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Exploring tensions in organisational learning
- international and postcolonial perspectives

By

Nicola J. Watts (MEd.)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Deakin University (December, 2004)
I certify that the thesis entitled
Exploring tensions in organisational learning -
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Full Name: Nicola Jaine Watts

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My friends and colleagues who have followed the course of the research, and kept me going.
ABSTRACT

For the past decade I have been engaged as a management consultant in the area of organisational change and development. This has been primarily within international development environments, and all the professional opportunities, challenges and learning they offer. This thesis therefore employs reflexivity to explore professional practices within this context. These practices are primarily considered within the context of an emerging economy dealing with the challenges of globalisation, against a backdrop of tradition and the old vestiges of colonialism and socialism.

Of particular interest have been the tensions between humanist and corporate values that emerge when dealing with the people and learning side of organisations, and within a context of what can be broadly defined as 'where west meets east'. These tensions are explored within a values framework and through consideration of some the themes that feature in the area of postcolonial studies. The intention of the study has been to explore some of the meanings and representations that emerge from professional experience, how they are explained and represented, and what the meanings and representations derived might imply in considering the requirements of 'principled' professional practice.

The study is built around the work place and the researcher's role within it and therefore draws heavily on personal reflection and reflexivity. The qualitative methodologies employed draw heavily from the literature dealing with critical social science, and in particular that relating to 'narrative inquiry'. Particular consideration is given to the location of self in the research context and the way in which professional knowledge is constructed.
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1 CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Brief Overview

For the past decade I have been engaged as a management consultant in the area of organisational change and development. This has been primarily within international development environments, and all the professional opportunities, challenges and learning they offer. This thesis therefore employs reflexivity to explore professional practices within this context.

The international development environment in this sense is considered to be where international agencies have supported structural reforms at a national level in order to promote economic growth for the broader aim of improving socio-economic conditions. As part of such structural reforms at the macro level, it is common for international specialists to be brought in at various levels to support reform processes. Professional practices, accompanying international specialists, are therefore considered within the broader contexts of emerging economies dealing with the challenges of globalisation, against a backdrop of tradition and the old vestiges of colonialism and socialism.

Of particular interest are tensions between humanist and corporate values that emerge when dealing with the people and learning side of organisations, and within contexts of what can be broadly defined as 'where west meets east'. The latter is also reflective of 'transition culture', which is associated with the transformation of centrally-planned and controlled economies into ones more aligned with the open-market principles associated with neoliberalism. The importation of expatriates with specialised knowledge associated with business managerialism and technologies is usually also part of that process.

The intention of the study is to explore some of the meanings and representations emerging from professional experience, how they are explained and represented, and what the meanings and representations
derived might imply for further consideration of the requirements of "principled" professional practice. A values framework, together with themes that feature in the area of postcolonial studies, is drawn on to support this exploration.

The study is built around the work place and my role as the researcher within that. It therefore draws heavily on personal reflection and reflexivity. Qualitative methodologies employed draw from the literature dealing with critical social science, and, in particular, that relating to "narrative inquiry". Particular consideration is given to the location of self in the research context and ways in which professional knowledge is constructed.

1.2 The Research Problem

The core research problem considers the transfer to developing economies of common western corporate practices relating to organisational change processes and learning development practices. Consideration is given to how this transfer can be considered as reflecting themes of postcolonialism. Postcolonial themes are drawn upon because they acknowledge that whilst the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, they also assert the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change (McLeod, 2000). Issues that emerge are considered in terms of their implications for "principled professional practice".

Given that people and learning issues are usually considered to be key elements of any change programme or transformation process, of paramount interest are the points of convergence and divergence of what I refer to as "humanist values" and "corporatist values". This emerges from an acknowledged challenge for functional organisations to achieve the right balance or equilibrium between people values and business values (Lebow and Simon 1997).
As a "management consultant", who plays a key role in these processes, I am not only interested in the way I contribute to organisational life and its outcomes, but also the way in which I construct, represent, apply and reflect upon my own professional knowledge, beliefs and practices.

1.3 The Folio

From the outset, and in line with the requirements of an EdD, the initial research plan included the development of a folio comprising a substantial dissertation and a considered selection of other research writing. However there were subsequent shifts in focus from the original research problem and the anticipated structure of the folio. These can be attributed to the challenges and opportunities that presented themselves through undertaking research into professional and workplace practices; particularly as they relate to frequent changes in my own professional role and geographic location, and the impact of numerous “false starts” and getting “lost” in the myriad of rich reflective experience the work place offers.
Broadly speaking the entire research project has emerged as comprising the core elements summarised in Figure 1.3-1. It should however be noted the overall folio is submitted as a single paper which integrates Electives 1 (Chapter 4) and 2 (Chapter 6) within the broader dissertation. Electives 3 and 4 are included as Appendix 3 on CD ROM.

1.3.1 Elective Task 1 - Literature Review: creating a values framework

Substantial work contained within this thesis deals with “values”. In relation to the general theme of “learning and development” this relates to points of divergence and convergence of values that have a humanist orientation and those values that have a corporatist orientation. The literature surrounding values is therefore explored in order to define a framework for considering where this divergence and imbalance is most likely to occur.

1.3.2 Elective Task 2 - Organisational Learning Case-study

Whilst this comprises a stand-alone case-study, this task also represents a major element of the dissertation. This substantial element of the folio describes in detail an organisational change programme I was responsible for in post-colonial Tanzania. The principles of Senge’s (1993) learning organisation as defined in ‘The Fifth Discipline’, which have been influential in shaping many of my own work practices, are first explored alongside other relevant literature. Specific activities undertaken, and incidents, within the programme are reflected upon and critiqued within the five disciplines of Senge’s Learning Organisation.

1.3.3 Dissertation

Drawing heavily from Elective Task 1 and incorporating Elective Task 2, the dissertation seeks to explore issues around:-
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- Where are the points of convergence and divergence in relation to humanist values and corporatist values within the organisational practices surrounding learning and development?
- What, if any, considerations emerge out of the above?
- Within the context of international development programmes, how do practices relating to organisational change and learning and development reflect themes of postcolonialism?
- What, if any, considerations emerge out of the above?
- What are the implications of the above for the principled professional?

1.3.4 Elective Task 3 - Article

Work place research is considered to be of significance from both personal as well as broader perspectives, where the latter relates to supporting global professional reflection and development. Therefore in response to articles appearing in Australian HR magazines dealing with broad topics around international HRM, an article was submitted discussing issues that emerged during this research and seemed to not be reflected in the current professional discussion.

1.3.5 Elective Task 4 - Further consulting resources

In view of the outcomes of the key findings, this final task puts together some resource materials for use in further consulting programmes the author envisages being involved in during 2004. These resource materials primarily address similar organisational change contexts as the one described in Chapter 6, and seek to facilitate discussion aimed at grappling with issues surrounding organisational change in such contexts.
2 CHAPTER TWO: The Research Problem as a Professional Problem

2.1 Introduction and professional concerns

In relation to my research focus and the concerns raised above, I acknowledge however my uncertainty of whether it is possible to be sure that a concern is a valid one, at least at the beginning of a research project. The environment in which I operate has multiple layers of complexity and the purpose of the entire research project is to unravel, like the multiple layers of an onion, that complexity. One of the main purposes of this study is therefore to also better understand my professional experiences, and the different meanings that can be applied to them. Only on this basis can I better understand the implications of my own role and practices.

As previously discussed this research emerges as workplace based and from concerns relating to professional experience. Almost thirty years ago Argyris and Schöen (1974) defined five main areas of professional practice which need to continuously come up for review. These provide a useful framework, and I draw upon each area for exploring some of my own professional concerns, and how they have shaped the nature of this research.

1. whether or not professions which were founded to meet the needs of society, serve all members of society or only the advantaged

Much of my professional experience, which is drawn on throughout this paper has been within what is often referred to as emerging economies. This has been both within the context of international assistance projects, as well as within broader economic structural reform activities as they relate to privatisation. I have therefore not only witnessed first hand, but have been an active part of the struggles and values tensions that come with global transformation processes; particularly in terms of how they relate to points where “West” meets "East".
Within the context of international projects, I have sensed the pressures of deep "values gaps" and the way these create troubled divisions, which can also threaten to paralyse broader change processes. There have also been many cases where I have walked away from projects with more than a niggling doubt about the extent of real "development" and lasting change that they have brought.

In such an environment it is therefore valid to consider whose interests are largely being served through professional roles and what this might mean for others outside of those domains of interest and power.

2. whether or not professionals are competent, given the rapid changes in technology and other factors which impact on practice

Given the complexity of my broader professional context, what are the professional competency requirements? Do we simply adopt technical skills for playing the "game" associated with neo-liberalism and its flow-on into corporatism? Or do we have a role in developing skills that not only relate to our own personal reflexivity, but also enable us to be able to better facilitate those reflexive practices within the corporate context that we operate?

3. whether or not professionals actually learn from one another, given that many learn and work in an isolated way

Carl Rogers (1969), claimed that the most socially useful thing in the modern world is the process of learning, continuing openness to experience and incorporation into oneself of the process of change. However as we move further into a post-modern era learning; in particular the nature of learning and the purposes of learning, become even more important.

Much of the nature and focus of this research I believe primarily stems from the fact that I primarily consider myself as an "educator". It relates to an increasing consciousness of the corporatisation or instrumentalism
of learning and development, and the way in which many of the more 
humanistic values traditionally associated with education are overridden 
by corporatist ones.

I am therefore also interested in my professional learning and notions 
surrounding "reflective" and "reflexive" practitioners, and the continuous 
reflective requirements of professional practice. This also means it is 
esential to acknowledge, explore and seek to build understanding 
based around personal roles and identity within professional contexts. It 
also means considering: "how do professionals ensure their own 
learning and development, when that learning is likely to be confined to 
the context of the (corporate) environment that we inhabit?"

4. whether or not professionals can reform themselves from within, given 
that professionals supposedly know more about themselves than others

How do we ensure that professional activities are constantly changing to 
meet the challenges of a rapidly changing society? How do we ensure a 
correlation between words and practice?

5. whether or not professional work can be meaningful to a generation 
increasingly concerned with the quality of personal life and the desire to 
actualise themselves both within and outside the workplace.

How do we complement lifelong journeys of learning and transformation 
in both professional and personal contexts?

2.2 Professional Background and location of self within research

My research concern can perhaps be put into a broader perspective through 
a brief introduction to myself and my professional background. For the last 
decade my business card has indicated a prominent international
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telecommunications consulting company. Telecommunications and
management consulting has been riding on a wave of technological
development and deregulation. In line with those key drivers, the
development side of telecommunications organisations and the people
working within them have also become a key focal area.

Included on the business card, and underneath my own name, the title
"Senior Management Consultant: Organisation Development" appears. Many
of my company colleagues have their academic qualifications listed also,
however my highest formal qualification; a Masters of Education, has not
been shown. Perhaps this was an oversight, or perhaps it is because I have
often felt that it sometimes appears as an oddity in a world dominated by
economists and engineers. On the other hand education has been emerging,
as a key and complementary "e" required by the corporate world for
sustaining itself, and has been reflected in the demand for professionals to
manage organisational processes associated with "change" and "learning and
development".

When asked "what is your job?" and "what is your profession?" I often
struggle to answer in a succinct but meaningful manner. In a dynamic world
the nature of my job and professional role seems also to be constantly
changing. Within the complex environment of organisations undergoing
change, roles are also subject to constant contextual change. I have been
attributed with various labels. "Training and Development Consultant",
"Project Manager", "HR Consultant", "Change Agent", "Senior Management
Consultant" and "Organisation Development Consultant" are just some of
them. But labels are usually simply convenient ways of marketing, or
impressing upon someone else a personal functional skill or level. Therefore
perhaps in more meaningful terms it might be enough to say that I have been
responsible for changing the way things are done within organisations.

In a telecommunications business environment this usually means seeking to
better align people, processes and technology for the achievement of
organisation and business objectives. Integral to this is the notion of learning.
Learning in organisations is usually linked with a functional role often labelled
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as Human Resource Management (HRM) or Human Resource Development (HRD).

HRM, which is generally considered as an offshoot of broader “business management”, however did not comprise the major areas of my own formal tertiary studies. Fifteen years ago I was a classroom teacher in a small school in “anglo-saxon” rural Victoria. When I try to recall why I chose “education” as my field of academic study many vague humanist ideals come to mind. Ideals that said education produced educated people; people who should be reasonable, rational and objective and therefore able to make better contributions to society, and that every individual had the right to fulfil their own potential and be treated with dignity and respect.

My classroom teaching career was not extensive but, in retrospect, was very powerful in helping shaping very strong beliefs in relation to the way people learn, and that in social frameworks “rights” come with “responsibilities”. When I first graduated I was appointed to a primary school in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. Coming from my middle class rural background, I can remember the doubts running through my mind, as I made that first symbolic crossing of the Westgate Bridge from “east” to “west” in Melbourne. What skills did I really have to launch into this foreign world of multi-culturalism and low socio-economic profiles?

However I didn’t just survive, I felt that I thrived. I considered that I learned something about creating environments where individuals, despite their abilities and past experiences, could feel valued and experience success. Despite how tough, or vulnerable, some of those kids appeared on the outside, whatever I put in they put back a hundred fold into creating a wonderful learning environment. It was an environment, which I believed was built on the values of trust and respect, and a constantly articulated belief that everyone had something important to contribute.

Two years later for personal reasons I moved back to the country. A small one-room one-teacher school had hit a magical number entitling them to a second teacher, and I was lucky enough to be it. Another wonderful
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experience emerged, working with children in a multi-grade classroom environment, which lasted two years. The most powerful realisation coming in a firm belief that children largely learn despite having a teacher. While a teacher may often have a role to model or demonstrate particular concepts or skills, a teacher's role is more that of a facilitator whereby learning "structures" are put in place to support learners in their own personal or group learning. The environment, and sometimes "hidden curriculum" accompanying that environment, also makes a powerful learning factor.

I graduated to Curriculum Consultant in 1990 with the Victorian Ministry of Education. This was when the Labour government of the time appeared to be channelling substantial funds, for the improvement of educational outcomes, through a focus on *reflective practices and improvement or action-oriented problem solving processes* such as "Key Group" and "Exploring Mathematics in Classrooms" (EMIC). On the methodologies I was "sold". They simply seemed to provide legitimacy to my own beliefs that teachers develop best professionally by deeply exploring what goes on in their learning environments and by refining practices in the light of reflection. Not only did my own learning curve continue to soar, but I also felt that I knew what it meant to facilitate learning and development amongst professional educators.

Learning was considered to be a continuous, active and constructive process. You had to be bit a bit of risk-taker, but making of mistakes was part of the process; so long as you learned from them. What my colleagues and I were doing seemed to have a good feel about it. It was based on strong shared, and perhaps somewhat intuitive, beliefs that learning was being enhanced. At the time we may not have had a lot of quantitative evidence to support the methodologies, but qualitative and anecdotal evidence coming from colleagues, students and parents seemed to support the various initiatives.

However a change of government was imminent. It was clear that our professional development models were expensive in terms of resources and time requirements. Among those who were enthusiastically embracing the changes occurring within education, there were also dissenters. There were some cries of "back to basics" and calls for education to pragmatically
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address workforce needs, and unify learning outcomes in order that "apples" are compared with "apples", rather than with "pears" and "oranges". Business management principles associated with internal efficiencies and measurable outcomes started to move rapidly into education institutions.

I had by then been a consultant for two years in a regional school support centre. Radical changes were in the wind, and it was clear that it was time for another personal change of direction. Without a backward glance, but appreciative of the personal learning opportunities I had had access to, I ventured overseas. My first appointment was to an international school, being established in Lao PDR. I was responsible for a Year 7-10 class, curriculum development, and the interim role of director. It was an exciting prospect to put all those ideas about education and learning that I had been developing into a new school.

In the complex cross-cultural school environment, again there were differing values and beliefs about the purposes of education and the means of delivering it. While most parents enjoyed watching their children thrive as individuals in a rich socio-cultural learning environment, specific concerns were also expressed. For example; how would they compare with counterparts back "home" or in other similar international schools? Would they be adequately prepared to enter educational pathways in other country's education systems? Clearly education needed to cater for the development of the individual and the group, but it also had to be pragmatic and functional. Education, it seemed needs to cater for the multiple purposes it services, and the challenge of the educator is to find the "right mix".

My career at the international school did not last long. My skills as an educator suddenly seemed marketable outside the formal schooling environment. With some encouragement from people working in the area of international development, I therefore began my career as an "international freelance consultant". I did not really have any clear perception of what kind of consultancy services I had to market, but it didn't matter as the work came to me rather than vice versa. I had some business cards with "Training and Development Consultant" printed. "Training" seemed a natural extension of
my experience with learning and education processes, but I was not exactly sure what I had in mind with the “development” aspect. However in the first year it came to mean:

- becoming a team leader for a socio-economic study in relation to a broader feasibility study for hydropower dams; and considering broader and sustainable socio-economic development requirements
- leading curriculum development for a national university in areas of study relating to sustainable natural resources management, and
- building up a national institution charged with the responsibility of managing government and international projects seeking to improve natural resources management.

My training and development orientation had planted me firmly in an area which had always been of interest to me; that of environmentalism and sustainable natural resources management. It was an opportunity to draw on my interest in action-oriented learning processes to solve problems within a context of socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental complexity. However I was also beginning to become more and more aware of participatory processes as powerful tools in serving the ends that various international agencies considered were just and right. Implementing processes that sought to understand multiple perspectives, and build consensus and coalition, was something that I realised I was quite good at.

I had always held an inherent belief that “humanity” exists within a complex ecological system and that if we do not respect that interconnectedness then our future is somewhat bleak. A purely instrumental and functional focus on market economies and western models of consumerism and continuous growth, as the means for achieving equitably beneficial ends, has not always sat comfortably with me. Neither have arguments in relation to the importance of economic development at a macro level assuaged my concerns for the demise of “community” at the micro level. While I have sat and talked with communities in Indochina who through my eyes live in abject despair; displaced by war and trying to eke a meagre living from a diminishing natural resource base, I have also sat with those who appear to derive pride and
dignity from their affinity with the natural world and within their social community. To make decisions to interfere in those systems is to enter into a complex realm of value-laden judgements and views.

However what emerged for me personally was a chance to clarify and articulate my own beliefs and values:—

- respect of the interdependencies in relation to the broader ecological system that we exist within, and a desire to live in harmony rather than through practices associated with dominance and sheer exploitation;
- respect for the different perspectives that come from the values and beliefs of people associated with, and who have legitimate right to, a specific locale;
- the rights of individuals in relation to their responsibilities to their broader communities.

My professional approaches seemed to be acceptable to both funding agencies and national bodies in the “international development context”, and my professional services were actively sought. I was subsequently approached by an international telecommunications consulting company to consider a training and development project for the Lao PDR. I wrote the project proposal, and while that was acceptable to the German financing agency, in the initial stages my Curriculum Vitae was not. It seemed that my “educational” qualifications were not sufficiently impressive in a world dominated by “economists” and “engineers”. However due to a strong stand taken by the consulting company, and amongst a few misgivings, I was eventually appointed as Project Manager.

The 18-month project was considered by all stakeholders to be a success and I suddenly found myself thrown into the new realm of information technology and telecommunications. While philosophically I was drawn more to the area of natural resources management, the “glamour” and financial rewards that came with the telecommunications business proved to be a powerful lure. Personal ideology, in terms of some fundamental values and interests, suddenly came up against short-term benefits and reward.
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Globalisation then took on a personal meaning. For 10 years this not only meant working for large corporations which operate globally, but also undertaking professional activities in Australia, Lao PDR, Brunei, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Syria, India, Germany, Italy, Uganda, Tanzania, Taiwan and Croatia. My colleagues encompassed nationals of all these countries, plus many others. In addition I regularly travelled to other countries for meetings and seminars. Without even really being conscious of the transition, I had joined an increasing number of professionals who operate in a global workplace.

Being a global player within the corporate world of telecommunications has meant a diverse range of organisation and human resource development roles and responsibilities. These include, but are not limited to, organisational change management, organisational assessment, business process review and design, design of organisational structures, job analysis and design, job evaluation, HR policy review and design, remuneration review and design, training needs assessment, training curriculum development (outcomes and competency-based), training delivery, facilitation of strategic planning workshops, design and implementation of management and leadership programmes, design and implementation of cross-cultural awareness programmes, management of recruitment and selection processes, interim executive management roles, project management, personnel planning, design of retrenchment programmes, executive management coaching, and personal assistant to CEO’s.

