie evaluate alternative courses of action). For some managers these configurations may include mainly conservative items which will maintain the momentum of their organising actions. Hence, their managerial strategies evolve inertially. According to the findings of this research, managers' own and organisational "past-loadedness" influence the extent to which conservative or non-conservative items are included in their configurations. Therefore, imprinted templates which are in-use (and identified) at the time that managers join the organisation influence the constitution of their configurations and their event trajectory. For instance at the time of recession when there is a lower rate of organisational activity the scope of perceived options is narrowed down. This simultaneously affects managers identification of events (or alternative course of action) as was the case of the Marketing Manager in case three. This manager had joined Metal Finishing Ltd in the recessive period of the

Figure 8.2   Managers' event-spotting activities
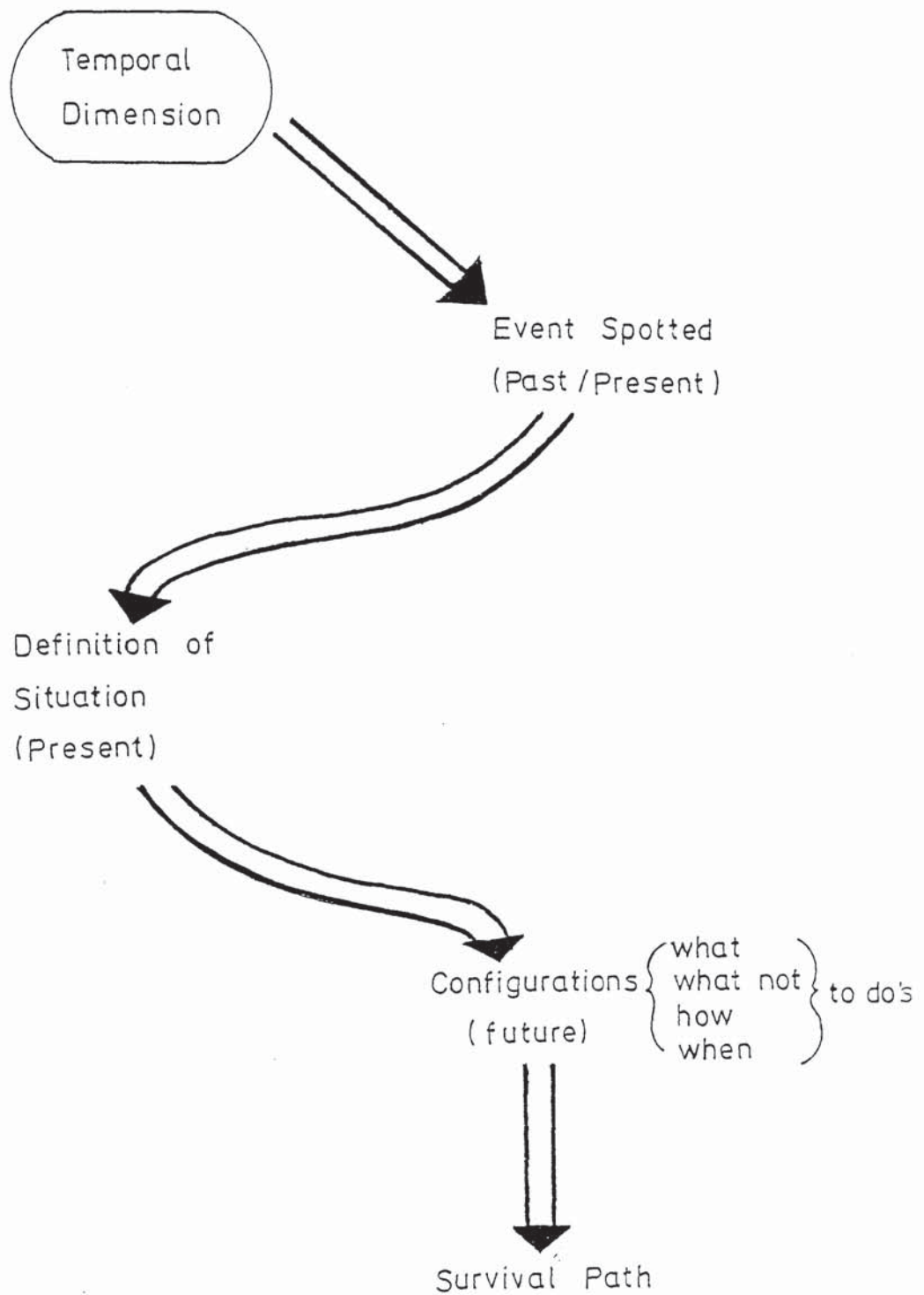
mid 1970's after his previous company was bankrupt due to reduced demand for their services. At that time the strategy adopted by MF Ltd. was to create a temporary boundary around their production and marketing activities and maintain the momentum of their trading position.