Being a global player in the telecommunications industry has also usually meant being a lone woman, or at least part of a minority group, within male dominated international project teams and local organisations. In order to survive in this broader corporate environment this has meant developing certain kinds of masculinist competencies such as advocacy and the ability to put in place strong systems of measurement and control. However the extent to which I have usually been accepted at the local levels and across broad cross-sections of organisations I believe can also be attributed to more feminine values and behaviours, which include a genuine interest in the welfare and development of others. Often however these run into direct
conflict with each other, and have not only created interpersonal tensions but values tensions deep within myself.

Being a global player also means working in complex cross-cultural contexts. Encountering different ways of doing things is expected when you cross national borders or step into the cultures of different organisations and different countries. Adapting and working within these environments brings not just a professional challenge, but provides a richness that takes you beyond your own boundaries. Being a global player, however, also means bringing global perspectives to local environments, and as I mentioned earlier my professional concern relates to how this reflects both sides of postcolonialism. Being a corporate player means specifically bringing corporate perspectives to those local environments and my professional concern relates to potential forms of corporate imperialism, together with disalignment between humanist and corporate values. This can mean losing sight of the broader instrumentalism of corporatism in serving international development and humanistic objectives.

Being a global player ostensibly emphasises the need to keep abreast with global trends, as well as balancing them against more localised project and workplace requirements and activities. In this sense important double loops of learning are implied. In a competitive business environment the learning professional is expected to offer the broad concepts and strategies currently popularised and demanded by the corporate world. On the other hand grand narratives associated with exemplary learning and development methodologies and other "HRM practices" need to be constantly tempered by actual practices and results. The quest for bridging gaps between theories and practices must be continuous.

In addition being a global player in the international development arena implies a focus on the broader macro objectives sought and the instrumentalism of economic structural reform programmes. However these can also be at odds with short term organisational and other stakeholder objectives. Accordingly the need for continuous personal reflection in relation to professional practices and theories is essential. I therefore consider
research as a natural extension of the personal learning process, where research provides the discipline and framework to explore the powerful corporate world and global contexts I inhabit through a number of different eyes.

Perhaps one other point is worth exploring. Giddens (1991) refers to the globalisation process of *individuation* whereby we are forced to live a more reflexive life towards an open future, where increasingly tradition and custom are declining in their impact on our lives. As a woman, I perhaps can view myself as an example of this. Instead of following the traditional role of my mother; bearing children, occupied largely by domestic life, subordinate in a male dominated environment, economically dependent, etc; and whether or not it is for better or for worse, I have been open to an alternative future that sets of global changes have enabled. In this thesis I therefore cannot avoid the issue of globalisation; neither from the perspective of myself as a player within it and the opportunities it has presented me, nor from the perspective of those impacted and who I encounter in my professional practice.

I use this brief overview of myself in order to stress that my research occurs directly within the context of my work, and it is extremely important to locate myself with in it. In order to be “reflexive” it is essential to recognise the contextual nature of personal perspectives and the fact that these are hardly autonomous of a specific social context of their own. I therefore emphasise the following:-

1. My academic background is in *education*, with a relatively small portion of my career encompassing the formal education sector. However I have repackaged my skills and knowledge for application in business contexts.

2. In terms of access to my employment roles and the remuneration I have received from them, I have personally benefited from the projects that I have been involved in, and from the way they are directly linked to globalisation and corporatisation.

3. In the context of the organisations that I have been engaged in within emerging economies, and in terms of the benefits associated with the
terms of my employment, my personal position appears as “privileged” in contrast to the employees employed locally.

4. In the context of the organisations that I have been engaged in and within my professional role in those organisations, I have had the capacity to influence organisational decisions, which as a consequence is likely to have an impact on the people within them.

5. I am aware of myself as a white-middle-class-Australian woman participating in what often appears as white-male dominated corporate contexts. Furthermore these corporate contexts are often supplanted in multi-cultural, multi-racial contexts where the old vestiges of colonialism and socialism linger against the new ones of global capitalism

6. I am embedded within my own knowledge and experiences, and my professional concerns arise out of that. I cannot pretend that those are necessarily the concerns of the people I work with; either expatriate or those coming from the countries in which I have been professionally engaged. I cannot also pretend that I understand what it means to be part of the multiple social identity groups of the nations in which I work.
3 CHAPTER THREE: General Background

3.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned this paper explores professional roles and reflexivity within organisational change and development activities in the context of transitional or emerging economies. This broad context is however rife with multiple and competing beliefs about human rights, progress and development, and the instrumental means for achieving them. It is also within an environment of unprecedented technological advancement that tends to shrink the global space. This in turn results in constant exposure to otherness, which means it becomes ‘harder and harder to live out a life within the premodern condition of an undisturbed traditional society or even within the modern condition of a strong and well organised belief system’ (Anderson 1995, p. 6). It is also within a postmodern context, which reveals a world in which different groups of people actually have different beliefs about belief itself (Anderson 1990).

This chapter therefore seeks to explore some of the broader themes surrounding professional practices associated with organisational change and development activities in the global world in which I operate.

3.2 Belief systems in a post-modern world

Many dominant belief systems have been associated with what is often portrayed as the end of the modern era (Anderson 1990), each of which has professed to have the truth and competed to varying degrees with others: for example, ‘this faith against that one, capitalism against communism, science against religion’ (Anderson 1990, p. 3). Anderson & Michael (1989) identify six dominant belief systems that tend to operate, intermingle and to varying degrees compete with each other in today’s world. Whilst not to disregard the influence of other belief systems, the broader context of this research however can be considered within the dominant framework of the belief
system that they define as a western view of technology, economic development and progress, and its overriding image of a world in which the conditions of life keep getting better for everyone. This view also tends to be equated with the principles of liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1995) and capitalism, and their ostensible instrumentality in serving broader humanist agendas (Drucker 1992; Hammer and Champy 1995; Senge 1991; Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996).

This belief system emerges within a broader context of what is often conveniently portrayed as the transition period from a modern era to a post-modern one. Whereas modernity is viewed as based around notions of rationality, objectivity and truth, post-modernity is viewed as situational, provisional, contingent, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability (Anderson 1995; Lyotard 1984; Derrida 1993; Kuhn 1996). Post-modernity is seen as the departure from a world of tribes, traditions, religions and worldviews into a pluralistic global civilisation (Anderson 1995), which is also often associated with the emergence of the more recent forms of consumer and multinational forms of capitalism (Jameson 1988).

There is a lot of complex and competing ideas and literature surrounding the notion of post-modernism. However, within the context of this research project, the notion of a post-modern transition or condition is a useful construct. It assists in acknowledging this critical transition process that we are all living, and identifying the contradictory barrage of cultural stimuli that people are exposed to within it (Anderson 1995).

On the one-hand, post-modernism critiques the way in which stability and order is maintained in modern societies through grand narratives, which are essentially stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs in order to reinforce them (Lyotard 1984). On the other hand we can see first hand the way such grand narratives are still at work. In the context of the research programme this certainly relates to the ways metanarratives encourage nations to undertake certain programmes of economic restructuring for the
betterment of their citizens, and encourage organisations to undertake certain kinds of change programmes for improving internal efficiency and effectiveness.

When Lyotard (1984) defined the post-modern era as a time of 'incredulity towards metanarratives', he did not mean that all people stopped believing in all the stories associated with modernism, but rather that the stories were not working so well anymore. As noted by Habermas (1984) this requires attention to constantly exploring links between thinking and action. Essentially this research project therefore seeks to understand the broader context of organisational and professional practices as they exist within the framework of the post-modern condition. It also seeks to investigate some of the stories around those practices, together with the contradictions, inconsistencies and tensions within them, and what this might mean in relation to professional practices.

Because of the broader contextual location of organisational practices, consideration inevitably ranges from the meta levels of global economic restructuring, to the macro levels of national structural adjustment, to the micro levels of organisational change, through to notions of identity. This echoes an exploration of aspects of what Laïdi (1998) refers to as the 'crisis of meaning'; reflecting gaps between 'power' (based around markets and economic activity) and a broader sense of 'meaning' (community identity).

3.3 Globalisation, Western Capitalism and Corporatisation

3.3.1 Globalisation and the proliferation of western capitalism

Also reflected in terms like 'global economy' (Hirst and Thompson 1996), 'global marketplace' (Paliwoda 1993), and 'global village' (McCracken 1988), **globalisation** refers to a complex set of social, cultural, political and economic changes (Giddens 1999). Whilst globalisation is not just economic in, and of
itself (ibid), the marketplace is seen as one of its' key driving agencies. UNESCO, for example, defines globalisation as:

a set of economic, social, technological, political and cultural structures and processes arising from the changing character of the production, consumption and trade of goods and assets that comprise the base of the international political economy (2000).

Globalisation signifies diminishing economic borders and simultaneous increases in 'international exchange and transnational interaction' (Dolon 1993, p.259). In particular it is often equated with the spread of western capitalism, and the decline of old vestiges such as socialism. It is also commonly used to explain the proliferation of multinational and supranational organisations, and to illuminate significant transformations in the nation-state system (Greiger 1997).

Intensifying globalisation over the last few decades has seen substantial global economic restructuring. Jackson (1994) articulates this as:

...by the mid-1970s, the fortunes of the western economies began to shift. Rapid technological change and the internationalisation of production began to set in motion a process of economic restructuring that would profoundly change the structure of employment in the west. This process gained momentum, and broadened and deepened its impacts, during the 1980s, which saw an even more thoroughgoing globalisation of the world economy, especially in the areas of capital markets and financial services (p. 2).

This global transformation is also reflective of neo-liberalism, which promotes free, unregulated markets coupled with aggressive individualism (Wells et al. 1998).

Neo-liberals espouse the superiority of the market as opposed to the state, as the allocators of resources, and they argue that capitalist markets – unfettered in this global age by national or regulations – maximise economic efficiency and serve the guarantor of individual freedom (p. 324).

These views reflect the intellectual framework of still popular eighteenth century philosopher, Adam Smith, who saw free markets seeking natural equilibrium. He used the expression of the 'invisible hand' to explain how society operates most effectively within a market economy because it has its own tendency towards justice and order (Haakonssen 1998). Strong advocacy for the pursuit of human freedom through economic freedom and
free enterprise gained momentum during the last century, and is reflected in works like those of prominent American economist and Nobel Prize awardee, Milton Friedman (1962, 1982).

A 'new capitalism' (Drucker 1992; Hammer and Champy 1994; Senge 1991), which is seen to be at the heart of global transformations, is portrayed as being more meaningful, humane and socially just (Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996), implying the instrumentalism of capitalism in serving humanist values.

As globalization and modernization cut everywhere deeper into existing social fabrics and give rise to new social patterns, new hopes, new aspirations, new institutions and new authority structures, basic conceptions of social and industrial justice naturally come under review, are challenged (and sometimes exploited) and eventually are changed to define a new order' (Meindl et al. 1994, p. 198).

Globally it presupposes fundamental shifts in the 'distribution of wealth, environmental protection, and rules of trade and investment that should contemplate the asymmetries between the industrialised and the emerging and low-income economies' (Drummond 2001, p. 181). It is linked with collectivist approaches to the protection of human rights, and collaborative approaches to improving general collective effectiveness (Held et al. 1999).

Certainly these collaborative and collective sentiments are reflected in the respective mandates, charters and visions of global organisations such as the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation, and the high level humanistic objectives that underpin them. Neo-liberalism is also considered to be reflected in the monetary policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Barber 1995; Pannu 1996), and the way in which emerging economies have been encouraged to undertake substantial restructuring programmes; inclusive of deregulation of markets, streamlining of government and public sectors and privatising certain public institutions (Boron & Torres 1996).
Within this framework however, globalisation is also often critiqued as a correlate of Western dominance and imperialism (Sen 2001), having contributed to the emergence of a ‘fourth world’ whereby vast tracts of humanity are largely dismissed as being of no relevance to the new world economy (Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996). Examples are also cited in the western world of those groups who are considered to be losers in the global economy; particularly in terms of unemployment and declining or stagnating incomes (Greider 1997).

This acknowledges the paradox in that whilst human welfare is ostensibly the key driver of programmes and interventions, people are also part of the means in the sense of their roles in the global transformation process (Anand and Sen 2000). Also whenever we set up a criterion of humanism, the question arises as whether the aim is the wellbeing of an individual or the broader wellbeing of all humankind (Golebiowski 1982).

Concern is also expressed that no one takes responsibility for global capitalism in all its dimensions (Greider 1997). Multi-national companies are seen as obsessed with breaking into foreign markets. Lenders and investors are preoccupied with financial returns and the security of their assets. Political leaders are seen as leaving the outcome of the great political issues of our times – the distribution of wealth and power within and among societies, the treatment of ordinary citizens, and even human rights questions – substantially to private markets (ibid).

Whilst the emphasis is often on the marketplace, Giddens (1999) suggests globalisation refers to a set of changes, not a singly determined change. Many of these changes are social, cultural and political, as well as inextricably linked to the broader communications revolution. In this sense, Giddens argues that globalism is not just about bigger pictures; not only about the global market place and diminishing roles of nation-states, it is also about the impact on our individual lives. It is about the impact on our personalities, our identities, our lives, our emotions, our relationships with other people,
because of the way globalisation invades local culture. Particularly for those who have traditionally been outside the framework of western capitalism, globalisation means it is now almost impossible to live a life without encountering people with different worldviews (Anderson 1995).

In response to the challenges posed by globalism many commentators call for a focus on an international ideology associated with global humanism (Grieger 1997), a 'new humanism' (Frankel 1998), and the upholding of certain undisputable universal principles and values (Giddens 1994; Donaldson and Dunfee 1999). The focus of economics should not just be on production, but principles of personal freedom, physical security, human dignity, human development (Giddens 1994; Donaldson and Dunfee 1999; Grieger 1997).

While many see room for optimism, areas for focused attention are also identified. Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) argue there is a need for radical change in the rules of the game, and that the words and deeds of capitalism must be subjected to more reflexivity. That means translating capitalism into a fully-fledged social practice that has an ethical commitment, and which does not lose sight of the values at the highest level it purports to support. It also means considering how those being drawn into globalisation processes deal with the overwhelming power and presence of the west (Akindele et al. 2002). Other views point to structural issues, arguing for example that the public sector should retain the prime responsibility for creating frameworks for global commerce (Grieger 1997).

3.3.2 The rise of the corporation

Many see globalisation as synonymous with the rise of the corporation and proliferation of multinational and supranational organisations (Saul 1997). The latter is also associated with neo-liberalism and the need for enterprise
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cultures (Keat and Abercrombie 1991; Douglas 1992; Heap and Ross 1992), which enable efficient and effective operations within free markets.

Indeed four organisational metavales can be considered as key drivers of the corporation. They are ‘maintenance’, ‘growth’, ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ (Hodgkinson 1991). Maintenance relates to the self-preservation of organisations; that once in existence, an organisation does not question its ‘need-to-be’. Growth is the second metavalue as organisations constantly seek to expand, and growth is seen as protective ‘insofar as it augments power and thus protects against threats to survival’. Organisations are considered effective if they can achieve their purpose, so there is ‘an imperative to be effective’. Efficiency, as a broad ratio of input to output, is also considered a metavalue.

Whilst a corporation is usually considered as a privately owned firm, broader notions of ‘corporatisation’ have also emerged. These consider the restructuring of organisations to emulate structures and managerial principles of private firms. Bostock (2002), for example defines corporatisation as:

a process of making a State body into an independent commercial company. In many countries it has been considered appropriate to corporatise such formerly State owned providers of services such as energy, public transport, telecommunications, airports, even prisons, and more recently, institutions of higher education. Corporatisation is often the first stage in a process of privatisation where the ownership of a former State body is transferred to private individuals and institutional investors generally through the floating of shares available to the public and subsequent listing on a stock exchange. The privately owned corporation will then operate in a market place under normal commercial conditions and hopefully return a dividend and appreciate in the value of its shares (p. 1).

Corporatisation also tends to be associated with universal theories around global management; particularly American management models (Clegg et al. 1999). There are common beliefs that competitive pressures lead to a convergence of ‘best practice’ or ‘the one best way’; irrespective of the company’s national identity, and any firms failing to do so will fall by the way in an increasingly competitive market (Womack, Jones and Roos 1990). Critics of this approach however argue that whilst there may be convergence around principles (i.e. such as lean production), divergence prevails in the
way these translate into practice (Kochan, Lansbury and MacDuffie 1997), and that universal theories of management are not applicable to all contexts (Clegg et al. 1999).

Organisations that bring people together for the primary purpose of engaging in economic activity are often considered the most powerful and influential of the post-modern era (Saul 1997). Major corporations tend to cultivate and reinforce particular values that legitimate themselves and social order (Cheney and Frenette 1993). Major national and international corporations are seen as having replaced religious, familial, educational and community institutions in the production of meaning, personal identity, values, knowledge and reasoning (Deetz 1992). The extent of modern corporate encroachment into non-work life, and the transformation of other institutions, is seen as a form of colonisation (Goldsmith 1997; Grace and Humphries 1997) – a colonisation of the life world (Habermas 1984, 1987).

Corporations have historically been built around forms of masculinity linked to power and control (Deal and Kennedy 1982) rather than forms of femininity, which are more linked to humanism. In their pursuit of growth and profits, corporations often overlook the impacts of their instrumentalism (Saul 1997). However as (Kitson and Campbell 1996) remind us, ‘we can expect organisations to be socially responsible because that is part of the contract out of which they were created, a condition of the permission that society granted that they exist in the first place’ (p. 98).

3.4 Shifts in approaches to HRM

3.4.1 Overview

In line with the development of western capitalism, and the rise of the corporation, there have been changes in the way people are viewed within organisations (Wright 1995; Lundy 1994; Fisher, Dowling and Garnham
1999). Common concepts associated with people in organisations evident this century can be broadly defined as follows:

(a) Labour as a cost: concepts involving minimised costs and control
(b) Human Relations: Trade Union movements, acceptance of individual rights
(c) Human Capital: Investing in people, measuring value-addedness
(d) Partnerships: Learning organisations, shared benefits, social accountability and responsibility

The role of people (labour) as a major productive resource contributing to the economic development and performance of organisations has been a fundamental element of economic theory. This view is also reflected in classical management theories with their emphasis on controlling people through clear distinctions between management and labour, and keeping down labour costs. Scientific approaches to management as epitomised in Taylorism (Taylor 1911) were the order of the day. Taylorist notion saw workers as having limited sets of inputs to an enterprise, their roles and responsibilities were closely defined, and their knowledge and skill development was limited to the performance of those functions.

The second approach, representing a stronger human relations orientation, emerged during the middle years of the century. It developed in conjunction with an increasingly prosperous society with strong trade unions and an increasing acceptance of the rights of individuals. It emerged in response to growing labour tensions and to an acknowledgement that human resources differ from other resources (Fisher et al. 1999). It however also coincided to a certain degree with offshore shifts of many western companies in search of cheaper labour (Piore and Sabel 1984).

The third approach regards human resources as vital assets of any organisation. The phrase ‘human capital’ (Schultz 1961) indicated a shift in thinking which saw the human resource base as a form of investment.
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Investing in human capital, particularly through training and development activities was regarded as a means of improving dividends. This approach increasingly developed in response to major changes and threats faced by organisations (i.e. recession, international competition and deregulation) and the need to develop competitive advantages (Stroh and Caliguiri 1998).

This approach is also associated with post-Fordism and post-Fordist organisations and work places. Mulcahy and James 2000 noted:

Set within global markets, post-Fordist workplaces are claimed to require a workforce that is able to perform many different tasks or is multiskilled. Workers are constituted as capable of taking shared responsibility for decisions and adept at finding their own solutions to problems. Post-fordist workplaces strive to continually search for improvement, through approaches such as Quality Assurance and Total Quality Management (p. 2).

In line with enterprise cultures, the changing nature of relationships between organisational contributors (particularly in relation to employment contracts and status) and the enterprise core are also noted (Saul 1996).

The fourth approach views organisations as appropriate environments for autonomous individuals to work together for their common good. It acknowledges an evolution in the nature of work as a social institution, and the social responsibility that accompanies it (Senge 1990). It is also reflected in the popularised concept of the 'learning organisation', which emerged largely through the work of Argyris and Schön (1974) and Senge (1990). In The Fifth Discipline, Senge (1990) defined the concept of 'learning organisations' as:

organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (p. 3).

Whilst these trends are evident, and organisations grapple with the concept surrounding what are seen as more humanistic and democratic approaches to the treatment of people in organisations, there are also arguments that suggest a lot of organisations are still locked into the scientific management paradigm (Clegg 1998).
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The creation of learning organisations has presented a number of challenges for organisations, particularly as it relates to the people within them and the purposes for generating new knowledge in organisations. Management theorists, such as Handy (1990) and Drucker (1990), have discussed key issues surrounding knowledge; including different kinds of knowledge, knowledge management and who are the beneficiaries and owners of knowledge in organisations. They also address other organisational issues relating to the way people are grouped together, the nature of the tasks they are responsible for, organisational culture, the role of organisational leaders, etc.

In the face of changing organisational contexts and challenges, the face of Human Resource Management has also changed.

It was nearly a decade ago that several management visionaries began promoting a new direction for the human resources function. They argued that, as business made the transition from an industrial to an information age, the knowledge, know-how and experiences of employees would become the core assets of companies. ... As nurturer and caretaker of the workforce, the HR department would, in turn, need to undergo fundamental changes, moving beyond its traditional responsibilities of personnel administration and employee advocacy to play a central role in helping companies fulfill their highest-level business goals. ... (Mercer 1997).

Testimony of HR's current popularity is found in the plethora of journals and eye-catching titles on business shelves in bookstores, and a quick search of the internet. However examine the duties and responsibilities of an HR professional and a broad cross section of activities will be found. Anything from payrolls to performance management, career management to counselling, outsourcing to occupational health and safety, recruitment to redundancies, training to trade-union liaison, will fall within the scope of the HR professional.

HR practitioners come with diverse ranges of academic backgrounds and workplace experiences (Fisher and Dowling 1997) and HRM in general receives varying degrees of strategic focus across organisations. Professional bodies, such as the Australian Human Resources Institute and the Australian Institute of Training and Development offer structured systems
of recognised qualifications and continuous professional education and development. Tertiary institutions offer numerous options for professional academic qualifications in HR, but these all usually tend to be within the broader framework of business management.

As still a relatively new area, and struggling to find its place, the following statement is indicative of some current challenges facing HRM in becoming a recognised and credible discipline:

...it needs to broaden its horizons to look beyond simply meeting the needs of particular interest groups such as managers and employers. It also needs to ensure that it does not become captured by particular academic disciplines, such as organisational behaviour or psychology. HRM also needs to take a more comprehensive social science approach rather than becoming a minor branch of management science. (Lansbury 2003, p. 194).

3.4.2 International HRM

International HRM has also emerged as a growing area. This is clearly in response to the rise of the corporation and corresponding shifts of western companies into offshore locations, foreign investments in offshore locations and the various facets of organisational capacity building associated with international assistance and structural adjustment programmes.

In order to build, maintain and develop their corporate identity, multinational companies need to strive for consistency in their ways of managing people on a worldwide base. Yet, and in order to be effective locally, they also need to adapt those ways to the specific cultural requirements of different societies. While the global nature of the 'business may call for increased consistency, the variety of cultural environments may be calling for differentiation' (Laurent 1986, p. 97).

Certainly different cultures represent significant challenges for western companies and western managers operating in foreign locations. For example, and in relation to an African context, Harvey (2002) uses Alice's
Adventures in Wonderland as a metaphor to highlight the requirements of more informed HRM decisions by Western managers in diverse contexts.

The sheer complexity and diversity found there can make the HRM process one of the more vexing decisions that management may have to undertake when doing business in Africa. Just as Wonderland held many surprises for Alice during her adventure, Africa holds many surprises for Western HRM, not only in the form of the alien nature of the 'rules, regulations and laws' of many African nations but also in the extent to which many African organizations/employees ignore or bend the rules (p. 1119).

Attention to managing diversity in organisations has become popular both in intra-national as well as cross-national contexts and has developed its own business momentum. Managing cross-national diversity, which refers to managing interfaces between peoples of two countries, such as that between expatriates and host-company nationals, is seen as distinct from managing intra-national diversity, which refers to coping with the realities of increasingly diverse ethnic- and gender-wise workforces within countries (Tung 1993, 1995). Managing cross-national diversity is also reflective of a general acknowledgement in the international business community that not dealing with the cultural challenges of globalisation is likely to 'lose deals', cause 'trouble', and 'break careers' (ibid).

Management of diversity, particularly as it relates to an acknowledgement of the multicultural nature of workforces in the Western world, is often seen as business-case driven (Thomas 1991; Simmonds and Nelson 1997; Weaver 1999; Gray 2002, and Litvin 2002). It is reflected in popular appeals to tap the potential of diverse groups of employees in order to compete successfully in the global market place (Thomas 1992). However others question this argument (Kucyznski 1999; Stark 2003). Whilst there may be a general acceptance of a kind of commonsense (Litvin 2002) that acknowledges heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups (Wheeler 1997), the contributing factors are not necessarily identified and fully understood (Kucyznski 1999).

However there are also suggestions that intra-national diversity programmes in organisations in countries like the US and Australia have been badly
managed (Flynn 1998; Litvin 2002); tending to focus on gender, race and ethnicity and bottom-line business issues rather than social justice ones (Stark 2003). Whilst social justice may be readily equated with concepts of equal opportunity and inclusiveness in the workplace, along with those of organisational effectiveness (Thomas 1991; DPAC 1998), broader notions of social justice, particularly as they relate to both the relationship with and impacts of macro reform in international environments, appear to be underdeveloped areas.

It has also been noted that despite the rhetoric of diversity, organisational structures and processes have become increasingly similar over time. This is associated with 'conformity with social rules and rituals rather than with efficiency processing inputs and outputs, and this may also be the case with the notion of 'diversity management'. It is a perspective concerned more with legitimacy than efficiency' (Orrú et al. 1991; p. 361). It is also noted that many organisations tend to pay lip-service to diversity, whether it be in some nations for reasons of legal compliance (Thomas 1992), or just to create a sense of awareness rather than actually building skills for managing diversity (Litvin 2002).

Senge et al. (1999) in 'The Dance of Change', which continues the work of the Learning Organisation originally defined in 'The Fifth Discipline', acknowledge 'diversity as a learning phenomenon' (p. 274). However they also note their own concern in the general treatment of this topic as:

we do not have enough experience to feel confident writing about it as authors. We know that there are problems with existing diversity training programmes and we do not want to endorse them; and we also know that managers and organisations cannot ignore the fear and anxiety that emerge around race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and so on. Nor can diversity be treated as a 'token' concern, if only because the corporate world has too much of a history of tokenism here, and has driven away too many people as a result (pp. 274-275).
3.4.3 The corporatisation of learning

The previously mentioned term ‘human capital’ alludes to an acknowledgement of the human factor within neo-liberalism and capitalism. Studies sponsored by the World Bank (1980) support notions that human resource development has an important bearing on economic growth, and of a two-way relationship. On the one hand growing economies are seen as improving educational, health and nutritional standards. On the other hand investment in human resources assists in promoting economic growth. This also acknowledges the paradox that whilst human welfare is ostensibly an outcome of economic growth, people and the skills they bring to the economy and the workplace are seen as contributors to that economic growth (Anand and Sen 2000).

In countries like Australia and the UK, reform initiatives in education and training service delivery are considered as highly instrumental in meeting challenges associated with increasing economic productivity and competitiveness (Jessop 1991; Smith and Smith 1999a; Djojonegoro 1995). Competency-based training and development movements, popular in the UK and Australia (Vocational Education and Training Act 1990), can be viewed as evidence of the desire to objectively quantify elements of competence and performance criteria required as outputs of vocational training and its pragmatically functional orientation in supporting corporate institutions (Deetz 1992). It also more broadly reflects notions that the purpose of many educational institutions is to teach people to be functionaries and make them marketable (van der Zee 1996). In other words, learning at many levels is seen as instrumental in supporting corporations in the marketplace and enabling individuals to gain employment within them.

Certainly the language of business or corporatism rings loudly in relation to learning. Learning and HR professionals in corporations, for example, are constantly challenged to show on company balance sheets how people and people development adds-value to organisations (Ulrich 1997). Whilst
broader educational concepts such as enhancing personal capabilities and empowerment (Savage 1996), metanoia and unleashing collective aspiration (Senge 1990) are also evident in popular management literature, they often appear as locked within frameworks of corporate learning instrumentalism.

Goodson (2001), for example claims that:

There is increasing evidence that the knowledge that workers and professionals are being given in training is, in spite of globalisation, less and less general and theoretical and more and more context-specific, local and utilitarian... [This means that] teachers are being turned from intellectual workers who control their own curriculum and pedagogy into technicians who define the curriculum designed by other people. They are less and less planners of their own destiny and more and more deliverers of prescriptions written by others (p. 14).

3.5 International contexts and perspectives, and development dilemmas

3.5.1 The Economics of Development

The essence of modern economic growth is that, on average, per capita income of all people in a nation rises, not just the income of a select few. One of its key characteristics is that economic growth did not begin everywhere in the world at the same time, and between those part parts of the world that have achieved growth and those that have not, a gap in the standard of living has inevitably opened up (Gillis et al. 1992). The economics of development has therefore emerged as a substantial area that seeks to explain and address these challenges.

Whilst obstacles internal to the less-developed world are often drawn on to explain unequal development, many economists and others argue the main barriers to development today lie also with conditions external to the developing world. Many scholars share views that slow economic growth, inequality and high levels of unemployment in developing nations arise out of unequal relations both between rich and poor nations and between classes within poorer developing nations (Gillis et al. 1992). Furthermore solutions to
problems surrounding poverty require fundamental changes in these power relations (Griffin and Gurley 1985).

The World Bank and IMF play a major role in the economic development of many emerging economies, having facilitated stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes. These provide substantial credits in return for debtor country's adherence to programmes of macroeconomic adjustment and microeconomic reform (Gillis et al. 1992). This influence is often attributed to the debt crisis of the 1980's, which left Third World countries increasingly dependent on First World Countries and Banks (ibid). The end of the cold-war, and of cold-war rivalry in many nation states, has also been attributed to increasing dependence on international financial institutions and the conditions of structural adjustment (Chabal 1996).

However these programmes have also attracted criticism. The ideology of free-market liberalism inherent within structural adjustment programmes is regarded by many as maintaining a continuous licence for cultural imperialism and the institutionalisation of both political and economic domination and exploitation of weaker partners (i.e. developing economies) (Tandon 1999). As mentioned earlier some also consider that many people remain outside the benefits possible through participation in the global economy (Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996). Many critics see structural adjustments programme hitting the poor hardest (Hunt 1989).

Whilst development economists argue for the adoption of classical and neoclassical economic principles in emerging economies (Fieldhouse 1999), criticism is also directed at the imposition of ready-made solutions. For example:

The question is whether structural adjustment is the most appropriate package of economic reforms for all African countries or whether it is merely the latest in a long line of 'development' blueprints for Africa. The fact that some Africans are now prepared to support structural adjustment is not in itself an indication of its desirability. It is, rather, the proof that those Africans are adept at learning the language which will deliver the most financial aid from the West (Chabal 1996, p. 47).
3.5.2 Colonialism, post-colonialism and postcolonialism

It is often argued that it was colonialism that first integrated colonies into the international capitalist economy, for the broader benefits of the dominant coloniser (Childs and Williams 1997). However this also challenged a fundamental traditional belief that material conditions were fixed; sowing a seed, for example amongst Africans, the idea that material progress and prosperity was possible for all (Obadina 2000).

Many also argue that the post-colonial period, that is the period after the formal end of colonialism, saw the lingering on of colonial capitalist power structures. This contributed to declining socio-economic conditions for many citizens of former colonised nations, and created distinctive gaps between the rich and poor. The adoption of socialist policies by many former colonised nations was therefore reflective of an intention to break those capitalistic structures, both internally and externally, and to pursue economic development through breaking links to international capitalism (Obadina 2000).

With the decline of socialism, and due to the previously referred to debt crisis, many former colonised nations have developed liberal market policies. Whilst this is regarded as bringing new opportunities and possibilities for growth and improvement of the economic conditions, many see this as reflective of new forms of imperialism. Some theorists, like Nankivell (1995), point to the 'imperialistic' power of markets. ‘Since the economy is the principal source of change it is thus able to exercise a form of imperialism vis-à-vis the rest of society’ (pp. 28). The economy has its own culture, its own way of doing things, its own model of understanding of the way things work and its own value system.

As previously mentioned this is often seen as perpetuating structures, which enable political and economic domination and exploitation of weaker partners.
by stronger ones (Tandon 1999). Nigerian theorists Akindele, Gidado, and Olaopo (2002) argue:

the asymmetry of power and interests of the member states of the global village, as well as the lopsidedness in the rules of the game there-in, cannot benefit Africa and her people. This is so and would continue to be so because globalisation is a new order of marginalisation and recolonisation in a "neo-neo-colonial fashion", of the African continent (p. 1).

In association with the broader communications revolution accompanying globalisation and the spread of neo-liberalism, the threats of cultural imperialism and loss of identity are also noted. For example another Nigerian commentator Otokhine (2000) argues that the imperialistic nature of globalisation results in:

A sort of cultural imperialism which will seek to enslave the African mind, leaving in its wake a cultureless or culturally disoriented people (p. 2)

Postcolonialism, where the term is considered to be in contrast to 'post-' or 'neo-colonialism', is an emerging area of study. It does not however define a new historical era where the ills of the past colonial period have been cured. Rather, postcolonialism recognises both historical continuity and change. On the one hand, it acknowledges the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map has changed through decolonisation. On the other hand, it also asserts the promise, possibility, and continuing necessity of change, while also recognising that important challenges and changes have already been achieved. Postcolonial discussion therefore explores social, political, economic and cultural practices emerging both in response, and resistance, to colonialism (McLeod 2000).

In asserting the possibilities that accompany dynamic change, and as a form of social theory, postcolonialism also implies reflexivity. All social practices and social order are considered to be both emergent and contingent on reflexivity, with reflexivity involving 'the routine incorporation of new knowledge or information into environments of action that are thereby reconstituted or reorganised' (Giddens 1991, p. 243).
3.5.3 Cultural Imperialism

Previous reference has been made to concerns of cultural imperialism associated with globalisation. Cultural imperialism can be considered as 'the aggressive promotion of Western culture, based on the assumption that its value system is superior and preferable to those of non-Western cultures' (Bilton et al. 1996, p. 656). Furthermore, as imperialism can be defined as the legitimacy of economic and military control of one nation by another (Childs and Williams 1997), cultural imperialism implies the aggressive promotion of values and culture that support such economic and power interests.

Postcolonial and globalisation theorists raise questions about the nature and survival of social and cultural identities, with postcolonialism emphasising the value and necessity of difference (Szeman 2001). Globalisation is often associated with both 'world culture' (Mazrui 1974), 'world-system' (Wallerstein 1974) and the resurgence of local culture (Wilson and Dissanayake 1997). The earlier comment of Otokhine (2000) is further reflected by Szeman (2001) who expresses popular concerns arising around notions of cultural imperialism and its association with Western homogeneity as:

Worries about cultural imperialism, especially understood as the global diffusion of American cultural products and values, constitute in fact perhaps the earliest development of the idea of globalization. The threat associated most commonly with the idea of global culture is that it will eventually result in a homogenous world culture, erasing existing differences between local cultures and leaving in its wake an impoverished, soul-less Americanized culture of commodity consumption (p. 214).

However in considering some of the issues surrounding claims of cultural imperialism, the nature of culture itself, together with concepts like those of hegemony, difference and hybridity, can be considered.

3.5.3.1 The nature of culture

Culture can be defined as the 'shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit a community
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together’, (Kilmann et al. 1985, p. 5), and is one of the most distinctive properties of human social association (Giddens, 1997). Furthermore Giddens’ (1997) theory of structuration sees culture as comprising key structures that shape behaviour and views of social reality without individuals being aware of it. Culture can therefore be considered as a process in practice or in action (Swidler 1986; Ortner 1984).

Culture is subject to dynamic change (Jameson 1991), as never holding still, but constantly evolving, adapting, being borrowed, forced upon one another through the ways people in different countries now ‘influence, dominate, parody, translate, and subvert each other.... enmeshed in global movements of difference and power’ (Clifford 1986, p. 22). Culture is about how people with various stocks of knowledge, including different stories, symbols and rules, make and transform the world’ (Kennedy 1998, p. 5).

Cultural change therefore reflects the power struggles, noted by post/critical scholars, which represent conflicts of interest associated with different values and belief systems. Change is also inherent in the way technology transforms our lives and brings global cultural diversity closer to home (Cope and Kalantzis 1997).

Culture has also become a guiding idea in management theory and practice (Cope and Kalantzis 1997). Indeed “culture” is at the heart of this research. The notion of organisational culture as often captured by organisational theorists such as Senge (1997) is an instrumental one. It is something that can be managed and manipulated. However as also noted by Cope and Kalantzis (1997) there are elisions between national culture, racial and ethnic culture and organisational, and this is particularly important throughout this research where the lines sometimes become somewhat blurred.
Globalisation and its ideology of neo-liberal capitalism has proliferated through the imperialistic nature of the market (Nankivell 1995), and the way this is also reflected in structural adjustment programmes at macro levels. Globalisation and capitalist ideology is also considered as invading local culture and impacting ordinary lives (Giddens 1999), particularly through mass media and advances in communication (LeFort 1986). However capitalism can also be considered as having proliferated and been propped up through hegemony. Gramsci (Smith and Hoare 1971) defined hegemony as an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, and one concept of reality prevails throughout society. No matter who is in power, both sides tend contribute to and prop up an environment of 'hegemony'.

Hegemony therefore implies a shift in social identity, aspiration and values. However in relation to claims of cultural imperialism associated with globalisation, it can be argued:

The West has not imposed its will on the world by force but by the sheer attractiveness of its civilisation and the belief in the desirability of material progress and prosperity. It is able to get people in other nations to desire what it desires and thereby manipulates their aspirations (Obadina 2000, para. 27).

In this sense capitalist ideology and its representations of family, humanity, nation, science, property (LeFort 1986), technology, economic development and progress (Anderson and Michael 1989) has not necessarily imposed its will on the world by force. Rather it has attracted considerable global followings through the desirability of what it is seen to offer. Fukuyama (1995) points specifically to American hegemony and the tendency of countries to aspire to become liberal democracies and to participate in global capitalism.

Of course there are also examples; particularly minority ethnic groups, who indicate that they do not necessarily wish to subscribe to these values, and
globalisation and its dominant ideologies therefore represents dis-benefits to them. For example:

The concept of private property and the encouragement of competition over co-operation are just two examples of what have been promoted as universal norms. The sustainable livelihood of people whose customs and value systems do not accommodate them have often been jeopardised as a result. Some of the most glaring examples of this kind of destruction of traditional ways of life can be found among indigenous peoples such as the Guarani, Quechya or Maya in Latin America or the Masai in East Africa (WDDF, p. 3).

However almost without question it appears there is sufficient subscription to capitalist ideology and its fundamental concepts of material progress and prosperity and democratic ideals to proliferate and sustain capitalist structures and values. Whilst Marx saw ideology as a kind of false consciousness of the world put out by the ruling institutions to maintain the structure of the world as they want it (Carver 1991), and may be considered a form of imperialism, it appears nevertheless that the imperialistic process itself is also unknowingly supported to a large degree by those in positions of less power within capitalist power structures.

3.5.3.3 Culture and globalisation

Cultural homogeneity is often associated with globalisation and the proliferation of mass culture. Furthermore this is linked with notions of a global ‘network society’ (Castells 1996) and it’s ‘complex connectivity’ (Tomlinson 1999, p. 2), which refers to ‘the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterise modern social life’ (ibid).

However globalisation is also seen as having binary and contradictory tendencies, reflecting both forces of homogeneity and heterogeneity:

....It is important to present globalisation as a strange amalgam of both homogenising forces of sameness and uniformity and heterogeneity, difference and hybridity, as well as a contradictory mixture of democratising and antideocratising tendencies. On the one hand globalisation unfolds a process of standardisation in which a globalised mass culture circulates the world, creating sameness and homogeneity everywhere. On the other hand globalised culture makes possible unique appropriations and developments
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everywhere, thus encouraging hybridity and difference to proliferate. (Kellner 2002 pp. 293-294).

Globalisation is therefore also associated with its antonym, *localisation*, which is concerned with strengthening local community systems and values. In part this is as a means of improving quality of life in the locality, but also as a means of combating globalisation and its economic impacts (Mander and Goldsmith 1996; Hines 2000; Shiva 2000), and maintaining the identity and strength of indigenous, but relatively defenceless, local cultures (Nietschmann 1986). It is also associated with, and drawn on to account for, the revival of national and minority cultures and traditionalism (Colchester 1994; Dirlik 1996; Jameson and Miyoshi 1998, Held 2000).

Kennedy (1998) however sees cultural change as at the heart of structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank, and draws on the notion of transition culture (Sachs 1995) as a deliberate cultural change strategy. He sees the underlying structure of transition culture relying on basic oppositions that the future is a form of global integration based on the articulation with transnational organisations dominated by the West, and the past is a form of inferior economic organisation dominated by communism and a ‘Russian statist culture’ (p. 9). Kennedy sees transitional culture as deliberately seeking to supercede local peculiarities, seeing the logical conclusion of the World Bank’s strategies as:

one must focus on redesigning institutions to assure that these [World Bank] policies will be implemented properly. Finally, one must transform the culture of work and life in order that the policies and institutions work properly (p. 9).