The concept of "past-loaded-ness" is emphasised here in this fashion in order to explain organisational failures or decline. It is argued accordingly that when managers are confined to a limited number of organisational scenarios, regarding the variations of events in their surroundings or when they are familiar with a set of scenarios which have presented the desired (anticipated) outcome in the past, they may fail to recognise a specific event or may act upon a non-specific event or may even anticipate recurrence of an event. Consequently, the activated response may fail to produce the desired outcome.

Furthermore, it has been shown that managers may include some non-conservative and disjunctive elements in their configurations. Managers synthesise their past-loadness whilst constituting these elements in their configurations. Thus, in the process of event-spotting certain events are considered as the sign of disjuncture. If managers identify an event as a sign of disjuncture, they may depart from the routine and estbalished approaches to the allocations of resources and tasks. These kind of decisions are frequently of strategic nature which also require a search for novel "resource pools".

In summary, the configurations that managers utilise for making sense of their surroundings include a set of "what...if...then" assumptions that managers test practically. These assumptions and their details are retained and edited with respect to managers' perception of contextual variations. Managers learn these assumptions during their initial socialising stage into organisations. They

internalise them whilst recognising them as the constitutional basis of their organisational activities.

LABELLING EVENTS

Another central point which has emerged from the analysis is the labelling of events by managers. This labelling takes place according to the nature of the activities that the events initiate and the resources which they sensitise. They are routine, non-routine, expected and unexpected events. Thus, a situation is called routine when:

- it requires application of a practice (approach) which is familiar to the managers and their role-sets; familiarity is decribed in terms of having experienced the same process;
- the inputs of the process are known and the outcomes of the activities are predictable;
- it includes activities which have well-defined paths and ends;
- it has a recurrent pattern or is periodic;
- there are identified contingent variables;
- there are episodes with known durations and intervals;
- the practice includes more mechanical bits thus less thinking;
- the manager has cognitive comfort in analysing and synthesising it;
- it is assumed to be of less strategic significance to the organisational activities, thus the retained poses are activitated;
- managerial activities contain the organisation's tactical plans.

Similarly a situation is described as non-routine (unexpected) when:

- the practice includes more analytical thinking;
- no familiar scenarios in the manager's repertoire can be applied to it; the manager has not experienced it;
- the existing poses in the repertoire and the manager's experience are in conflict as regards the characteristics of the situation;
- the anticipated future events and their outcomes are not realised.

However, it is also argued that whilst activiting the repertoire, managers search for disjuncture, ie situations which reinforce discontinuity and thus allow deliberate editing and re-working the existing scenarios. The disjunctures have strategic and political implications with respect to the selection of their

responses. Consequently, a situation may be labelled as unexpected regarding the time frame of events leading to the disjuncture. Yet, a situation is labelled as the "expected unexpected" if:

- the managers search for them;
- it allows deliberate editing;
- there are contingent plans for resolving them.