In particular he notes how the World Bank pays specific attention to values and cultural for countries in transition and for individual participation in liberalised economies.

Values: in line with the changed relationship between the citizen and the state, encourage the understanding that citizens need to take responsibility for their actions, including their choices about education, work and lifestyle (From Plan to Market: World Development Report, p.126 cited in Kennedy 1998, p.14)
3.5.3.4 Difference

Anderson (1995) sees postmodernity as the ‘age of over-exposure to otherness’ (p. 6), and that globalisation has meant people constantly encounter people and ideas that represent different worldviews. This means that in addition to the pluralism this creates, issues emerge around notions of identity and the break down of belief systems. Postcolonial theorists, in particular are interested in the way differences are represented and used (Said 1994; Bhabha 1994).

In relation to organisations, Czarniawaska and Höpfl (2002), note that through emphasising ‘difference’ as something to be managed, many organisations institute the ‘problem of difference’. They consider the condition of postmodernity has led to a situation in which relativities have rendered the condition of the other ‘problematic’ and:

the management of diversity, might be argued to be a means by which difference is subsumed within the prevailing orthodoxy. Difference, then becomes a property of something, and is rendered abstract by this process. The management of diversity is a tautology which subordinates difference by reducing it to taxonomic structures and giving it a place within a system of categories (p. 2).

In addition concerns associated with consequences of the loss of social diversity through potential extinction of minority cultures, which accompanies the application of market principles and structural adjustment programmes, are raised (George 1989).

3.5.3.5 Hybridity

The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, and the cross-fertilisation of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as oppressive. The concept of hybridity has therefore emerged as an important concept in postcolonial theory. It is concerned with the interaction and location of cultural identity; particularly as it relates to colonising and colonised cultures and the way cultures are able to dominate over others.
Hybridity is also a useful concept for helping break down false views that cultures are pure and have unchanging features.

As used in horticulture, hybridity refers to the crossbreeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third:

a disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things, grafting a vine or a rose on to a different root stock making difference into sameness (Young 1995, p. 26).

The hybridisation process is concerned with the social construction of knowledge, as it relates to the 'mechanics of the intricate processes of cultural contact, intrusion, fusion and disjunction' (Young 1995; p. 5). Young views hybridity as making difference into sameness and sameness into difference, but in a way which makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different (ibid, p. 26). He also draws attention to distinctions between intentional hybridity and unconscious organic hybridity.

On the one hand hybridity is associated with an imperial process. Loomba (1998) gives examples of 'deliberate colonial policy' used to manipulate cultural outcomes through hybridisation. Bhabha (1986) however introduced a new twist to this idea. He saw hybridity as a transgressive or subversive act challenging the colonisers' authority, values and representations and thereby constituting an act of self-empowerment and defiance.

Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1996) stress that cultural identity is always incomplete and is formed through interaction with others. Bhabha (1994) developed the concept of borders and living border lives where borders are seen as important thresholds, full of contradictions and ambivalence, which both separate and join different place that are able to initiate new signs of identity. At these borders, past and present, inside and outside no longer remain separated as binary opposites but instead co-mingle and conflict. From this emerge new, shifting complex forms of representation that deny binary patterning, which are different from those that have been traditionally fixed; such as native/foreigner, black/white, East/West etc.
For him, recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate:

For a willingness to descend into that alien territory... may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity* (Bhabha 1994, p. 38).

Papastergiadis (2000) explores emergent forms of diasporic and hybrid identities associated with globalisation and migration. He sees them as questioning existing dominant forms of citizenship and cultural identity, which define belonging according to national categories and exclusive practices of identification. Whereas the historical and cultural field that shapes contemporary society is increasingly diverse and varied, it is considered there can no longer exclusively be a focus on traditions and institutions that have taken root in a given place over a long historical period. The identity of society has to reflect this process of mixture that emerges whenever two or more cultures meet.

Whilst other theorists see culture as being subject to more dynamic changes (Jameson 1991), beyond those of cultural mixing, the concept of hybridity offers a framework for considering identity in postcolonial contexts and for exploring claims associated with cultural imperialism.
4 CHAPTER FOUR: Values and Corporatism

4.1 Introduction

Themes surrounding professional practices associated with organisational change and development activities in today's global world, discussed in the previous chapter, reveal potential values tensions between those associated with people and those associated with business and corporatism. They are also widely acknowledged in the literature. Klein and Eason (1991), for example, succinctly summarise the dilemma of Western industrial society and its continued struggle with conflicting value systems. In particular they note one value system concerned with economic growth, development and expansion, a second one concerned with the intrinsic value, autonomy and personal growth of human beings, and a third concerned with research, the development of knowledge and the exercise of skills for their own sake. Furthermore, as argued by post/critical scholars, at the basis of values conflicts there are usually power struggles based on conflicts of interest.

The research surrounding values is extensive and complex. The purpose here is to draw on some of that literature to build a framework for exploring tensions and points of convergence and divergence between what I have referred to as "humanist values" and "corporatist values". It is important to stress however these terms have been adopted out of convenience only, and not with any intention to create an image of binary opposites, or to imply that corporatism and humanism do not value elements of each other or that they are mutually exclusive. Rather it is a representation for exploring where and how these points of tension emerge in organisations.

Rockeatch (1973) notes values can be viewed as being either instrumental or terminal in their orientation. That is, they can be seen as either focused on preferred ends or preferred means. This is a useful construct for considering the nature and tendencies of values relating to "corporatism" and "humanism". Whereas values associated with corporatism can be viewed as highly
instrumental in their orientation, those associated with humanism can be viewed as having a more terminal orientation.

There are of course many "humanisms", which, whilst having their differences, all emerge as sharing a central concern for man (Wilson 1973). It is therefore essential to consider what is meant by humanist values within the context of this paper. The challenges of defining a workable concept of humanism, because of its existential value and the way it is bound up in socially constructed emotions and evaluations (Van Praag 1973), are well acknowledged. The dangers in defining humanism too broadly or too narrowly, as both extremes can be used to excuse and legitimise extreme behaviours Hook (1973), are also noted. Fraser (1989) suggests we should give up the idiom of humanist values expressed in classical modern terms such as ‘autonomy’ and ‘self-determination’, retaining instead the substantial critical core of humanism; its ‘emancipatory force’ (Habermas 1984).

Values that appear as supporting this notion are reflected in what Kurtz (1997) succinctly defines as ‘courage’ ('which enables us to fulfil our interests, desires, values, whatever they are', p. 23) ‘cognition’ ('critical thinking', p. 58), and ‘caring’ ('an inward and outward expression of some moral regard for others', pp. 81-82). However the concern expressed by Golebiowski (1982), in relation to whether humanism is concerned with the wellbeing of an individual or the broader wellbeing of all humankind, is also noted.

In this sense humanism and humanist values, whilst still not readily pinned down, in principle reflect preference for a positive attitude towards certain end states of existence (Bem 1970) that relate to the human condition; both individually and collectively. In chapter 3 it was also noted that corporatism, as it more broadly supports principles of neo-liberalism, global capitalism and enterprise culture, is seen as instrumental in fulfilling the possibility of serving humanist agendas. However it was also noted that corporatism appears to have a tendency of losing sight of its own instrumentality (Saul 1997). Furthermore social scientists such as Weber, Foucalt and Habermas remind
us that for more than two centuries ‘instrumental rationality’ has increasingly dominated ‘value rationality’, leading to a ‘civilisation of means without ends’ (Flyvbjerg 1993).

The discussion that follows therefore seeks to explore potential points of imbalance between the instrumentalism of values associated with corporatism and the more terminal orientation of those associated with people and humanism.

4.2 Terminal and Instrumental values: exploring the potential for imbalance between corporatist and humanist values

4.2.1 Universal values and metavales

Ethical theories about whether or not actions can be judged as good or bad rest within different sets of philosophical debate (Kizza, 1998). The theory of relativism for example is negatively formulated and denies the existence of universal moral norms. It takes right and wrong as relative to society, culture or the individual. Postmodernist thinkers like Foucalt also reject foundational, universal, or normative assumptions about human nature because they are considered as constructed through modes of discourse and action (Martin et al. 1988). Notions of self, or of self-actualization, are rejected. Grand narratives associated with humanist values are therefore also abandoned.

However in providing options for defining programmes that can provide a basis for enriching and sustaining human life, other theorists argue ethical and moral debate is not necessarily terminated within postmodern discourse (Gergen 1991), and the virtues of humanism should be debated (Kurtz 1997). Accordingly it is argued there are universal values considered to apply to all of humanity and embodied in all cultures (Allport, Vernon and Linzey 1960; Rokeach 1973).
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Giddens (1994) and Donaldson and Dunfree (1999) have argued there are universal principles and values, such as personal freedom, physical security, human dignity, human development, etc, which can unite all perspectives outside the domains of the various fundamentalisms, and which have real purchase in today’s world. According to Giddens (1994) universal values imply ethics of individual and collective responsibility able to override divisions of interest.

Certainly as previously discussed, principals of capitalism, neo-liberalism, and economic development are ostensibly linked to serving broader universal and humanist values. However the instrumentality of business organisations and corporatism in general in serving these ends is reflected in the meta-values identified by Hodgkinson (1991) and discussed in the previous chapter.

According to Hodgkinson these four metavalues relate to organisations rather than to individuals. They represent the desire or volition bases for collective systems, and can work as powerful influences over values associated with people. Through the pursuit of these meta-values, corporations can be seen as often overlooking the impacts of their instrumentalism (Saul 1997). There is therefore clearly potential for imbalance or misalignment between the respective focus placed on the more terminal and humanist nature of universal values and corporate instrumentality associated with meta-values.

4.2.2 A focus on well-being: individuals, social identity groups or organisations?

Humanism versus corporatism values tensions can be seen within the relative focus placed on the welfare and interests of individuals and various social identity groups, in relation to the well-being of organisations. Whilst corporatism is ostensibly instrumentally linked to upholding human rights and interests, the paradox of people representing both ‘means’ and ends' in this respect has been noted (Anand and Sen 2000).
Egri and Pinfield (1999), for example, note that because of the tendency of management theorists and practitioners to work to improve organisational efficiency, more concern is expressed for the project guiding the tool and less for the impact of the tool on the surrounding environment. This indicates high levels of instrumentalism in the way science and technology, knowledge and resources; including people, are viewed as serving organisational interests.

### 4.2.3 The value of people

Differing views of people and people management were discussed in Chapter 3. Notions, relating to human capital and investing in human capital (Schultz 1961) as means of promoting economic growth (World Bank 1980) and improving company dividends (Stroh and Caliguiri 1998), have also been further extended through the application of business accounting concepts. The development of intellectual capital, as units of competency as an asset for investment or a liability for depreciation (Ulrich 1997), in order to more effectively manage and measure all of the parts of the human contribution to the organisational machine, is an example of this.

Lebow and Simon (1997) however note the significant challenge within the existence of two value sets; one dealing with how organisations treat people and another with what organisations must do everyday to be successful in the marketplace. These value-sets are considered to be in constant ‘dynamic tension’. Organisation or business values are crafted in a ‘competitive environment’, whereas people values are crafted in an ‘inclusive environment’ where individuals interact with each other. They argue that functional organisations (as opposed to dysfunctional) achieve balance or equilibrium between people values and business values.

Furthermore, Rees and Rodley (1995) highlight the human costs of managerialism, as reflected in broader concepts and values associated with corporatism, inherent in the great divide between market values and
humanistic values. They believe the rise of managerialism creates a tension between economy and society, and organisational values over personal values and the values of individualism.

'Efficiency' is seen as a key organisational value where often human costs are not allowed to cloud the efficiency equation. Effectiveness and efficiency can also be viewed as being about means of control – 'the manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behaviour' MacIntyre (1984, p. 18). Such discussions therefore suggest a need to consider values which place human considerations over market ones, and values which demonstrate interdependence between environmental and human well-being and which balance the alleged benefits of efficiency (Rees and Rodley 1995; Saul 1997).

4.2.4 The value of knowledge

Humanism versus corporatism values tensions can be seen within whether or not knowledge is associated with *phronesis* and *emancipatory* knowledge or technical and practical knowledge; particularly where knowledge is viewed as a commodity.

It is sometimes useful to explore knowledge values from ancient as well as modern and current perspectives because of our strong tendency to look to the ancients for guidance in dealing with values and ethics in general. Aristotle, for example, made clear distinctions between different types of knowledge. *Episteme* dealt with universal knowledge, *techne* dealt with knowledge associated with the production of things, and *phronesis* was related to actions based on knowledge about things that are good or bad and how that knowledge combined with reasoning formed the basis of *praxis*.

Aristotle frequently draws comparisons to *techne* and was concerned that technical affairs constituted an inferior realm of objects, knowledge and practice. Socrates echoed this concern arguing that philosophical inquiry
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needs to focus upon moral and political matters. One must seek higher wisdom, knowledge of the pious, the just, the good, rather than just mastery of material things. Similarly Plato viewed the realm of *techne* as inferior and potentially dangerous, advising rulers to stay away from mundane technical activities as much as possible (Winner 1999).

Drawing on the writings of Francis Bacon, Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, David Hume and Adam Smith, we see ancient pessimism about *techne* replaced with all out enthusiasm for technological advancement. Here the application of *techne* for technological advancement is clearly equated with progress, and knowledge equated with science. Knowledge therefore also needs to be considered within critical concepts of society. The society of the time tends to preserve itself through its ruling consciousness, and the knowledge it constructs, values and perpetuates. It has trouble liberating itself from itself own ideology (Adorno 1984).

Knowledge values clearly change over time. In post-modern societies, knowledge has become more functional; you learn things, not to know them, but to exploit that knowledge. Not only is knowledge in post-modern societies characterised by its utility, knowledge is also distributed, stored, and arranged differently than in modern ones. Specifically, the advent of electronic computer technologies has revolutionised modes of knowledge production, distribution, and consumption in our society (Lyotard 1984).

In today's capitalist world knowledge also clearly has value and is transactional. Knowledge and its application is valued within the broader marketplace (James 1997), and knowledge value-added management strategies (Ulrich 1997) are readily promoted within commercial organisations. In order that value-addedness is created in the marketplace the focus of knowledge is usually on *skill* and *utility*. 
However is it sufficient to be satisfied with skilful technicians capable of fulfilling their functions? Will technicist approaches to knowledge production and value-addedness evident in management strategies succeed in delivering long term results and benefits? Are they broad enough in scope to address pressing social and environmental concerns? What about Aristotlian concepts associated with the virtues of practical wisdom where the values of pursued ends should be clearly discernible? Popular management commentator Peter Drucker (1990, 1992, 1993) has been espousing the importance of knowledge for almost half a century. According to Drucker people in organisations need to be able to balance both techne and phronesis.

Bagnall (1995) also discusses different kinds of knowledge applicable in today's world, and how different kinds of knowledge are valued to varying degrees by individuals and different groups. For example, an artist will perhaps value aesthetic knowledge over purely technical knowledge, whereas a telecommunications networks engineer may value technical knowledge over existential knowledge, and so on. These different views of knowledge may also be viewed as hierarchical in terms of their value. For example the artist may value aesthetic knowledge above all else, but technical knowledge may be valued as an important means for achieving that higher aesthetic knowledge. Clearly complex issues emerge around which kinds of knowledge are valued more; for example, ethical knowledge or technical knowledge, and their relative instrumentalities.

4.2.5 Ways of knowing

Most of what we consider as "knowledge" has been vested in positivism, where science is seen as the way to get at truth, to understand the world well enough so that it can be predicted and controlled. Underpinning this philosophy is the notion that phenomena exist in causal relationships and these can be empirically observed, tested and measured (Bilton et al. 1996).
Pinion (1963) discusses the potential for schisms to occur in an intellectual world where areas of agreement and mutual understanding have been steadily reduced through specialisation. ‘Schematisations of thought divorced from the total context of experience are likely to lead to false conclusions and only a critical conspectus can give the age the philosophy and sense of direction it needs’ (p. viii).

Indeed many matters previously considered epistemological have come to be viewed as dependent on social conventions and human values (Giddens 1984). Post-positivists (and indeed many postmodernists) emphasise the importance of multiple measures and observations, each of which may possess different types of error. They believe that all observations are theory-laden and that scientists (and everyone else, for that matter) are inherently biased by their cultural experiences, world views, and so on (Trochim 1999).

Lytard (1984) considers the most important question for post-modern societies is who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided. Such decisions about knowledge don’t necessarily involve modernist/humanist qualifications: for example, to assess knowledge as truth (its technical quality), or as goodness or justice (its ethical quality) or as beauty (its aesthetic quality). Rather, Lytard argues, knowledge follows the paradigm of a language game. Because the rules of language games continually change, they act as confusers of reason.

The development of knowledge is usually considered by learning theorists as resulting from ongoing interaction with the environment and resulting in cognitive hierarchies (Piaget 1970). Whereas theories around cognition have tended traditionally to focus on rational, logical, rule-bound thinking, as encapsulated in logical intelligence (IQ), other dimensions of “intelligence”, such as emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer 1990; Goleman 1995), social intelligence (Salovey and Mayer 1990), spiritual intelligence (Zohar and Marshall 2000), have been defined and gained increasing acceptance.
This suggests that whilst modern organisations have valued positivist rule-bound ways of knowing, post-modern organisations are likely to value other ways of knowing (Anderson 1990). The latter is reflected in strategies like story-telling (Boje 1994).

4.2.6 People development

In relation to notions around people development, the temptation to become involved in debate around the subtleties of associated terminologies; particularly as encapsulated in terms like “education”, “training”, “development”, and “learning” is avoided here. Rather differences are acknowledged, as well as the way these differences are also generally reflected in the term “education”.

Broadly speaking, education, as it is usually regarded in Western social philosophy, emerges from humanistic, technical, liberal and radical traditions. It is seen variously as concerned with realising, skilling and empowering the individual (O’Hagan 1991). Furthermore these concerns can be seen as not always compatible or in alignment.

Education therefore encompasses a range of notions. Reflecting ideas that emerged during the Enlightenment; the eighteenth century philosophical movement (Bilton 1998), education has been seen as a means producing ‘educated people’; people who should be reasonable and rational and therefore able to make a better contribution to society and support the emancipation of humankind. Educational ends, as reflected in Hodgkinson’s (1991) notion of ‘aesthetic education’ were associated with self-fulfilment and the enjoyment of life, reflecting an overall ‘respect for persons’ (Lawson 1979).

On the other hand, education can be viewed as concerned with teaching people to be functionaries and making them marketable (van der Zee 1996).
Modern education, or 'economic education' (Hodgkinson 1991) is primarily a training ground for assuming occupational roles Geiger (1980). In the marketplace education is a commodity and learners its consumers (Tett 1996). Rogers (1992) also notes that education establishes status, particularly through social roles and position that individuals are able to attain through education.

Deetz (1992) regards shifts in educational focus as attributable to the shared values and legitimacy granted to the corporate institution. Deetz aligns things like 'competency based education' and 'learning contracts' with corporate knowledge practices. While competency based education focuses on individual learners, such learning concepts emerge as pragmatically functional in their orientation. Such approaches to learning enable individuals to participate at various levels within the market, as well as providing the means for organisations to achieve their broader business goals.

This also points to education as a social phenomena and social dimension firmly anchored in culture, which is high on the agenda of many societal institutions (Fletcher 1984; van der Zee 1996; Zijderveld 1983). Education therefore can be seen as an instrument of social policy, directing itself predominantly to the redistribution of societal goods and wealth (Griffin 1987) and connecting adult education to the values of the industrial society and the welfare state (Jansen and van der Veen 1996).

However gaps between ideologies and realities are noted. On the one hand Hodgkinson (1991) points to 'ideological education', and how it has always been a function of education to transmit the culture of the society in which it occurs. On the other hand, even though education may be marketed under ideologies such as equality of opportunity, education in the marketplace is seen as perpetuating and legitimising unequal opportunity rather than social emancipation. This is because education is seen as simply reproducing the fragmentation of collective experience and social relations within broader social, political and economic contexts (Edwards 1991).
Substantial thinking seems to hold that adult education (and training) are best located in or situated in – integrated with – the instrumental contexts, extrinsic demands and life problems from which the need of education and training are seen as arising (Brown, Collins and David 1989; Knowles 1982). Others, like Bagnall (1995), however raise concerns about embedding education in social situations like the workplace. At the core of Bagnall's concern is education – the ends to which it is directed, the procedures for achieving those ends, the criteria for which that learning is assessed – being defined by the culture of the workplace. The potential for non-workplace discourses is thereby diminished.