Indeed, routine events and disjunctures are distinguished in this thesis according to their structuring attributes which motivate manager's search patterns.

TEMPLATE CONSTITUTION

This research has also illustrated that managers and their role-sets are collectively involved in the construction of the imprinted templates. It has been shown that a great deal of time is spent in meetings, interacting with others, and discussing over the items which are similtaneously inserted in the agendas of the meetings. These mutual informational loading activities, may or may not result in switches in managerial strategies or the re-organisation of the constituting elements of their configurations.

The interactions between managers and their role-sets clarify their tasks and expected roles. The meetings are formal means of division of labour among managers and minutes of the meetings as action sheets are the means for controlling the process. Similarly, the agendas of the meetings are designed to maintain the continuity and enhance the structuring functions of these interactions.

RATIONALISING

The claim of this thesis that managers develop configurations of their organisational situations is patently logical. However it begs the question "to what extent is rationality assumed in such managerial processes?" Theorising about the ways managers handle their portfolios, as presented here indicates that there is a certain degree of "rationalising" in managerial actions. It has been shown in this thesis, that managerial work includes goal-directed, or goal-seeking actions. In either case managers and their role-sets rationalise and realise their actions by looking forward and backward in time and hence search for events (familiar or unfamiliar) in order to reduce perceived uncertainty and in order to manage their portfolios. The point is that, in relation to this question, the future is relatively unknown and thus managers will face unexpected events and surprises, therefore their strategies and approaches will change. Rationality, however here, is conceived as stemming from the past loadedness of actors and organisations and is thus confined to the process of generalising regarding the future or "forward looking" perspective. In Figure 8.3 the sequence of managerial practices as interpreted is shown.

IMPLICATIONS

i)   For theory:

Over the past decade the main development within the domain of "orthodox" management theory has been its focus on the observable activities of managers in various organisations. These theories have criticised the earlier perspectives and conceptualisations of management for presenting the "folklore" of management. They have used the term "folklore" to illustrate the disjunction between theory, ie

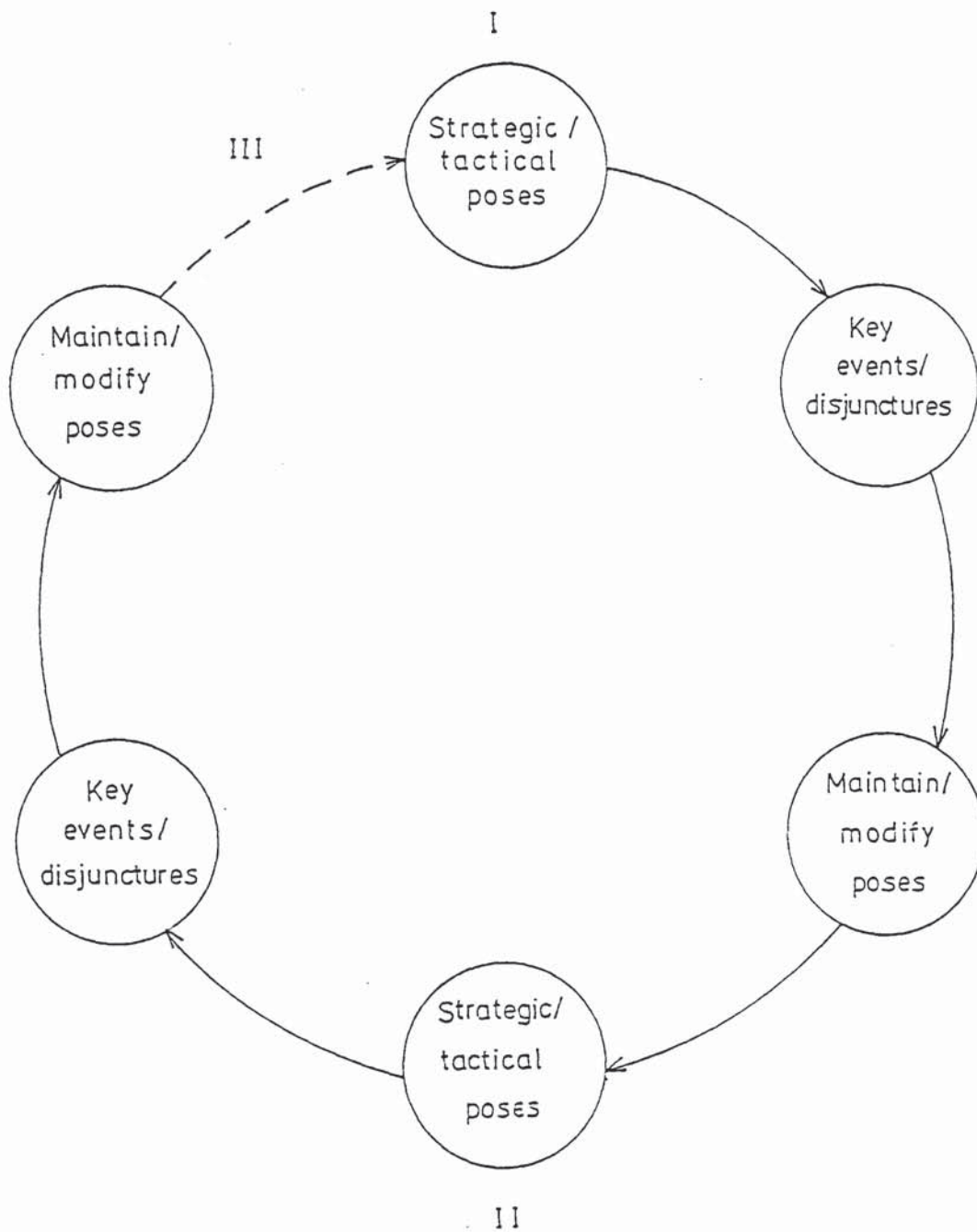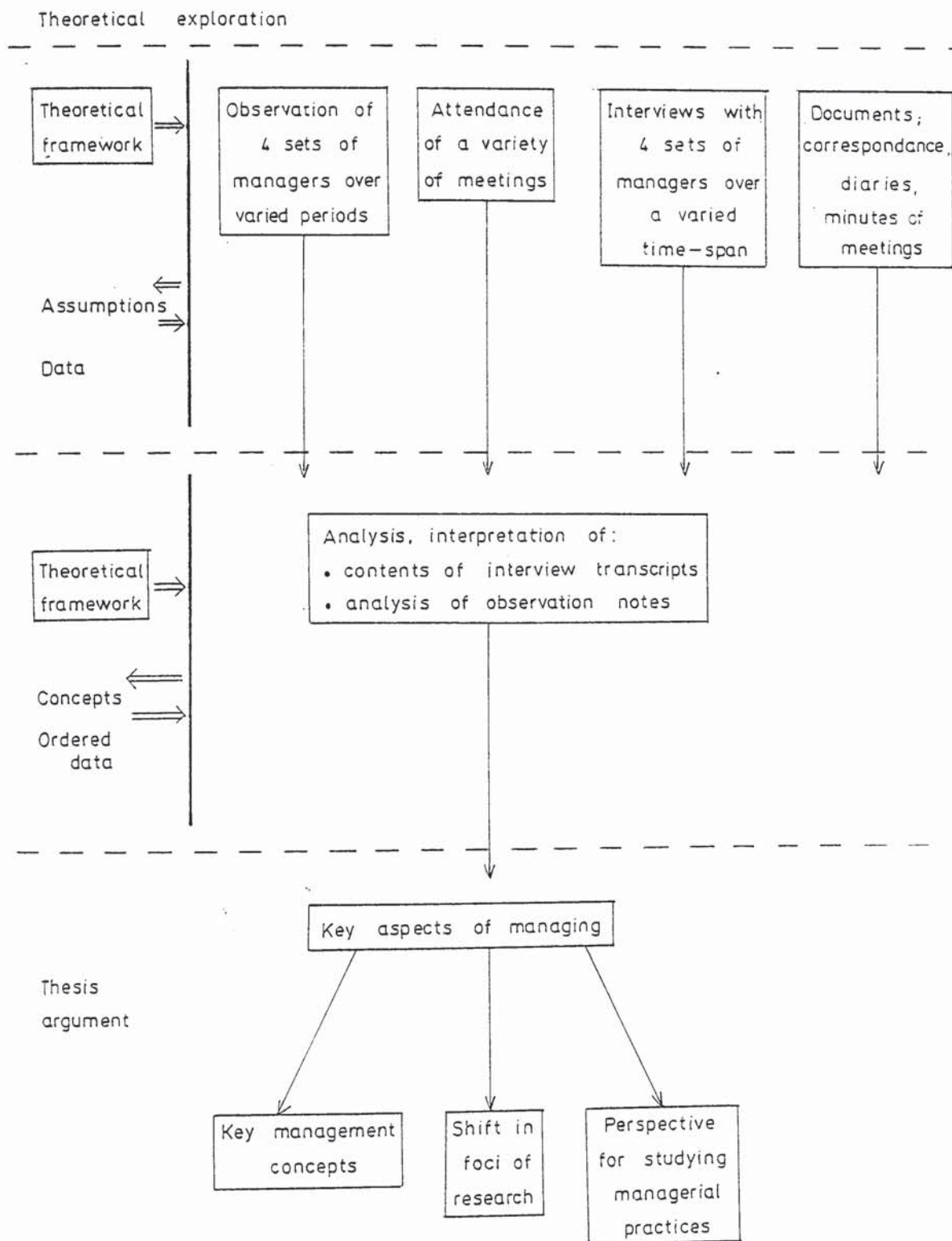Figure 8.3   An interpretation of the sequence of managerial practices