Calls to measure the value-addedness that learning brings to organisations (James 1997; Ulrich 1997; Pickett 1999) have become common. This reflects aspects of human capital theory which guide decisions relating to investment in education and training (OTFE 1999). Human capital theory sees each person as having a stock of human capital - acquired skills, knowledge and experience enabling them to perform more or less effectively in the workplace. Education and training are seen as building an individual’s stock of human capital, as is work experience. The main function of education is to impart skills and knowledge to increase the productivity of individuals in organisations. Decisions to invest in further training and education are therefore based on costs and benefit analyses. If benefits exceed costs, training will take place.

Functional and competency approaches to education however are also seen as putting aside critical self-reflection in favour of programs that avoid conflict and uncertainty through their positivist emphasis on evaluation and measurement, and management and control (Deetz 1992). Senge et al. (1999) and Argyris (1993) argue that a pre-occupation with measuring often ignores authentic learning. Marginson (1993) also warns that competency systems tend to undervalue the creation of new knowledge because observable competencies encompass only existing knowledge and skills.
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Pinion (1963) considers the general dilemma of education in a world of unprecedented scientific discovery and technological change, accelerated by political and economic pressures. He expresses concern that within this complex context and in the pursuit of knowledge, 'we tend to lose sight of those values that are essential for the enlightenment and happiness of mankind' (p. vii).

As previously mentioned whilst, many postmodern theorists reject foundationalistic meta-interpretations of such humanistic values, it is also argued that we should not lose sight of the substantial critical core of humanism as it is reflected in Habermas's (1974, 1984) 'emancipatory force'. Habermas's knowledge constitutive interests are therefore used as a framework for considering learning and educational interests. These knowledge constitutive interests are technical knowledge interests, practical knowledge interests and emancipatory knowledge interests.

**4.2.6.1 Technical knowledge interests**

Habermas (1974, 1984) sees technical knowledge interests based around the control of social processes and outcomes. In organisational contexts learning within this framework can be seen as based around *techne* (Drucker 1992, 1993), and geared towards the achievement of functional outcomes (Deetz 1992). Those outcomes are usually predefined and measurable.

*Technicist* approaches to adult education are evident in concepts such as "education for behaviour change", "behavioural objectives", "needs assessment", "competency-based education", "task-analysis", "skill training", "anticipated learning outcomes", "management by objective", "accountability", "criterion-referenced evaluation" and 'empirical-analytical research' (Mezirow 1991). They have clearly emerged from the field of business management and associated fields of human resource management, where the emphasis is on building links between productivity, training and education (Prais 1995; Bartel 1994).
4.2.6.2 Practical knowledge interests

Habermas's (1974, 1984) practical knowledge interest is guided by an interest in educating people to see their social world more wisely and helping them act in a more considered manner. It however does not necessarily consider all the epistemological issues or power interests associated with knowledge and learning. In an organisational context, learning within this framework is seen as based around practices and how they reflect a practical kind of wisdom as encapsulated in *phronesis* (Drucker 1990).

It can perhaps also be considered alongside what Mezirow (1991) defines as 'instrumental learning'. Instrumental learning is considered to have a practical focus on task-oriented problem solving, and is situation-centred. It can also be associated with some of the transformative aspects of learning which result in new or transformed meaning schemes (Mezirow 1991), and concepts of 'life-long learning' and the 'learning society' (Wain 1987; Edwards 1997). It could also be considered to include principles associated with learning organisations (Senge 1990) where the focus is on challenging 'mental models', fostering 'personal mastery' and encouraging 'team learning' to 'create the results they (organisations) truly desire' (Senge 1990, p. 3). Such learning should result in changes in action, not just taking in new information and forming new ideas. Recognising gaps between espoused theories (what we say) and theories in use (what we do) is essential (Argyris 1996).

However it does necessarily expose the instrumentality of learning and the learning process in serving the practical interests of the organisation, where the ultimate aim may remain as one of technical control and manipulation (Mezirow 1991).

4.2.6.3 Emancipatory knowledge interests

Habermas's (1974, 1984) emancipatory knowledge interest is guided by an interest in emancipating people from the constraints of irrational, unjust,
unsatisfying and unproductive forms of life imposed by structures of social domination. It therefore requires a broader critique of social systems and their structures. In an organisational context learning this requires the basic premises, beliefs and values that guide action, be examined and perhaps dramatically changed.

It is perhaps however more particularly reflected in the principles of action research, where action or transformative approaches to learning include a dynamic for change and reform. Learning is considered as a form of collective self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to ‘improve the rationality and justice of their own social practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out’ (Kemmis and McTaggart 1991, p.5).

4.2.6.4 Summary

The above discussion clearly indicates that people development with a technical orientation emerges as much more instrumental in its orientation. On the other hand people development with an emancipatory orientation appears more aligned with terminal and humanist values.

4.2.7 Masculinist Culture

The cultural frameworks of Hofstede (1991) and Stening and Ngan (1997) make distinctions between ‘Feminine’ culture, which tends to value relationships, the caring of others, and quality of life and security, over values associated with individual achievement, success and reward. In this sense feminine values emerge as more people oriented and caring (Noddings 1984) whereas ‘masculinist’ culture (Blackmore & Sachs 2000) emerges as based around individual interests and the interests and values of competitive market environments.
Because most organisations tend to be associated with a masculinist culture of work and management practices (i.e. tangible business results, power and control) rather than softer, feminine sets of values (i.e. participation and nurturing), these feminine elements are often overlooked through power games and the corporate preoccupation with time and efficiency and effectiveness. Zanetic and Jeffrey (1997) argue however that the world of work is heading in a more ‘feminine’ direction and organisations that do not understand and capitalise on the differences offered by women (Connell 1995) will lose their competitive edge. This suggests that the instrumental application of feminine values can also support corporate success.

4.2.8 Technology

Humanism versus corporatism values tensions can be seen within whether or not technology is employed to serve human interests or whether it is either employed at the expense of human interests or as ‘technology for technologies sake”. Undoubtedly technology has come to be widely associated with values of advancement and scientific rationalism and views of economic development and material progress (Anderson and Michael 1989).

Golebiowski (1982) notes the technology, which dominates industrial society, emerges from western cultures and the capitalist social order. Modern technology therefore cannot be regarded as socially and culturally neutral. Nisbet (1971) argued that technology has become an autonomous set of social ideas and practices, and organisations and individuals dedicate themselves to the advancement of technology for its own sake. Because of this technology has permeated most of the basic institutions of society.

Boulding (1969) views the relationship between technology and values as two processes in interaction. Both technologies (ways of doing things) and values (choice and preference processes) are created and transmitted by a common learning process, and constantly interact. As a result of their complex
interaction today, two cultural systems emerge: the worldwide superculture of airports and skyscrapers, and the traditional cultures of various national, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups. According to Boulding the two are interdependent and must learn to adapt to each other. Mannheim (1971) however argued that technology has so affected our values it has produced a crisis in valuation; that is, it has made evaluation of alternatives in any situation extremely problematic.

The two way interaction between technology and social structures is also noted. For example and in relation to the broader concern of organisations, it is seen as determining the composition of the labour force and the organisation of work (Heilbroner 1967) and influencing work ethics (Riesman 1971). Whilst on one hand technology is seen as offering new social choices (Mesthene 1968) and is responsive to social conditions, it is also seen as having social impacts (Heilbroner 1967; Mesthene 1968; Boulding 1969; Mannheim 1971; Nisbet 1971), with concerns often expressed over technology as a potential instrument of domination (Golebiowski 1982). Many theorists argue for more discussion around tensions between values associated with people and those associated with technology if the latter are not to dominate (Trachtenburg 1964; Hoggart 1966; Golebiowski 1982).

The impacts of technology on organisations can be viewed from a number of different perspectives Roberts and Grabowski (1999). Firstly technology can be seen as an independent influence on human behaviour or organisational properties that exerts unidirectional, causal influences similar to those operating in nature (Giddens 1984). It implies the direct influence of technology on human values as discussed earlier.

Secondly it can be viewed from a strategic choice perspective where technology is not viewed as an external object but as a product of on-going human action. This perspective can be viewed through another three streams of thought. One stream focuses on how a particular technology is constructed through social interactions, and highlights beliefs that outcomes such as job
satisfaction and productivity of workers can be manipulated by jointly 'optimising' the social and technical factors of jobs (Trist et al. 1963). The second stream explores how shared interpretations of a certain technology arise and affect interaction with that technology.

The third stream within this second perspective is represented in Marxist accounts of technology where the emphasis is on how technology is devised and deployed to serve the purposes of political and economic interests, but fails to consider the person in the workplace. This view clearly alludes to how technology can support the values of powerful groups and can dominate the values of others.

The third perspective views technology as a trigger of structural change, and views technology as an intervention in the relationship between people and organisational structure. Here we see scope for following the technology path for technology's sake alone, where values associated with technology override other considerations. This path can also echo sentiments of the previous point where following the technology path can provide a powerful tool for driving the interests and values of powerful groups above those of less powerful groups. Alternatively it also suggests possibilities for the alignment of people and technology for the benefits of some common good.

4.2.9 Identity

Humanism versus corporatism values tensions can be seen within whether or not personal identity is based around notions of individual realisation and empowerment and an acceptance and valuing of diversity, or whether it is increasingly caught up in the language of careers, roles, and functions of production. The latter clearly and instrumentally supports the interests and values of corporatism and reflects a shift attributable to the shared values and legitimacy granted to the corporate institution (Deetz 1992).
Personal values can be considered as constructed within frameworks of activity and experience (Giddens 1984). Habermas (1984, 1987) explores how three key processes produce, reproduce and transform cultures, societies and personal identities. Firstly, there is the process of cultural reproduction and transformation, by which knowledge and culture are transmitted and developed. Secondly, there is the process of social integration, by which social relationships and solidarities are secured and gain their legitimacy. Finally, there is the process of socialisation and identity formation, by which individual capacities for social interaction, production and expression are developed. These three processes are seen at work in the way individuals connect up with one another within the realms of meaning or semantic space (culture), social space (society), and historical time (identity).

According to Habermas in the dimension of semantic space, the language in which we understand ourselves, our work lives and our socio-political circumstances is increasingly the language of systems; the language of goals and roles, of functions, of production and organisation. In the dimension of social space, we increasingly understand ourselves as members of organisations expected to perform in relation to formal organisational goals and norms. In the dimension of historical time, our notions of personal identity and capability are increasingly caught up in the language of careers and formal duties and responsibilities, so we see ourselves increasingly in the roles of client (in the socio-political sphere) and consumer (in the economic sphere), and in terms of the provision of services to clients and consumers.

We experience ourselves as caught up in abstract, generalised, and globalised system processes, and there seems to be little alternative to adapting ourselves to them. Despite the fact of our endlessly being involved in the lifeworld processes of cultural reproduction and transformation, social integration and individuation-socialization at the local level, the conditions of late modernity - and the colonisation of lifeworlds by systems imperatives - push us towards under-valuing what is local, interpersonal, value-laden, moral, or authentically-expressive.
Furthermore, postmodern perspectives consider the constructed character of all attempts at being – on the part of both self and others. It therefore becomes increasingly difficult to be certain of who or what one is. True identities, and actual characteristics of persons, are replaced by concern with the perspectives in which they are constructed. Furthermore multiple identities and the potential for personal values tensions amongst those multiple identities is also implied, together with what Argyris (1993) refers to as the contradiction between espoused values and values in action.

Many theorists also note the shift away from the self and person as embedded in institutions such as the family and other community groups (Lasch 1978; Deetz 1992; Casey 1995). Deetz (1992), for example discusses how major national and international corporations have tended to replace religious, familial, educational and community institutions in the production of meaning, personal identity, values, knowledge and reasoning.

Casey (1995) describes how corporations encroach into the personal domain, and go beyond the potential of just providing another cohesive social value framework. She implies that work place culture can be created and shaped and this culture, for example, has the ability to create designer employees, which erode individualism and work to serve the needs of organisations over individuals. The extent of modern corporate encroachment into non-work life and the transformation of other institutions is seen as the colonisation of the life world (Habermas 1984, 1987).

However given that (as discussed further in the next section) many organisations seek to align personal identity with organisation identity, Wenger’s (1999) framework of ‘social ecology of identity’ notes a divide between ‘identities of participation’ and ‘identities of non-participation’ (p. 190). Organisations can therefore appear as being beyond the scope of engagement of their members (Wenger 1999), with more global aspects of organisational life invariably viewed through the local.
4.2.10 Diversity

In Chapter 3 reference was made to the management of diversity within the context of organisation and business management theory. In principle the management of diversity has been acknowledged as essential in view of organisations operating in globalising markets, the increasingly multicultural nature of the workforce, and a general acceptance that heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups. Such instrumental views of diversity, as a means of supporting corporate objectives, certainly emerge as divergent perspectives from those surrounding the celebration of difference and diversity as often reflected in the Arts and Anthropology. They also emerge as divergent from the more humanist or terminal orientation attributed to diversity and difference as they relate to notions of the uniqueness of every individual and the right of every individual to realise individual potential.

Shared values are usually seen as an integral part of culture (Kilmann et al. 1985), and therefore diversity is often attributed to differences across different social identity groups. Shared values, along with shared vision, are also often seen as underpinning successful organisations and a strong sense of personal identity in relation to the organisation (Senge 1990; Handy 1993; Porras and Collins 1996). Many organisations therefore actively seek to build and manipulate organisational culture.

Prasad and Mills (1997) note however that despite the widespread rhetoric of diversity and multiculturalism, organisations are, in fact extraordinarily monocultural entities. Particularly once a dominant leadership style establishes itself, it can be very difficult for minority ways of thinking and doing to survive (Mant 1997), and that organisational monoculturalism in turn leads to institutions not valuing workplace diversity (Prasad and Mills 1997).

Furthermore, whilst not disagreeing with the notion of shared values, Griseri (1998) warns against organisational totalitarianism, suggesting that:
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A high conformant monoculture is the prime kind of organisation for which it makes sense to talk about "the values of the organisation". There are tendencies within such organisations that can easily degenerate into forms of oppression. This for example, 'both undermines and undervalues the diversity of modern workforces, which are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic as the world becomes a more convergent global economy (pp. 75-76).

Giddens (1994) believes there are universal ethical principles and values which have real purchase in today's world. Within the context of a globalising order, which on one hand represents unpredictability, manufactured uncertainty and fragmentation, there are opportunities for the development of shared values that come from a situation of a global interdependence organised by a 'cosmopolitan acceptance of difference'.

Prilleltensky (1999) sees a key connecting mechanism between personal and collective values within relational values such as, respect for human diversity, collaboration and democratic participation. Prilleltensky and Nelson (1997) suggest that in order to attain the necessary balance among the various values, neglected values must be moved to the foreground. For example, within the present Western context, this means relocating the value of social justice from the background to the foreground, and pushing the obsession with personal advancement from the foreground to the background.

4.2.11 The professions

Humanism versus corporatism values tensions can be seen within whether or not the professions are viewed as serving the interests of all members of society or whether they serve organisation and self interests.

Emerging in mediaeval times through the clerical foundation of the university (Freidson 1986) and with the craftsmen's guild and inns (Sizer 1996), the notion of the professional was associated with religious and moral motives to dedicate oneself to a good end (Freidson 1986). Today however the terms "profession" and "professional" are also not easy ones to pin down. They are often associated with certain kinds of vocations; particularly those requiring
specialised knowledge and the status associated with that knowledge, together with codes of conduct associated with the possession and application of that knowledge.

Goffman (1961) referred to the 'moral career' inherent in the professional career, and how it is not uncommon for individuals belonging to professional associations being bound together through professional charters or codes of practice. In this sense professional values are also commonly associated with concepts of commitment, integrity, responsibility, and accountability (Kizza 1998). Professionalism is also concerned with social processes and the control of professional behaviour, as well as the institutions by which that process is carried out (Freidson 1986). In addition to codes of practice, I also made mention in Chapter 2 of areas of professional practice, noted by Argyris and Schön (1974), for continuous focus if the professions are to have a valid role in today's world.

Gergen (1991) noted however how society comes to tolerate breaches in moral careers amongst professionals. There are many examples of public figures who, for example, break laws. Gergen sees this as reflective of a postmodern world where such events are not indicators of flawed characters, but of 'unfortunate quirks, momentary slips in judgement, or complex situations' (p. 185). Postmodernism is seen as raising many issues about the relevance and nature of professional values and ethics.

Freidson (1986) discusses the ways certain professional groups value certain knowledge. Professionals are seen as agents of different kinds of knowledge, with professional identity and status strongly built around that. He also notes the way certain kinds of professional knowledge impacts the social and natural world, through the legitimacy accorded that knowledge.

The role of some professions, as central members of a new class structure (Freidson 1986), 'Professional-Managerial Class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich...
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1979) and the 'New Class' (Gouldner, 1979), is recognised. This professional class is considered as neither working class nor capitalist class but possessing an ideology, which asserts the social value of science and technology. Freidson (1986) also discusses the unequivocal influence of professional groups on the political economy through, often elitist, 'standard-setting committees' within professional associations.

Clarke and Newman (1997) however note the impacts of managerialism on the professions, and the way managerialism has challenged the normative power of professional regimes. The discourse of managerialism, which is linked to the regimes of organisational power, is seen as having displaced traditional professional roles. The ways in which HR Professionals, for example, are commonly encouraged to demonstrate how they add value to organisations and to speak the language of business (Ulrich 1997; Pickett 1999) is an example of this discourse at work. Clarke and Newman (1997) further argue that the adoption of managerial and business language both serves to legitimate organisations and to change roles and goals of interest within them, thus implying a corresponding change in professional values.

According to Kizza (1998) professional values interact between four different codes; professional codes, personal codes, institutional codes and community codes. During the writing of this paper an internet based (AHRI Forum August 1999) discussion was taking place between Australian Human Resource Institute professionals on the topic of HR ethics. Many comments focused on issues associated with balancing individual values and codes of conduct with broader corporate and organisational values, and the discrepancies often found between; what Argyris (1993) refers to as, values-espoused and values-in-action. These concerns perhaps also reflect ways in which other value-sets dominate over traditional professional values.

Saul (1997) also points to a narrow form of professionalism associated with corporatism; one which erodes broader notions of citizenship through a mind-your own business mentality, which further contributes to imbalances
between individuals and groups. He sees this kind of corporatism as an absolute alternative to democratic individualism, and warns against it.

4.3 Summary

In view of the broader research interest surrounding tensions between humanist and corporate values, the themes discussed above will be used as a basis for exploring aspects of professional practice, particularly as they relate to dealing with the people and learning side of organisations.
5 CHAPTER FIVE: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

With a focus and frameworks for undertaking research, the challenge remains in aligning methodology with the research problem. In this chapter I seek to discuss my approach, and explore relevant methodological issues.

This research programme is essentially workplace based and workplace oriented. It is my "story" of personal reflexivity in relation to the professional contexts in which I operate. The intent to embark on workplace research is based on the belief that it should be the "principled" position of the professional educator that will ultimately determine professional practices employed.

This research occurs within what can be defined as postmodern workplaces. I use the term postmodern here because it acknowledges the diverse and increasingly unpredictable world of complex interrelationships that sets the scene for the workplace. Under postmodernism, methodology also loses its status as chief arbiter of truth, with empirical emphasis shifted to more local and practical concerns. The necessity for bridging gaps between theory and practice is highlighted. Discussion is not so much focused on tools and methodologies but on the active construction of meaning.

One of the major challenges of approaching formal research however lies in unraveling the discourses surrounding methodology (research practices) and epistemology (ways we come to know something). Whilst as a social researcher qualitative rather than quantitative research methodologies appeared to offer more holistic opportunities for investigating social situations, there is a lot of very complex literature surrounding non-empiricist and post-positivist research. I highlight this point because matching qualitative research methodologies with the workplace context and concern emerged as a substantial challenge in approaching this project.
In many ways it was through tackling the social research literature that I really came to realise how much I am a product of my own world experience. In his *Being and Time* (1927; trans. 1962) Heidegger described what he called the *structure of everydayness*, or *being-in-the-world*, which he found to be an interconnected system of equipment, social roles, and purposes. My way of "being in the world" is reflective of my own personal history and my own situational or cultural embeddedness. As a result, for example, the ethnographic strategies of Senge's Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (1994) appealed readily to me because they represented a way of being in the world familiar to me; that is, the world of business organisations and the language that accompanies it. This was seen in contrast, for example, to some of the more academic social science literature.

As described by Schon (1983) in *The Reflective Practitioner*, I was perhaps also a good example of a professional who often knew more than I could put into words, but readily recognised a kind of "knowing-practice" when reading something that made sense to me. Discourses of course create, produce and reproduce opportunities for people to be and recognise certain "kinds of people", and Senge's ethnography is framed within the language or discourse of the "business management" world that I readily recognise.