Figure 8.4   Process of development of the thesis argument

Theoretical   exploration

| Theoretical framework | Observation of 4 sets of managers over varied periods | Attendance of a variety of meetings | Interviews with 4 sets of managers over a varied time-span | Documents; correspondance, diaries, minutes of meetings |

Assumptions

Data

Theoretical framework

Analysis, interpretation of:
• contents of interview transcripts
• analysis of observation notes

Concepts

Ordered data

Thesis argument

Key aspects of managing

Key management concepts

Shift in foci of research

Perspective for studying managerial practices

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unsubstantiated prescribed functions of managers and the practice, that is what managers really do. They have claimed that the implications for practising managers concern the enhancement of managerial performance (hence their rationality). Furthermore, the theorticians in this school, have argued that their method, ie observation and description of managerial work span both the theory and the practice.

However, in this thesis the paradigm of the "activity" school has been dismissed for its inadequacy in grasping the temporal and intentional dimensions of managerial work. It has been demonstrated that in their attempt to show the interdependence between managers (organisations) and their work contexts, their characterisation of managerial work as fragmentary and episodic has produced 'snapshots' of managerial work. They have thus neglected the underlying context of managerial practices and individual manager's interpretations of this. Furthermore, relocating the activity school interpretations into the alternative paradigm proposed in this thesis, it is shown that the episodes in a manager's working day, if analysed within their temporal and intentional dimensions reveal the ways the manager develops and maintains rites and rituals.

Whilst furthering this constructive stand point of the thesis, the "fragmentation" puzzle has been resolved by showing the recurrent nature of managerial work. It is therefore argued that 'events' rather than 'activities' are the key dimension for analysing managerial practices.