This realisation however became significant because, if one is what one does in the world, a phenomenological reduction to and beyond one's own private experience appeared almost impossible Heidegger (1927; trans. 1962). I would only ever know what I know because of my own predisposed ways of knowing. I therefore became very much aware that I had to further explore social research models, concepts dealing with identity and self, and the notion of reflexivity. But again I found the literature and its discourse very challenging. In fact at one stage I became so frustrated that I was afraid there was no point in pursuing my research because satisfying the rigorous requirements of social research would continue to elude me. However I eventually took heart from Hammersley (1984) who suggested:
...that the organisation of sociology around paradigms which conflate theoretical assumptions and political values, rather than around research problems, is counterproductive in the extreme...." and that....."the 'paradigmatic mentality' also obscure methodological and theoretical issues and works against the resolution (p. 63).

It therefore seemed better to simply launch in, explore my concern, and learn about research along the way.

In the early days of my career, as an educator consultant within the state school system, I had also previously been involved in Action Research programmes; particularly as they formed part of my Masters Degree. Action Research as it draws on the methodologies of phenomenology, ethnography and case-study (Stake 1978) and with its emancipatory (Habermas 1984) orientation had appealed to me, and I had followed Kemmis and McTaggart’s (1988) participatory spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting for implementing educational research projects that had joint goals of involvement and improvement. As an educational practitioner, at that particular time, I can say that it appears that we were afforded a luxury of being able to bring groups together and provide time for collaboratively delving into practices in an attempt to understand and improve classroom situations.

Implementing Action Research, as a critical social science, within the context of the professional management consulting environment I have inhabited, however emerged as a real challenge. Not challenging in the sense of implementing participatory or collaborative processes to address workplace concerns, but in the sense that those processes usually tend to be purely technical or practical, rather than emancipatory (Habermas 1984; Carr and Kemmis 1997) in their orientation. That is, they are ultimately seeking to serve "ends" or outcomes already determined by the organisation, and never question the situational embeddedness of the organisation itself.

Also alongside other busy, constantly-on-the-move, milestones-and-outcomes-to-meet professionals it is not so easy to find like-minded
colleagues who not only share similar concerns (although this is not the most difficult part), and, more pragmatically, who are able to invest time in rigorously and methodically investigating their work place situations. So whilst it was my original intention to pursue “action research” as a collaborative exercise in reflexivity, sustainable opportunities for this did not emerge. I have therefore followed a more personal reflective path, in an attempt to conduct a sociological critique of a theoretical critique (Bourdieu 1990, 1998).

In simple terms that means I have sought to consider the social and organisational situations in which I operate and critique a key management theorist who has influenced my own professional theories and practices. Recognising my own embeddedness in modern management practices, I have however sought to consider them through different lenses. I am therefore also particularly interested in exploring the broader contextual frameworks of the international environments in which I operate, and how I am located within them, together with the nature of my relationships with, and representations of, “others”. Here I particularly refer to myself as a white female change practitioner in offshore settings amidst the traditionally fixed binary opposites associated with black/white, East/West, native/foreigner, male/female, tribalism/individualism, etc, working within the new vestiges of globalism, new capitalism, and postcolonialism, against a backdrop of the old vestiges of colonialism and socialism.

Work place research however emerges as messy; particularly because of the dual role of researcher and organisational player. It also becomes messy because of false starts, and constant changes in work places and roles that is part of life as an international management consultant. In addition, whilst my research is primarily positioned within the field of education, it not only seeks, but is also forced, to cross borders into the areas of business management, economics, postcolonialism, sociology and creates what Pillow (2003) refers to ‘reflexivities of discomfort’ (p. 187). I however take further heart from Visweswaran (1994) who states that:

The qualitative research arena would benefit from more “messy” examples, examples that may not always be successful, examples that
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do not seek a comfortable, transcendent end-point but leave us in the
uncomfortable realities of doing engaged qualitative research (quoted in
Pillow 2003; p. 193).

5.2 The 'Reflective Practitioner'

appealed to me on two fronts. One relates directly to the notion of personally
reflecting on professional practices. The other is the contribution of Schöen into
the broader literature and research surrounding ‘organisational learning’
(Robinson 2001), which features as a key concept throughout this paper.

The ‘reflective practitioner’ (Schön 1983) echoes Dewey’s (1938) view that:

to reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net
meanings which are the capital stock of intelligent dealing with further
experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and of the disciplined
mind (pp. 86–87).

Schön (1983) argued that a vital attribute of all effective practitioners,
regardless of the area they operate, is the ability to reflect on ongoing
experience and learn from it. For Schön this involves ‘reflection-in-action’,
which is not bound by the positivism of what he describes as ‘Technical
Rationalism’. He sees the reflective practitioner as one who is:

not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but
constructs a new theory of the unique case. His inquiry is not limited to a
deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends.
He does not keep ends and means separate, but defines them interactively
as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from
doing….Thus reflection-in-action can proceed, even in situations of
uncertainty or uniqueness, because it is not bound by the dichotomies of

Schön (1983) proposes that a great deal of knowing is tacit, implicit in
patterns of action and a feel for the issues and problems with which
practitioners are dealing.

On the whole, assessment is that professional knowledge is mismatched to the
changing characteristics of the situation of practice—the complexity, uncertainty,
instability, uniqueness and value conflicts—which are increasingly perceived as
central to the world of professional practice (p. 14).
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For Schön (1983), experience is intrinsic to reflective practice, and he sees reflected-upon-experience as becoming knowing-in-action, 'the characteristic mode of ordinary practical knowledge' (p. 54). Professional knowledge is therefore legitimated. Furthermore reflective practice encourages professionals and practitioners to combine living life with self-criticism and growth.

However Giddens (1984) also reminds us that the knowledge we construct around social situations is shaped by the social structures that produce us. Therefore, as noted by Habermas (1984), self-reflection and self understanding may be distorted by social conditions. Carr and Kemmis (1986) in relation to their work with teaching professionals note:

> Teacher's knowledge provides a starting point for critical reflection. It cannot simply be taken for granted and systematised into theory, nor can it be taken as definitive in prescribing practice. This is not because teachers' knowledge is any less compelling than the knowledge others have; it is because educational acts are social acts, which are reflexive, historically located, and embedded in particular intellectual and social contexts (p. 44).

Notions of critical reflection therefore become important. Understandings of the critical component of critical reflection has been influenced by a range of theorists including Habermas (1990), Giroux and McLaren (1987), Brookfield (1995), and Zeichner and Tabachnick (1991). Perhaps Smyth's (1998) definition of critical succinctly captures common endeavours in reflecting critically on professional teaching experience:

> a process of arriving at a new heightened sense of awareness that is tilted towards social change based on self-reflection. It also refers to the process of challenging the taken-for-granted aspects of teaching and learning, and, in a sense, rebuilding them from the ground up, based on experiences of teachers in classrooms (p. 7).

Indeed a broader review of literature on reflection reveals very contrastive views (Grimmett et al. 1990; Bengston 1995; Hatton and Smith 1995; Cole 1997). Hatton and Smith (1995) identify four aspects of reflection that are variously interpreted:
whether reflection is limited to thought process about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action;... the time frames within which reflection takes place, and whether it is relatively immediate and short term, or rather more extended and systematic,... whether reflection is by its very nature problem-centred or not... and... how conscientiously the one reflecting takes account of wider historic, cultural and political values or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought, a process which has been defined as critical reflection (p. 34).

There are certainly a number of themes or issues to highlight here. Firstly, my reflection, as it appears in the research text (in contrast to field text) is predominantly retrospective and not directly bound up in the specific action and lived experience of just one case-study as captured in Chapter 6. It therefore has to acknowledge shifts in self and self understanding emerging over the substantial time frame of the overall research project (see later discussion relating to Ricoeur).

Secondly it is also useful to reflect on combining formal work place roles with work place research and professional reflection within the framework of Habermas’s (1984) knowledge-constitutive interests of technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge. As has been acknowledged the research context also falls within the context of a professional services contract. These of course come with specific terms of references, mandates and accountabilities, which usually reflect a technical or practical knowledge orientation.

Reflection with a technical orientation, for example, may assist in determining whether pre-determined outcomes are being met and whether or not professional practices need to be adjusted in order to meet those outcomes. It does not necessarily provide for exploring what lies within those pre-determined outcomes. Similarly reflection with a practical orientation may assist in determining whether a process facilitation role is considered effective.
Process facilitation roles are where a facilitator helps a group define its goals or problems, supports the development of making plans for change and implementation, and supports the team in monitoring and reviewing progress and any issues encountered along the way. They are readily evident in terms of professional activities related to strategic planning, project planning and performance improvement initiatives, etc and are usually linked to high level interests of organisations and people who hold key positions of power within them. Reflection can therefore again be confined to the effective instrumentality of achieving those ends without necessarily considering other perspectives, except where those perspectives represent themselves as issues or problems that may impede high level organisational interests.

Reflection with an emancipatory orientation however implies developing a deeper understanding of the socially constructed and interactive processes of organisational life, with a view to changing them. Such approaches imply a broader critique of the systemic nature of the organisation, and there may not be a mandate (or a will) for this within a professional services contract. This kind of reflection therefore has to extend beyond what might be a formal role within the organisation.

Also, as noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), it is easy to be swamped by the complexity of field experience, particularly as it relates to the workplace. It therefore becomes challenging to maintain what might have been a clearly defined research focus at the beginning. When caught up in the day to day activities, politics and challenges of the workplace it is also difficult to look at situations with different eyes. Reflection of professional practice therefore needs to provide for reflecting and re-reflecting again, and:

more of a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem definition and solution (ibid p. 124).

Reflection also needs to consider the role and personal identity of the researcher within the research context. Ricoeur (1988), for example contends consideration of the self is essential in self-knowledge. This also needs to extend to the relationships with, and ways of representing, others.
5.3 Reflection versus Reflexivity

On the basis of the above it is therefore useful to note some distinctions made between reflection and what has emerged as reflexivity, where reflexivity is seen as:

A process of examining, questioning and monitoring the behaviour of the self and others promoted by the social conditions and experiences of late modernity (Bilton et al. 1996, p. 668).

Giddens (1998) sees reflexivity as the guiding principle of modern self-identity, and at the basis of how knowledgeable agents construct theories of their own circumstances and form courses of action. Accordingly, reflexivity brings, at least potentially, a new level of knowledgeability, control and orderliness to one's experience of self. It ushers in a demystified world, geared towards calculability. Reflexivity refers to:

a world increasingly constituted by information rather than pre-modern modes of conduct. It is how we live after the retreat of tradition and nature, because of having to take so many forward-orientated decisions (Giddens and Pierson 1998, p. 115).

This distinction between reflection and reflexivity is defined by Chiseri-Strater (1996) as:

to be reflective does not demand an 'other', while to be reflexive demands both an other and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny (p. 130).

In addition, reflexivity, as noted by Hertz (1997), has also focused upon the 'what I know' and 'how I know it' and entails 'ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment' (p. viii). It therefore also requires the researcher to understand her/his location within the research process and issues surrounding politics and power relations between researcher and researched. Reflexivity then 'becomes a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness' (Callaway 1992, p. 33). It is also seen as involving an ongoing self-awareness during the research process which assists in making transparent the practice and construction of knowledge.
within research, in order to produce more accurate analyses of research. As Davies (1999) states:

reflexivity, broadly defined, means a turning back on oneself, a process of self reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research (p. 4).

Self-reflexivity, therefore according to Pillow (2003) acknowledges the researcher's role(s) in the construction of the research problem, research setting, and research findings. She highlights the importance of the researcher becoming consciously aware of these factors and thinking through the implications of these factors for her/his research. Pillow also highlights difficulties and tensions in shifts from modern to postmodern understandings of doing qualitative research.

For example, reflexivity as a methodological practice is dependent on a subject or subjects to reflect on and how the subject is thought is key then to how reflexivity is practiced. For instance, many researchers are utilizing reflexivity in ways that are dependent on a modernist subject – a subject that is singular, knowable, and fixable. Thus, if my subject, either myself or an "other," is knowable the possibility that I can then know this subject through better reflexive methods is attainable. On the other hand, an understanding of a subject as postmodern, as multiple, as unknowable, as shifting, situates the purposes and practices of research, and the uses of reflexivity, quite differently (p. 180).

This also reflects Scheurich's (1997) assertion that, 'modernist researchers believe their research methods mirror reality; postmodernists believe modernist research methods (predominantly) mirror the representational ideology of the modernist researchers'" (p. 64). Therefore whereas the modernist researcher might strive to discover objectively some kind of truth, by adopting a postmodernist view and by exceeding the knowable order, the predictability that can occur with traditional research can be disrupted.

Within this context Pillow (2003) sees four validated strategies of reflexivity as having present-day currency among qualitative researchers and in some instances currency that also works across research situated as postmodern. She also argues however for a move away from 'comfortable' uses of reflexivity to what she terms 'uncomfortable reflexive practices'. Practicing uncomfortable reflexivity interrupts uses of reflexivity as a tool of
methodological power to get better data while fore-fronting the complexities of doing engaged qualitative research to develop:

practices which "interrogate the truthfulness of the tale and provide multiple answers" (Trinh, 1991, p. 12), and to what I suggest are unfamiliar – and likely uncomfortable – tellings (p. 193).

I use these strategies as a framework for considering further aspects of my own research.

5.3.1 Reflexivity as recognition of self

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) and Denzin (1994) note the impact of the researcher's perceived personae and value system both during fieldwork and in writing up research findings. They stress the importance of providing readers of research with some insight into the personae and value system of the researcher, as this is needed for interpreting and deconstructing the author's text.

Pillow (2003) however discusses the challenges of disclosing one's own subjectivity in the research process and marking where her(him)self ends and another begins through the use of self-reflexivity. Her own review of qualitative research articles and texts suggests that:

researchers are handling their subjectivity in myriad ways – some accept ........ that they can know who they are and thus state it up-front; others blur the line between themselves and the research subject(s), other texts collapse under the weight of the confessional tale – but all are attempting to account for how their selves interact and impact the research process (p. 182).

She also sees an invested ideology here in relation to whether or not a researcher can be honest about her(him)self, particularly in relation to an 'other', and asks:

But how do we do this in our research? How much do we need to know from or about the researcher to trust or believe what she/he is reporting? Where does the researcher/author begin and end in relation to the research and research subject?
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She sees how researchers point to how their own dual identities, their own dual positions of power and subjugation in the academy and in their community, and how what Delgado Bernal (1998) refers to as cultural intuition further shape and challenge the research process. She however differentiates cultural intuition:

which impacts the research by providing historical and personal cultural insight into the research process, thus impacting the formation, doing, and analysis of research, from practices of selfreflexivity, which attempt to account for how the self is involved in the research process (p. 558).

She is particularly concerned with how self-reflexivity may result in a simple identifying of oneself or a telling of a confessional tale, which continues to work to identify and define the ‘other,’ and how the use of selfreflexivity is also often used to situate oneself as closer to the subject. She argues that many researchers seem to assume that by putting her(him)self into the text, s/he has taken on the problems associated with representations of others without further troubling their own notions of knowing, echoing Spivak's (1988) sentiments that ‘making positions transparent does not make them unproblematic’ (p. 6).

Whilst Pillow (2003) accepts there may be a need for authors acknowledging themselves in the text; particularly in view of critiques of colonial and colonising practices of ethnographic research, she also argues that it is essential to consider:

did the use of "witnessing" as a metaphor for the researcher aid in my understanding of the research or close off my reading (for who can critique what another has “witnessed”)? And specific to such uses of this form of self-reflexivity, I want to ask what it (re)produces and what it limits? (p. 183).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in relation to their work with narrative research, which they view broadly as a 'way of understanding experience' (p. 20), also point to problems associated with the intersubjective nature of the inquiry. They note that:

to dismiss the criticism that narrative inquiry is overly personal and interpersonal is to risk the dangers of narcissism and solipsism (p. 181).
They further allude to problems associated with what they label the "Hollywood plot.. the plot in which everything works well in the end" (ibid).

For myself as a workplace researcher I cannot avoid my own situatedness in the research context, and the subjectivity, as well as shifting subjectivities, which are inherent in that. I have therefore provided detailed information on my self as well as my values and belief sets. The above points however suggest that particular attention must be given to the way self is positioned within the research, and the way the multiple voices associated with personal identity are also positioned within the research, and I have tried to pay this special attention throughout.

Those voices also speak out in different ways through field texts such as journal writing, as well as through the actual research text and attention must be given to how the reader is fully aware of who is speaking. This particularly relates to "I" as the one who is recounting personal professional experiences as distinct from "I" who is also speaking as the critic, and implies the use of "I" in certain texts but not in others.

5.3.2 Reflexivity as recognition of the other

Pillow (2003) notes that reflexivity, as recognition of the other, is endemic to qualitative research and has been situated as key to legitimisation and validity claims. She argues that:

If the basis of why we do research is predicated upon being able to know, to understand the other, the subject of our research, then how well we are able to do this is vital to producing good research (p. 184).

She refers to Trinh (1991) who considers how researchers come to 'capture the essence' of the other(s) and 'let them speak for themselves' (p. 57), and that such stances are dependent upon the belief that there is some 'ontological intact reflexivity to the subject which is then placed within a cultural context' (Butler 1992, p. 12). While some feminist researchers have
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problematised such validity claims and point to the impossibility of representations (Lather 1986a), Pillow (2003) argues that within this critique remains the desire and necessity to represent. Thus while reflexivity here may be used to point to the limits of recognition of the other, the focus is still upon representing recognition.

Echoing postcolonial themes considered in the broader context of this paper, Pillow (2003) also points to literature that suggests representations of others, along with the characterisation of the research relationship, maintain colonial relationships and representations.

Reflexivity then always occurs out of an unequal power relationship and, in fact, the act of reflexivity may perpetuate a colonial relationship while at the same time attempting to mask this power over the subject (p. 185).

As a workplace researcher I cannot ignore the way my own reflexivity draws in others, and the way these others are represented in my own research process. I also cannot pretend to speak on the behalf of others, and acknowledge that care must be taken with how the voice of others may be used and projected within the research.

However with respect to critiquing professional practices against postcolonial themes, and because within those themes ways of knowing and representing others is considered as central to the establishment and maintenance of colonial rule (Said 1994), the way in which otherness is treated also becomes a subject of the inquiry. I therefore have to address otherness as both process and subject of inquiry, making clear the distinctions as well as points where they may intersect.

5.3.3 Reflexivity as truth

Previous reference has been made to postmodern moves away from rationalistic, linear ways of thinking towards an appreciation of multiple
perspectives and reasoning in context (Tarnas 1993). Pillow (2003) therefore stresses the importance of questioning and being vigilant about what can be known; pointing out that reflexivity, as truth, supports the idea that the researcher can get it right. She quotes Trinh (1991), as an example of where 'reflexivity' 'is elevated to that status of scientific rigor' (Trinh 1991, p. 46 as quoted in Pillow 2003, p.186), to raise issues around what role reflexivity actually plays in 'truth gathering', and how reflexivity acts in the interests of 'discourses of truth' which 'operate in relation to the dominant power structures of a given society' (McNay 1992, p. 25 as quoted in Pillow 2003, p. 186).

In my work place research I do not consider the desire for truth as primary. Rather I recognise there are multiple perspectives and multiples truths and that research does not produce final conclusions or truth. Rather it produces text which is open to further readings and interpretation. I also have to acknowledge the potential distortions evident in narrative texts identified by Steele (1986). These include the selective presentation of information that supports themes and findings the author unconsciously seeks to reinforce; the systematic omission of facts, accounts and interpretations that may confound the themes and findings the author consciously or unconsciously seeks to reinforce; and a systematic emphasis within the dialogues of the narrative intended to lead the reader towards themes and findings the author consciously or unconsciously seeks to reinforce.

I have tried to avoid these distortions throughout, as through this journey of personal learning I have tried to be open and alert to different voices and capturing these within the research. However in the end this research represents my personal story and journey of professional discovery, and it is one that is not complete with the conclusion of this research project.
5.3.4 Reflexivity as transcendence

Pillow (2003) suggests that evident in much qualitative research is the idea that the:

researcher, through reflexivity, can transcend her own subjectivity and own cultural context in a way that releases her/him from the weight of (mis)representations (p.187),

and therefore acts as a form of ‘confession’ and ‘absolution’ in line with Enlightenment ideals (ibid).

In my own work place research, transcendency is not an objective. Rather my objective through reflexivity is to better understand myself and my role within organisational contexts, but at the same time acknowledging the limitations of that reflexivity, and the care that needs to be exercised in terms of how to treat the outcomes or products of that reflection. This reflects Lather’s (1993) acknowledgment that to attempt to deconstruct one’s own work is to risk ‘buying into the faith in the powers of critical reflection’ (p. 685), and her idea that ‘rather, than take refuge in the futility of self-critique... I want to attempt it as aware as possible of its inevitable shortcomings’ (p. 685).