Hence, managerial work is fragmented because managers and their role-sets are involved in decision-making activities which include detection of events within the organisation's frame of reference. These activities initiate the eposodic nature of managerial work and require interactions of the organisations members. The

predominant writings of the activity school are reactions to the normative management theories of the early twentieth century. This research has thus refuted their claim that reflective planning is a rare management activity. It is demonstrated here that managers do allocate blocks of time to planning, organising and controlling organisational resources. Therefore it has been argued that these empirical generalisations concerning the fragmentary nature of managerial work are based on post-hoc rationalisations and are acontextual. Their conceptualisations cannot explain the failure or decline of organisations. The focus of this thesis on the time-embeddedness of managerial work has resolved this question.

ii)   For practice:

It has been claimed by various theorists and researchers that management and organisation theories have had little effect on practising managers because they fall short of demonstrating the ways managers allocate resources and experiment (for example, Peters and Waterman, 1982: 117). It is argued here that the impact of management theory on management practice has been limited purely because management theories have neglected the time dimension in their conceptualisation and have thus adopted ecologically invalid considerations.

For instance, a recent attempt in coupling theory and practice, has been the study of the role of "industry recipe" (Spender 1980), in determining the viability of business. Considering the core argument of this research, Spender's concept of recipe is both shallow and static. The concept of 'industry recipe' is an attempt to link manager's theorising with their business environments, yet it has developed within an attemporal perspective and seperate from managerial situations. If the recent switches in the management strategies of the foundary and dairy industries

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are considered, the recipe constructs that Spender identified for these industries and assumed as enabling tools for managers and for maintaining the viability of the industry are outdated and have consequently made little impact in practice.

The point which is raised here is the type of "knowledge" which should be produced by management theoreticians. If management practitioners and managers-to-be are to benefit from theory, its transfer into the knowledge which they are said to require, is implausible. Such concepts as recurrence, imprinted templates and event-detection, implied in the temporal dimension of managerial work, are laid into the foundations of managerial strategic and tactical approaches and can equally be considered as analytic tools for analysis of managerial approaches. They present managers with a vantage ground for understanding the direction of their strategies and tactics.

It may therefore be suggested that the performance of managers can be a joint function of their awareness of such conceptions and their ability to apply them to their experiences and thus analysing and structuring them. Furthermore such conceptions can be used as diagnostic mechanisms regarding the anticipated future, the organisation's prospectus and hence for re-organising and re-constructuring manager's approaches.

Event-detection

•Rules and resources?

•Configuration

or

course of action

•Imprinted

templates

•Disjunctures?

•Outcome?   ┌- favourable
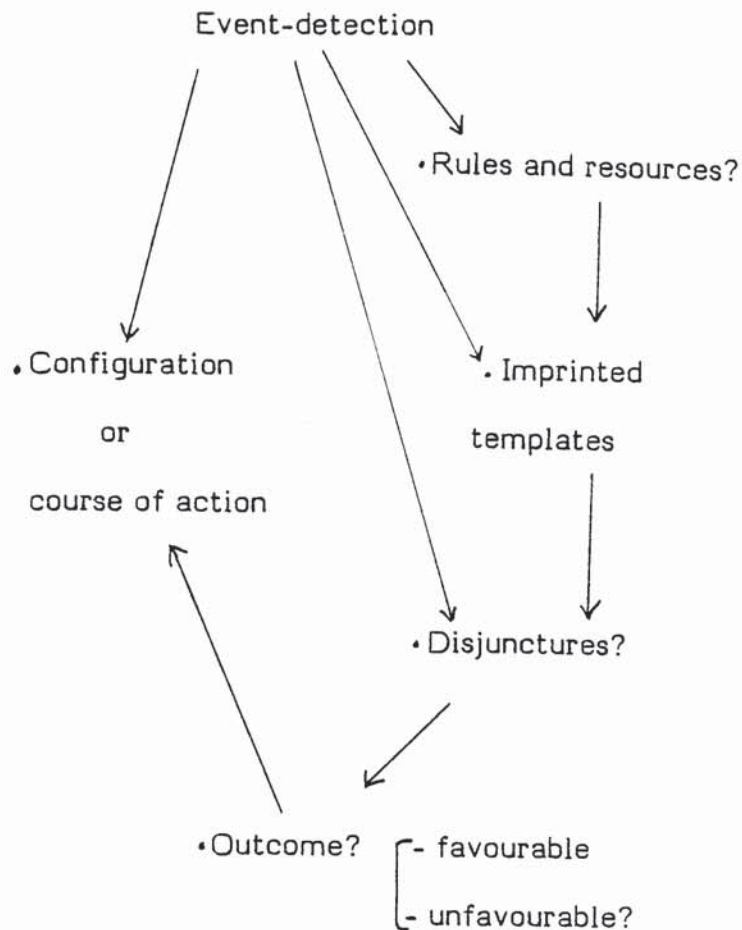
             └- unfavourable?

Figure 8.5   MANAGERIAL DISCRIMINATION

iii) For management education:

In recent years, the theory-practice dichotomy has dominated management education debates. Vociferous criticism has fallen upon the academic (ie theoretical) orientation of management education. Business and management schools have been critised for their failure to design their curricula with regard to the needs and requirements of practice.

The orientation and focus of these schools has evolved over the years. Within the

past decades, this orientation has concentrated upon a contiunuum of teaching, based on case analysis and observation or theoretical prescriptions. Case analysis method gained momentum in the belief that managers-to-be could learn from practice in simulated, historically based decision-making or choice situations.

However, the philosophy underlying case-study method, has been critised for its concentration on critical incidences and for presenting a logical approach to a management puzzle, yet in historical terms. However, it contains the answer and does not capture the supprises. The case study method is useful in terms of application of theory and directing the thinking of the student. Yet it cannot develop the abilities that managers require in order to identify events and trajectories.

It is also claimed that management educationalists orientated towards applied theory, have produced technocrats who can deal with defined and structured problems and not unexpected events which are for the most part unplanned instances requiring reactive skills.

The orientation of business schools as regards teaching of theory has been rebuked for dealing with the disciplines underlying management theory rather than managerial work per se. Hence, it is argued that their courses contain abstract material and are far from the reality of management.

One recent report with major implications for management education (Griffiths and Murray, 1985) has argued that the focus of management education and the basis of competion amongst the bsuiness schools in British context, has been on course design and quality rather than relevance of the taught material to the practical problems of business. The consequences of such focus are seen in the

dominance of the traditional disciplines of social sciences in management schools. In addition, as has previously been mentioned, the perspective of management education has been based on abstract (observer) considerations of the game of management without involvement.

The report has thus emphasised that the future of management education would be analytically oriented to practical objectives whilst maintaining a high intellectual standard. The management schools should provide courses with respect to the needs of the employers and students. It is argued that they would attempt to increase their share of the education market by becoming engaged in problem-solving projects.

It may be argued that management schools may influence management practice in a variety of ways depending on the purpose that the education is envisaged to serve. Equally there is a choice situation for the management school. Their survival may depend on; satisfying government's education policies, attracting or competing for private sector funds, hence taking a problem-solving stance, or maintaining an orientation to development of management theory and models. Accordingly the development of managerial skills will vary with such purposes. However, for example development of managers' cognitive skills if is based onteaching theory is seen as sterile and insipid unless it is used for similar future focus. It is the application of theory by the managers-to-be which raises the question. Yet, the dichotomy remains as considering managers as thinkers or doers.

Here the question is not resolved by supporting the adoption of either an academic or non-academic orientation by management education. Rather, this inadequancy may be seen by the general neglect over the constructs of 'time', 'events' and thus

time-embeddedness of managerial practices in the content of management courses.

Management education may never be at the frontiers of knowledge regarding the operational and strategic needs of industry and business if its purpose is solely to focus on diagnosing and resolving the existing problems. Management theory will remain inertial if its survival is dependent upon playing this game. Managing future and changing situations will require the backing of theories and models which elucidate the projected actions of managers.