Pillow (2003) talks of this as the need to be ‘rigorously self-aware’ (p. 188). Clandinin and Connelly (2000), refer to it as ‘wakefulness’; a condition required when positioned ‘at the boundaries of reductionistic and formalistic modes of inquiry, (which) is in a state of development’ (p. 184).

In relation to this discussion I therefore consider reflexivity as:

Thinking about a professional experience, with the intention of exploring some of the meanings and representations that emerge from that professional experience, how they are explained and represented, and what the meanings and representations derived might imply for future professional and/or research activities.
5.4 Case-study

As I have drawn on a particular case-study in the next chapter as a basis for personal reflexivity I need to give some attention to case-study, and the diversity it receives in the literature. For example, Yin (1993, 1994) and Stake (1998) regard case-study broadly as a valid research strategy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) view it as a technique for reporting the finding of naturalistic inquiry, whilst other researchers see case-studies as evaluation tools (Patton 1990; Yin 1993; Marshall and Rossman 1995). Researchers generally seem to accept that case-studies can be both quantitative and qualitative or a hybrid of the two (Runyan 1982; Yin 1994; Stake 1994).

While case-study appears to be used widely in the social sciences, where it is also exposed to social science critique, methodologically sound case-studies are not abundant within business literature (Buchanan et al. 1999). Whilst anecdotal, single-case, naturalistic observations abound in the business world, and feature heavily in the writing of popular management theorists like Senge (1990) and Peters (1986, 1995), they appear primarily as tools for training, education and professional development of managers.

My intention here however is not to debate the respective merits of debates around case-study, rather I focus on discussion which assists in defining and justifying my own approach to this particular case. Firstly, a case-study is seen as a way of capturing and deriving meaning from experience. Accordingly 'case-studies are undertaken to make the case understandable' (Stake 1983, p. 85). They are based on a 'belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered' (Stake 1995, p. 99), and that rules and generalisations are not the intention (Polkinghorne 1995).

Stake (1994) uses the term 'instrumental case-study' to describe particular cases that provide insights into an issue or refinement of theory (p. 237). In this type of case Stake argues the purpose of the case study research is to 'optimise understanding of the case' (p. 236). The inquirer attempts to seek out the complexities of the case to provide greater insight into an issue of
interest. He highlights the need for researcher to select cases 'that seem to offer an opportunity to learn' (p. 243). I therefore use a case study instrumentally, not only in order to better understand theories and practices relating to organisational learning and change, but also to look for deeper learning experiences provided in an international setting where faced with many of the binary opposites of those inherently associated with modern management theories and practices.

Case-studies can be both explanatory as well as exploratory (Yin 1993), and I draw on both. It is the meaning attached to events and experiences within the case that are seen as exploratory. Based on a belief that research inquiry can never be value free; 'no aspects of knowledge are purely of the external world, devoid of human construction' (Stake 1995; p. 100) the need to draw on multiple perspectives is implied.

Secondly is the notion of the case as a 'bounded system, and that it is important to identify what is and what is not in the case' (Stake 1978 p. 7). However some of the boundaries are readily blurred. Some of those boundaries are linked to time and place (Ragin 1992), and certainly my case study per se is limited to the physical place of a certain organisational entity in a distinct time period. However the very nature of the inquiry together with the professional practices are also linked to a professional self, which has experience in other times and other places (Ricoeur 1995). These are also brought to the case.

Also from a broader systemic perspective these boundaries can become blurred, as all cases 'are located within some wider context' (Mitchell 1983, p.192). I therefore acknowledge that whilst the case study explores specific organisational change and improvement processes this is occurring within a broader context of structural reform programmes at the macro level, and their interdependencies cannot sometimes be ignored.

Yin (1994) also describes a case as a contemporary single unit or phenomenon of study examined in a context 'where the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident' (p. 13). This also
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acknowledges that all social phenomena emerge out of social structures (Giddens 1984) and that those social structures are not necessarily confined to the context of the specific study. This clearly has implications for exploring organisational behaviour and how it is represented in the broader framework of culture; particularly in the sense of culture as often being portrayed as having distinguishing characteristics associated with different geographic locations (Hofstede 1991; Stening and Ngan 1997), as well as for understanding systemic elements which exist outside of the organisation.

Finally, there are also divergent views in the use and location of theory. Yin (1994) for example argues that a fundamental stage in case research is that prior to data collection ‘theory development’ (p. 28) should occur, which can direct subsequent data collection and analysis processes because it helps design the case study and provides a vehicle for later generalising case results. On the other hand Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Stake (1983) avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model because it ‘cannot possibly encompass the multiple realities’ likely to be encountered (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 41). I however adopt a hybrid of this approach.

Although not committed to a theoretical model, I find it very useful to have a theoretical framework around which to explore the case study. For this purpose I have used the ‘Five Disciplines’ of Senge’s (1990) *Learning Organisation* as a means for exploring organisational experience. Senge’s Five Disciplines, and the way they have shaped my own professional practices, are also an integral part of my own self reflection.

5.5 Qualitative Research and the use of narrative inquiry

5.5.1 Introduction

Rhodes (1996a) notes that research is essentially about text. Research starts with a search for a text. A researcher selects text and classifies it in terms of data-text, methodology-text, process-text, other research texts, etc. Having decided these texts, they are then interpreted to produce the research.
Research is the reading of text. This reading is then represented as the research, but it is also represented in the format of text.

What is presented in this document is essentially research text. It is the capturing of a variety of inputs and their synthesis into a new framework of personal knowledge and understanding for further consideration in relation to professional practices. The writing of research text has however depended on the selection and capturing of data through a variety of field texts.

5.5.2 Writing Research

Writing research essentially amounts to telling a 'story' (Power 1990). My research, which is based around reflexivity, draws on personal stories as well as the stories of others. With its focus on 'understanding and making meaning of experience' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 80), it can be equated with an emerging qualitative research methodology known as narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry also reflects aspects of thinking associated with 'narrative knowledge' (Lyotard 1984), 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1990) and 'narrative identity' (Ricoeur 1988, 1992, 1995).

Lyotard (1984) highlighted the emergence of more holistic ways of knowing associated with narrative knowledge, and which are contrasted to the limited fields more commonly associated with scientific knowledge. Within this he also notes a postmodern breakdown of grand narratives, or stories, which a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs, in order to reinforce them. Previous reference has been made to Lyotard's interest in the nature of knowledge and the way it is constructed, as well as the way certain kinds of knowledge tends to be favoured over others (Anderson 1995).

Epistemological issues, as well as those associated with power interests, and who decides about the legitimacy of certain kinds of knowledge, therefore certainly arise in relation to research (Berge & Ve 2000).
Narrative knowledge is seen as distinct from *paradigmatic knowledge* (Bruner 1986; Polkinghorne 1995), whereby the latter is associated with inductivist modes characteristic of scientific explanation. Polkinghorne (1995) considers narrative as the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite, and that narrative is the natural way in which we construe ourselves (Polkinghorne 1996).

Narrative reasoning does not reduce itself to rules and generalities across stories (Polkinghorne 1995). Narrative thought is showing how knowledge of something interacts with other parts in contributing to a whole (Bruner 1986). It is concerned with the experience of the world through someone's eyes, rather than reflecting directly on the world, with narrative incorporating a sense of temporality (ibid). The present is seen as conditioned by the possibilities of the future and events of the past. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to this as the three-dimensional space where narrative knowledge is constructed.

The notion of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990) is also concerned with the way the past predisposes people to think and act in certain ways, and is relevant in terms of my own location in the workplace environment and in terms of the purpose of the research. *Habitus* seeks to define intuitive knowledge and explain the paradox of actions being directed towards certain ends without being consciously directed to these ends, where action is guided by a 'feel for the game' and a 'logic of practice' (Bourdieu 1990; p. 11).

Previous reference was made to the importance of locating self within a research context, but I come back to it here because of the importance of self within research text. Giddens' (1991) notion of the reflexive project of self is defined as the process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives. Furthermore narrative identity is interested in questions in narratives which involve 'who?' (Ricoeur 1992). Such questions include 'who acted?', 'who intervened?', 'what was done to whom', 'on whose
behalf was the action taken? and 'who is to blame?' (Ricoeur 1995). In other words, narrative identity is an accounting of a certain kind; where we seek to define "who am I?" If this is applied to a professional context it raises further questions about "who am I working for, and whose interests am I serving?" Or more broadly speaking, "who am I as a professional management consultant?" Essentially this research therefore seeks to explore broad questions about my own self-identity in relation to my professional contexts.

In relation to his work on the notion of self, Ricoeur (1995) sees a key problem lying in how we account for narrative questions which relate to 'who?' and suggests that for a person there are a series of dialectics at work in the process of narrating an identity. Firstly, there is a dialectic of explanation and understanding, whereby a process of interpretation involves interpretation, understanding and explanation. In other words, a person interprets something, understands it and then explains its meaning. For my research this has meant: (1) clarifying my own personal beliefs in relation to organisational learning; (2) interpreting what is going on in organisations and trying to understand its implications for those personal beliefs and theories; (3) interpreting what is going on in organisations against postcolonial themes and values frameworks to derive further meaning for understanding implications for those personal beliefs and theories.

Secondly Ricoeur notes the importance of the dialectic between self and other, which he sees as multiple. I have discussed this previously; particularly in relation to representations of others, but I also have to acknowledge the impact of others on myself through workplace and research processes. Thirdly there is the dialectic of identity, which is shaped by narrative in time. Each of these contribute to what he says is a dynamic relationship between sameness and selfhood, by which he means that we can be identified in time as the same person, but we also change over time as we develop selfhood. I also stress this point because whilst it is the same person who has been working on this research projects for many years now, I have undoubtedly learned and changed through this process, and this may undoubtedly speak through the research text in its entirety in terms of "what was important then,
may not seem so important now”, as the final conclusions and reflections fall into place.

Ricoeur reminds us that in the process of narrative making there is also a counterpart in a theory of reading. For Ricoeur such a theory should incorporate the author’s strategy towards the reader, the inscription of this strategy in a text, and the response by the reader as a reading subject and as a reading public. This also has important implications in terms of self, because it raises issues in relation to what image of self is to be portrayed through the research. For instance, “what is my purpose in writing this document?” “To become a respected academic?” “To sustain professional employment opportunities?” My response at this stage is that the research text as it stands represents a journey of personal learning. What I do with that learning in the future remains a separate and unknown subject.

5.5.3 Use of field text

Simplistically speaking any research must focus on a central idea, concern, problem or proposition. It will then involve a process of collecting and analysing data with findings and understandings organised and presented for a broader audience. Within the context of narrative inquiry, collected data can be considered as *field text* (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). Meaning subsequently attached to the experience captured within field text must then be composed as *research text*.

In line with previously discussed ideas of Steele (1986), Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note field text is ‘shaped by the selective interest or disinterest of researcher or participant (or both)’ (p. 94) and is already an interpretive and contextualised text because it is ‘shaped by the interpretive processes of researcher and participant and their relationship, and .......because of the particular circumstances of the ...origins and setting’ (ibid). Selectivity is also because ‘field texts...also say much about what is not
Nicola Watts said and not noticed' (ibid). It is important to highlight these notions up front in relation to field texts utilised during this study.

5.5.3.1 Journal writing

The value of professional journal writing has been advocated and generally well accepted amongst social scientists (Fulwiler 1987; Barnes and Duncan 1992). My own personal journal provided a substantial focus for reflection on experiences. It included the following elements:-

5.5.3.1.1 General Field Notes

This is where I recorded general day to day activities, and any particular comments or incidents standing out as having some special interest or significance. Critical incidents tended to be those seen as instrumental in revealing what Argyris (1993) refers to as the gap between ‘espoused beliefs’ and ‘action beliefs’, as well as those that challenged a preconceived notion. Through previous use of journals I have noticed my own tendency to document my own observations and my own thoughts. I therefore also often used structures such as that below in order to encourage myself to look at events from the perspectives of others, which would also often require me to change my own views or perceptions of a situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>What I think is occurring</th>
<th>What I think somebody else thinks is occurring</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.3.1.2 Critical Notes While Reading

This was an activity I undertook in addition to broader reading and reflection of relevant literature. It particularly related to something I read that
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challenged, reinforced or added another dimension to what I was doing in my work place activities, and the issues and themes I was exploring or concerned by at the time.

5.5.3.1.3 Personal Examination of Conscience and Self

In the true style of a personal diary or journal I also used it as a forum to explore personally confronting questions around my own sense of self and professional identity and conflicts that often arose between them. This enabled me to explore first hand something that interests me in relation to organisational life, and that is how organisations can foster whole people in the work place, and how in many instances people have to manage multiple selves because of the work place contexts they find themselves in.

5.5.3.1.4 Reflecting on my own cognitive processes

This also provided me with a first hand opportunity to reflect on myself as a professional learner. I asked myself questions around “why did I do that?” or “why do I believe that?”, and considered whether I was drawing on personal knowledge linked to a rational theory, or whether it was more of an intuitive nature, or indeed reflective of the broader organisational “game” that I was part of. It was also an opportunity for “playing around” with ideas. Ideas or what appeared as learnings or areas for further investigation were noted, explored and sometimes then rejected or developed further.

5.5.3.1.5 Assessing Progress and Status

This aspect was ostensibly for me to try and take stock of where I was in terms of the broader objective of finalising the EdD research. It particularly highlighted the numerous false starts and getting lost in the myriad of rich reflective experience the work place offers.
5.5.3.1.6 General Life Experiences

It is not always possible to draw convenient boundaries between personal, private and professional lives. Incidents outside the workplace can confront personal values and beliefs and change perceptions and attitudes that may flow on into the work place. This was interesting because it also highlighted how it is easy to view others through contextual lenses.

5.5.3.2 Research Interview as Field Text

It had been my initial intention to draw heavily on interview in the research project. However this emerged as quite problematic given the nature of my position in organisations, and being generally perceived as closely linked to key positions of power. This generally meant that in many one-to-one interview situations, interviewees were particularly conscious of what might be the most politically correct responses to provide.

Where people were formally interviewed they were given a copy of the “Plain Language Statement” (Appendix 1 & 2) 2 to 3 days prior to scheduling an interview and were asked to sign the accompanying consent form. The interview process usually began by explaining the general nature of my research interest and an invitation for the person concerned to tell me something about how they viewed the change occurring in the organisation, and to try to elicit some indication of where they saw the major sources of tension. Because of the messy nature of qualitative research, which has been noted previously, at the beginning it was difficult to have a clear focus on exactly what it was that I was researching. Therefore whilst all interviews had a similar theme, the questions and process were not consistent across all interviewees. Rather the different stories, perspectives and emphases that emerged were viewed as contributors to the rich fabric of what was seen as an organisational “research patchwork”.

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With each interviewee attempts however were made to ensure that I was non-evaluative of what the interviewee was conveying (Kaye 1996), and this included trying to ask open-ended and non-leading questions. My task was to take notes and write up the general responses of the interviewee. It again had been my original intention to pass a typed version of these notes back to the interviewee at a later stage for verification to ensure I had accurately captured what they communicated. However in many cases interviewees responded negatively to seeing their responses on paper and, despite reassurances of anonymity, were nervous about the potential for negative repercussions.

What therefore emerged was that in the context of being directly involved in the work place, the richer insights of organisational life and behaviour emerged daily in natural work place situations. Therefore as a researcher there was a need to develop the discipline to capture these in the journal frameworks discussed above. However in order to ensure a check on my own perceptions, other external consultants (both expatriate and local) were also regularly interviewed to gain their perceptions on what was going on in the organisation at all levels. Because they were viewed as external to foreign management, they were often used by other employees as conduits to have views, ideas and concerns expressed. They could recount the stories of others anonymously, as well as their own stories of organisational life. Whilst these accounts cannot be considered as representative of the entire organisation, they did however provide opportunities for stories and perspectives to emerge outside of the boundaries of more formal and official accounts of the organisation.

5.5.3.3 Professional Documents as Field Text

I also look back on some of the professional documents I prepared in the context of an organisational change programme, and the organisational story they represent. This reflection focuses in particular on the language and discourse used in relation to the organisation. It particularly examines the
representations of the organisation and its employees, and the way different kinds of knowledge frameworks are drawn upon.

5.5.3.4 *Newspaper Articles as Field Text*

Newspaper articles provided a rich variety of field text. Because the organisation, which forms a substantial part of this investigation, was the subject of much controversy, the media was a powerful forum for exposing and airing differences in perceptions and expectations at the heart of many organisational power struggles. The variety of *stories* contained within newspaper articles are ones that did not necessarily emerge within organisational discourses.

5.6 *Ethical considerations*

The essentially *political* and *value-laden* nature of all field research is well noted (Punch 1998; Giroux 1986). Punch notes two divergent strands of thought associated with research ethics; one arguing for the need for strict ethical codes and another for less restrictive models. Ethical considerations associated with qualitative research are by no means straightforward, but are usually seen as requiring an appropriate balance between ethical controls and fidelity in the reported findings (Deyle et al. 1992; Dockrell 1988; Kimmel 1988). Deyle et al. (1992) however also note that ethical positions will vary according to different researchers and different research contexts. Punch (1998) advocates that researchers into complex situations should not be unduly constrained by restrictive ethical codes, but should think ethically about their research approaches.

In essence however, most concerns relating to the ethics of research revolve around issues of consent, deception, privacy, harm and confidentiality of data (Punch 1998). I briefly explore these themes in relation to this research project.
5.6.1 Consent and deception

The notion of informed consent, whereby the subjects of research have the right to be informed that they are being researched, and also about the nature of research, is a common research requirement. Agreement was therefore negotiated with the concerned organisation that aspects of organisational life relating to the organisational change programme would be drawn on in relation to a personal doctoral research programme.

As has been discussed previously, where individuals were interviewed and relied on heavily for their respective insights and perspectives, informed consent was also gained. In both cases written information on the study in plain English format was handed to the participants (Appendix 2).

Obtaining informed consent is generally seen as a means for overcoming the potential for any deception in relation to research practices. However it is noted that there is not a clear-cut line between contracted professional consulting roles and the ancillary roles of reflexive workplace researchers. Much of the information gained emerges within the workplace role. It is not always possible or desirable to gain informed consent. The tendency previously noted that too much emphasis on gaining informed consent often impacts participant responses is also shared (Gans 1962; Van Maanen 1978; Punch 1998). It therefore becomes more of an issue of what is done with that information beyond the boundaries of that workplace role and the relationships of trust associated with it.

5.6.2 Privacy, Harm and Confidentiality of data

Conventional practices and ethical codes espouse the view that various safeguards should protect the privacy and identity of research subjects (Punch 1998). Whilst organisations have been identified within this research, this has been more for the reasons of providing necessary contextual
information relating to the location of the research project. Where detailed
information has been derived from being an insider in a particular
organisation, informed consent has been obtained. Information that has been
reported on any other connected organisation has only drawn from
information available through public sources such as official public
documents, media releases and the internet.

In relation to individuals referred to either directly or indirectly, or whose
comments or perceptions have been drawn upon, every endeavour has been
made to assure their anonymity.

Whilst the research object is professional practices, not people, inevitably
people and collectives are a focus of the study. Wallis (1977) states that we
must not cause *undeserved* harm, as a result of research. A key question
therefore becomes, ‘can anyone suffer *undeserved* harm as a result of this
research programme?’ But who is to define *undeserved* and *deserved* (Punch
1998), and who is to define *harm*?

Again it must be stressed that as the research is workplace based, the
process of gathering field research occurs within the workplace context.
Whilst power relations associated with the workplace and myself as a
researcher within it have been previously discussed, the potential to cause
harm to people and/or collectives does not differ from the professional
consulting role to the researcher role. I however like to think that my approach
to people and research reflects elements of the ethical positions of Deyle et
al. (1992) as *covenantal*; that is a sensitive people-orientation, and as one
based on critical theory and advocacy and supporting opportunities for
alternative voices to be heard.

In relation to the broader question of to what purposes the research will be
used, and whether there is any harm to be caused, I believe the same
principles apply. In the research text there has been an attempt to respect
and consider all views and perspectives put forward. There is no direct or implied criticism of individuals, collectives or organisations, beyond the identification of issues and their implications for principled professional practice.
6 CHAPTER SIX: Case study: exploring the five disciplines of the learning organisation in an international development context

6.1 Introduction

What follows here is a case-study of an organisational change programme that I was professionally involved in Tanzania, from Feb 2001 to Feb 2003. In line with discussion in Chapter 5, it should be noted that the term case-study is used in a specific but somewhat loose manner. It however forms a vehicle for further exploring the broader concerns defined in Chapter 1.

As part of broader macro-structural reform, involving the privatisation of parastatal organisations, I came to Tanzania as part of a major organisational change programme. My engagement was through the European consortium who, as part of a shareholder agreement with the Government of Tanzania (GoT), assumed management control of the former state owned fixed-service telecommunications organisation. My role in the organisation was ostensibly to provide high level support to fulfilling the requirements of transforming the organisation into a modern, efficient and effective business organisation. Broadly speaking my position could be viewed as a representative of the western capitalist system working amongst the old vestiges of colonialism and socialism in the pursuit of change.