In summary, the future context becomes paramount upon acceptance of the primary important of the time dimension in managerial work as advocated throughout this thesis.

iv) For management training:

Considering management training, the whole ethos of this process undermines the dictum that managing is temporally situated. With repsect to the focus of this thesis a whole battery of simulated, artificial training situations and workshops which aim at producing ready made managers are falsified and illl-conceived. One pertinent example is the range of training programmes offered to executives whose aim is effective 'time management'. The theoretical basis of insights offered by these courses are founded on the 'time spending' studies of managers' work which were carried out in the 1950's and 1960's. The handbooks of time management accompanied by diary notes and courses have been thus designed to relieve the busy manager, to help them balance demands and constraints imposed upon them by utilising their prime asset; their time. Time management courses have, however, failed in their objectives to increase the effectiveness of

managerial performance due to their inherent misconception of time. Time, is clock time, is considered, here, as an organising device and separate from events. Such a conception exerts more superficiality than reality on the managing process. Moreover, the concept of effectiveness with respect to the metaphore of clock time is diagnostic and clinical.

v) For further research:

The perspective which is proposed in this thesis for studying managerial practices theoretically and empirically may be placed within the field of organisation development. This perspective which equally presents an actual image of managerial work, provides a managerial response to changing situations. It can be used as an educational or learning strategy with the intention of adjusting managerial behaviour. Hence, it reveals (yet without proscribing) the elements and characteristics of the knowledge required to sustain the viability of an organisation.

It is envisaged in this thesis that the study of temporal-intentional aspects of managerial practices requires development of perspectives, concepts, metaphores, images and analytic tools. Hence, there are certain choices regarding such developments.

This perspective is one which gives attention to the temporally and intentionally situated practices of the actors in an organisation. It must therefore include consideration of the actions of those actors who identify and determine the temporal frames of reference for the organisation. Such a perspective will thus focus upon the politickings of actors in this process.

Moreover, the perspective may be developed with respect to the objective of showing the organisation's time tables which are differentiated by the contexts of its activities and its past-loadedness. This approach may also include analysis and consideration of mechanisms by which the organisation's resources are allocated with reference to these time frames.

On a similar line of development, the perspective will concentrate upon the ways actors in different organisational settings develop coping strategies with regard to different time frames, and thus, explore whether these actors are aware of these differences. Consequently it should examine the ways the actors develop their awareness. The implications of developing such perspectives are seen with regard to decision-making process and the significance of 'when-ness' in strategic decisions.

Indeed, as it has been suggested throughout this thesis, the foci of research into managerial work must take into account the aforementioned choices and so should seek to draw upon:

(a)   the ways managerial configurations are developed;

(b)   the characteristics of these configurations;

(c)   the mechanisms inserted in such systems;

(d)   the way organisational templates are developed, institutionalised and transformed;

(e)   the historical shaping of managerial practices and the consequences of persistence aned slow evolution of such practices;

(f)   the ways equivocality and uncertainty in the organisational information inputs are resolved;

(g)   intentionally discontinued practices as a means of decoding equivocality in the organisation's environment.

The concepts which are most relevant for examining managerial situated practices will have to deal with continuity and discontinuity of such practices. As previously discussed, concepts such as 'recurrance' will demonstrate the recurrent pattern of managerial templates or managerial configurations. Such concepts can therefore be utilised for understanding the situations of decline, innovation or change.

In addition, the concept of 'event' as the key time domension will explain the time-tabling activities of the organisation's members. It can be utilised, thus, to describe historical shaping of managerial strategies; the switches, turns and evolutions in such strategies. Further, such concepts as 'event' can be used for analysis of the elements in manager's configurations and sense-making models, hence for depicting the order of things in such models. Indeed, any perspective or concept for studying and understanding managerial practices must theoretically and empirically consider the analysis of discontinuities within the continuity of managerial practices which are embedded in the time-continuum.

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