My intention here is to both capture and critique aspects of the programme within the popular organisational learning framework of ‘The Fifth Discipline’ (Senge 1990), which has also influenced many of my own professional beliefs and practices in relation to organisational change and learning. My purpose for this has a number of dimensions. Firstly, in order to employ reflective or reflexive processes professional experience has to be captured. Once captured, emergent meanings and representations can be explored. They can be reflected upon in terms of the nature and origins of professional knowledge, which often appear as intuitive (Schön 1983; Bourdieu 1990,
1998), and the extent of alignment between professional ‘theories of action’ and professional ‘theories in use’ Argyris (1993).

Secondly, those experiences and the ways they are captured in text can be further explored to grasp their deeper implicit meaning by exposing underlying and hidden assumptions. I therefore draw heavily on this study for broader reflection or critique of professional theories and practices within postcolonial themes. The relevance of this is perhaps highlighted by a headline which appeared in the Tanzanian media during the course of the project; “Wazungu waimung’unya TTCL” (roughly translated as “white foreigners sucking the sweet of TTCL”). It at least seemed to indicate some local perceptions of aspects of colonialism being alive and well. This suggests a further need to consider professional roles and contributions in the broader sense of seeking genuine solutions for organisations in developing economies, and whether “western” organisational learning models are adequate in supporting this challenge.

6.1.1 The Five Disciplines of the Learning Organisation as framework for Case-Study Reflection

More than a decade ago The Fifth Discipline (Senge 1990) framed the concept of learning organisations. The learning organisation is an ambitious concept and I use the five disciplines it proposes to reflect on challenges and practices of working in an organisation in East Africa.

Although the initial publication emerged more than 10 years ago, I have chosen the notion of the Learning Organisation and, in particular ‘The Five Disciplines’, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the concept of learning organisations sought to create a vision or an ideal; something to aspire to but which has not necessarily been achieved. In fact 10 years down the track multiple research programmes, discussions, web-sites, etc continue to grapple with the notion and complexity of building learning organisations.
Secondly the concept of the learning organisation does not stand alone in terms of organisation and learning theories. A framework is provided for exploring and integrating multiple discussions around various themes. The research and thinking of many other theorists from a variety of disciplines is therefore also drawn on as appropriate throughout this paper; especially in terms of how they relate to my own beliefs and practices, and how they contribute to broader discussion around organisational issues that emerge.

Finally, the concept of the learning organisation draws heavily from the disciplines of social science and education, but frames them within the language of corporations and business. This in itself tends to inevitably provide scope for a clash of divergent value systems, which are a broader focus of this paper. Indeed even the cultural embeddedness of the learning organisation and its five disciplines within western corporatism needs to be investigated in order to understand the potential of its contribution within postcolonial environments and any genuine pursuit of social justice.

I therefore use each discipline as a framework to explore:-

- theory; that is what the book says
- my own personal understanding of that theory
- specific approaches, practices and experiences evident within the organisational change programme
- the alignment of theory and practices and any other emergent issues.

6.2 Introduction to the Project

6.2.1 Introduction

My intention is not to critique the project in terms of it business outcomes or the activities of any particular people or organisations associated with it. Rather it is used as a vehicle for exploring the broader concerns of this thesis.
Background information is therefore provided in terms of the broader context of the project within a macro structural reform programme, the personal location of the author within the project, and an overview of key activities associated with the project.

6.2.2 Context of structural reform

Tanganyika, as Tanzania was formerly known, gained independence in 1961 from its status as a British Protectorate. Based on the Arusha Declaration of 1967, Tanzania, under the leadership of Julius Nyerere, launched a socialist development agenda. According to IMF (1999) and World Bank reports (1990, 1999) the economy showed signs of growth and social indicators showed improvement. However this trend reversed during the 1970's and the 1980's, and was largely attributed to the inefficiencies of a state-run economy.

In 1986, the Government of Tanzania (GoT) embarked on a comprehensive structural adjustment programme supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and bilateral assistance. It was based on a major transition from state controlled to free market. Again, IMF and World Bank reports suggested the economy initially responded to these reforms, but during 1993 again showed signs of decline. After the election of a new government in 1995 economic reform and stabilisation efforts gained momentum again with a focus on streamlining the civil service, divestiture of parastatals and restructuring the financial system.

In November 1996, the IMF approved a three-year arrangement under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, which became known as the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), to provide support for Tanzania’s economic and financial policies over the period 1996-99. In April 2000, the IMF and the World Bank Group’s International Development Association (IDA) further agreed to support a comprehensive debt reduction package for
Tanzania under the enhanced *Heavily Indebted Poor Countries* (HIPC) Initiative.

Tanzania was to receive the bulk of the assistance under the enhanced HIPC Initiative when it satisfied a number of conditions, including:

- Maintenance of a stable macroeconomic environment, as evidenced by satisfactory performance under a program supported by an arrangement under the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, and specific structural reform measures in the areas of governance, government financial management, tax reform, improvement of the business environment, and improvement of utility performance (IMF 2000).

The structural reform agenda included restructuring and privatisation of utilities and other parastatal monopolies, and implementation of regulatory frameworks. Other public sector reforms were to be based on an approved *Public Service Reform Program* (PSRP), including further rationalisation of the civil service and the continuing improvement of salaries, resources permitting, to competitive levels.

By mid 1980's it was identified that trade in more than 50 commodities was restricted to parastatals. In the mid 1990's trade was completely liberalised and more than 400 parastatal entities identified for divesture. By the end of the 1990's more than half of them had been divested, and preparations begun for the divesture of utilities and other large monopolies. Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited (TTCL), the company forming the focus of this study, was one of these.

TTCL, the public telecommunications operator of Tanzania, had its roots in the administration of the East African Telecommunications Corporation encompassing Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (then Tanganyika). However with the collapse of the East African Community in 1977 the Tanzania Posts and Telecommunication Corporation was formed. In January 1994, the postal and telecommunication services were separated, leading to the formation of a
new state-owned company, Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited (TTCL). In 1994, Tanzania set up an independent telecommunications regulatory authority, the Tanzania Communications Commission (TCC), to license and oversee operations of all communication services.

TTCL was earmarked for early privatisation. In line with the information and communications technology boom of the 1990’s it was undoubtedly seen as likely to attract the attention of international telecommunications companies and investors. The investment memorandum for TTCL however was delayed, pending resolution of issues related to cellular telephone licensing, but was eventually issued during 1999. In the lead up to privatisation TTCL had also been the recipient of substantial assistance from the World Bank and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for organisational capacity building.

At the time of issue of the investment memorandum four other cellular telephone licenses had been granted in Tanzania, with these operators collectively having substantially more customers than TTCL. A decision was made that the investment memorandum for TTCL would also include the issuance of another cellular telephone license. It also provided for a 4 year exclusivity period, after which the market would be opened up to other fixed line telecommunications service providers.

The actual privatisation of TTCL was primarily overseen by the Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC). Letters of invitation were sent to almost 120 organisations for potential participation in the privatisation, with only nine submitting pre-qualification documentation, and only six reaching pre-qualification stage. Agreement was finally reached between a German and Dutch Consortium for the acquisition of 35% of the company. Initially 65% of the company would remain with the GoT, but as part of an ongoing process the agreement provided that a 14% share of the company would be available for acquisition by international financial institutions, a 5% share available for acquisition by company employees, and a 10% share available for acquisition
by Tanzanian financial institutions. It was envisaged the company would also eventually be listed on the Tanzanian Stock Exchange.

The agreement between the GoT and Dutch/German consortium not only laid out financial arrangements but also the licensing requirements. These included ambitious subscriber connection targets and the formation of a separate entity for the provision of mobile telephony services. The Shareholders Agreement between the GoT and consortium also included a "Management Contract". This laid out another separate financial agreement for the overall management of the company and provided for bringing a suitably qualified international management team to occupy the position of CEO and three other top positions relating to finance, technical operations and marketing (Figure 6.2.3-1).

The management contract was also to cover costs of bringing in international consultants with high levels of expertise and experience in a wide range of business and technical areas considered necessary for strengthening company performance. In practice this was reflected in the activities of approximately 20 consultants, on both short and longer term contracts, advising on and supporting key change initiatives relating to new network and information technologies, operations and maintenance, network rehabilitation, marketing and business development, organisational change and development, billing, quality management and process development, credit management, and so on. It also supported substantial information technology improvement, and out-of-country support provided by the consortium in terms of technical back-stopping, supporting investment processes, and supporting strategic vendor selection for plans relating to substantial network development.

The consortium itself constituted DETECON GmbH of Germany; a consulting subsidiary of the European telecommunications giant Deutsche Telekom, and MSI Cellular of Holland, which is the parent company of many mobile telecommunications operators across Africa. The separate agreement
between these two companies saw DETECON GmbH as the small minority shareholder, and provider of a specified amount of key fixed telecommunications consulting services on a fee paying basis. MSI was the major shareholder and source of financial investment.

Whilst the shareholders agreement was signed in February 2001, with an immediate introduction of personnel from the consortium, details relating to final financial arrangements and payments were not fully concluded, and were subject to independent verification of the financial status of the company. This issue erupted into a major shareholders dispute towards the end of 2001 and, despite ongoing negotiations, in the first quarter of 2004 remained unresolved.

6.2.3 The context of the organisation

At the time of privatisation, the company had approximately 3600 employees. The average age of employees was in the early forties, with the majority of employees engaged within the company for their entire working life. Staff distribution by sex was approximately 30% female and 70% male, with females concentrated at lower levels of job classifications. Less than 10% of company employees had formal academic educations. Approximately three-quarters of staff had not completed secondary schooling. More than 2/3 of employees were engaged in positions classified as "low-skilled".

At privatisation no expatriates were employed within TTCL. Expatriates had only been involved in the company in the capacity of temporary consultants engaged through previous international assistance programmes. Despite there being a large number of Tanzanian citizens of Caucasian and Asian origin, these groups were not reflected in the personnel profile of the company. Employees tended to represent indigenous black Africans, and *Swahili* people (an integration of indigenous black Africans and those of Arabic origins). In a nation where religion plays a strong part in family and
community life, the company reflected national profiles of a dominant Christian community and strong Muslim community.

HR policies of the company reflected national immigration policies and laws in relation to recruitment. First preference for filling vacant positions was with suitably qualified internal candidates. If no such candidates were available a national search should be undertaken. If suitable candidates could not be found international recruitment was permitted. It appears that prior to privatisation the latter had never been invoked.

Shortly after formalising the shareholders agreement, the Board approved a new high level organisation structure, and the appointment of suitably qualified personnel from the private consortium into the top four positions (Figure 6.2.3-1). Whilst these positions were filled initially with expatriates there was a premise that indigenous talent would eventually take over from expatriate management. The new organisation structure was based on creating core service organisations with clear responsibilities for key business areas and processes. Positions marked with the * were to be employed directly by the consortium as per the management contract. Only the credentials of the CEO were to be presented to the Board for approval, with the remaining three positions subject to approvals by the consortium and CEO.
On finalisation of the shareholders agreement, specialist consulting resources were immediately mobilised.

As discussed subsequently, a major reorganisation programme commenced to move from the existing organisation structure to one aligned with that defined above. A new structure was systematically defined and cascaded down through a participatory process facilitated by a high level “Organisational Steering Committee”. A number of guiding principles were adopted. Firstly, where a position in the new organisation structure closely matched the roles and responsibilities of the existing organisational structure, the incumbent remained in the position, subject to satisfactory performance appraisal after three months.

Secondly, where a position in the new organisation structure did not match the existing organisation it was to be opened up to internal recruitment and selection, and for appointment of the most suitably qualified candidate. Finally, where people who held existing substantive positions were not selected into advertised positions they would retain salary and benefits associated with their substantive position and be assigned “project” duties until such time the reorganisation process had reached a certain point and an imminent decision in relation to retrenchment was handed down. Those appointed into the new organisation structure were involved in participatory processes for defining and fine-tuning the next levels of the organisation.

While most positions were filled with suitable internal candidates and the majority of senior personnel absorbed into the new organisation, there were however a number of key positions not filled. An international candidate was found to fill the Director of Finance role, but others remained vacant.

As an interim solution it was decided to place expatriate consultants, who were in-country and engaged in related duties, into key vacant positions on a temporary basis. From an executive management perspective the rationale
behind this was that it: (1) enabled a message to be reinforced that “only suitably qualified and experienced candidates” would be appointed into positions; that there would be “no token appointments”, (2) would empower consultants to ensure that key business deliverables were met, and (3) provided time to coach and support internal candidates for roles and/or find other suitable candidates for placement into them.

As a result the “face” of the company suddenly changed (Figure 6.2.3-2). Executive and other senior management roles were filled with expatriates, with key departments supported by an influx of expatriate consultants provided through the management contract. In addition other activities; particularly relating to information technology, HR, and communications were supported through further direct contracts between the company and other consulting companies. Whilst some of these resulted in Tanzania nationals engaged in the company, the majority were expatriates. Overall the expatriates included nationals of UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Columbia, New Zealand, Holland, Mauritius and India.
TTCL as a state-owned company had always had a Board of Directors who provided guidance to the overall operations of the company. In principle on privatisation this did not change; only the Board's membership. The new CEO reported directly to the Board of Directors (Figure 6.2.3-3), which constituted 4 nominated representatives of the government, 1 representative of DETECON GmbH and 4 representatives of MSI. The chairman of the Board was also from MSI. In reality however because executive management were employed directly by the consortium there were direct operational reporting requirements to parent companies. On privatisation Board Members representing the government’s interests should have reported solely to a special office within the President’s department. However because of unresolved issues surrounding the final financial transactions of the privatisation many government agencies were involved.

Figure 6.2.3-3: Governance Structure
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6.2.4 Project Stakeholders

Broadly speaking the project involved a substantial number of key stakeholders. These included shareholders, who had a clear and joint interest in the commercial success of the organisation. However they also had divergent interests. The GoT had broader stakes in terms of providing telecommunications services to the entire nation, and the success of the privatisation was important in terms of its agreements with the IMF and World Bank. On the private shareholder side there were broader interests associated with the vision of MSI in becoming the leading mobile services provider across Africa, and in terms of DETECON's interest in selling consulting services.

Due to active involvement of certain sectors of the international community in the broader macro reform being undertaken in Tanzania, external stakeholders also included diplomats and investment bankers.

The 3600 employees of the company clearly had a high stake in terms of job security and remuneration. Customers were interested in access to services, and the quality and price of them. Numerous suppliers of equipment and professional services had an interest in the company. There was also considered to be a general public or national interest in terms of TTCL's contribution to national economic well-being.

The workers union was also a major stakeholder through its concern with protecting workers' interests such as job security, remuneration and other benefits such as housing, health care and transport allowances. However as a major power in the former socialist regime, it also had its own political interests.

Fraud, both internal and external, was rampant within the company; ranging from businesses engaged in line-tapping, to employees receiving payments
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for assisting in the award of contracts, to false claims of entitlements, etc. These groups were also considered as stakeholders, albeit with negative stakes in the company, which were under threat in the face of change.

6.2.5 Personal Location within the Project

I was originally invited to Tanzania, in my capacity as organisation development consultant, to undertake an investigation into the status of the organisation and to make recommendations for transforming the organisation into an efficient and effective private entity. I was contracted for 3 months by DETECON GmbH, with the approval of the major shareholder, to undertake this. My services formed part of the broader range of consulting services provided by DETECON through the agreement between the two shareholders. I have had a long association with DETECON GmbH in many international environments on a freelance consulting basis.

For the period February and May 2001, my role was purely that of an external consultant. My role was to collect information, analyse and report on that information and make relevant recommendations. On the basis of those recommendations, I was invited to remain and co-ordinate their implementation. My role in the company therefore continued until February 2003. However I was not contracted on a fixed basis for this period. Rather, because of ongoing uncertainties (particularly as they related to the ongoing shareholders dispute), I was continuously contracted for short-term periods of 3-6 months.

My capacity during the implementation phase remained as one of “consultant”, with no official decision-making power within the organisation. Because of the importance attributed to organisational change I reported directly to the CEO, and became chairperson and facilitator of the high level “organisational steering committee”. In addition, when the Director of “Organisation and Employee Services”, left to take up an international
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appointment, and no suitable candidates were located to fill this role, I also assumed the role of "Co-ordinator of Employee and Organisation Services".

My responsibilities and formal authority in this role was limited in contrast to other consultants who assumed full line management responsibilities. I had no formal decision-making power, but was rather co-ordinating the strategic HR plans of the company and coaching the next level of line managers within that functional area. The decision of executive management to place me in this latter role as "co-ordinator" rather than as an "Acting Director" was primarily based around the political sensitivities attached to this position; particularly as it related to the interests of employees.

However I need to stress that whilst I had no formal decision making authority in the organisation, this was not to say that I had no "power". I had a close working relationship with the CEO who readily listened to issues I raised, often sought my advice and readily accepted my ideas and recommendations. Because of the pervasiveness of organisational issues across all business and operational activities I was highly involved in strategic planning and all management forums. My profile and presence within the company was therefore highly visible and seen to be directly associated with the "people" issues of the company. I was therefore viewed by a substantial number of employees as having the "power" to influence and impact personal lives and welfare.

I worked across all departments, and both the headquarters and regional and rural areas. As English is not widely spoken by most people at the "grass-roots" level of the company there were communication barriers. However I interacted with people at all levels of the organisation on a regular basis.
6.2.6 The Organisational Change Programme

6.2.6.1 Phase 1: Organisational Assessment

The first part of my involvement in the project focused on the completion of an organisation assessment (Figure 6.2.6.1-1). This comprised a rapid investigation and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of organisational aspects.

The SWOT analysis considered:

**Internal Organisational Environment (Strengths and Weaknesses)**
• Vision/Mission/Goals
• Organisation
• Key Business Processes
• Human Resources
• Reporting and Management Information Systems
• Organisational Culture

**External Environment (Opportunities and Threats)**

• Tanzanian Legislation as it relates to employment
• Training and Development in Tanzania
• Employment Market and Policies in Tanzania
• Trade Union Relations
• Outsourcing Opportunities

Key findings of the investigation were presented to the existing management group for comment and discussion, before finalisation and submission to a working group comprising representatives of the European consortium for consideration of where key support should be directed.

6.2.6.2 *Phase II: Implementation of the Organisational Change Programme*

Within the broader strategic planning of the company there were a number of focal developmental aspects. These were:-:

• **Business Development:** understanding the market and its demands for various kinds of telecommunications services and products,

• **Network Development:** developing and rehabilitating the national telecommunications network to complement business development strategy and to fulfil requirements of the shareholders and licensing agreement
• **Information Technology Development**: developing information systems and systems platforms required for efficient and effective management of all key information relating to the business

• **Organisation Development**: fulfilling requirements of developing a customer and business responsive organisation and supporting the three previously mentioned strategic developmental strands.

Within this framework organisation development was considered by the executive management as a strategic imperative. The organisational development programme had a number of key elements to it, which largely emerged from the organisational assessment. Specific aspects of the organisational development programme are discussed in more detail in 6.4.2.

An Organisation Steering Committee was created in order to oversee and ensure alignment of all activities relating to organisational change. Due to the strategic importance of the programme the committee had the direct sponsorship of the CEO. For efficiency reasons it was decided to limit membership to 7. Membership therefore included the CEO, and his three direct reporting “Operating Officers” (expatriates). The latter were considered essential members of the committee as “organisational development” formed a key part of the strategic plans of their groups.

The Executive Director, as responsible for corporate communications and also in recognition of his former role as “Acting Managing Director” in the lead up to privatisation, was also considered an essential member. It was considered essential the Director of HR be a member of the group as the key person responsible for people issues within the company. In addition it was considered necessary that the group include regional representation. Two senior managers; one from Dar es Salaam the major centre and another from another regional “zone”, were therefore nominated at a management forum. I was a member in my capacity as organisation development consultant and assumed the role of chairperson, which also resulted in me being the only woman on the committee. It was however agreed that as various activities
came up other sub-committees would be created to oversee and provide input into them.

Preliminary discussion considered whether there should be a union representative on the committee, as a broader representative of employees. This however was eventually decided against on local advice that formal mechanisms were already in place for communications between management and workers, and that such an arrangement was likely to be deemed as outside of that framework. Instead it was considered more suitable that efforts be made by the Steering Committee, or its representatives, to meet regularly with the union leadership to invite input and to consult on strategies associated with organisational change. As it turned out however, there appeared to be reluctance on the part of the union to liaise with management outside of any framework other than the existing one, and through which work place conditions were traditionally negotiated.

However the Organisation Steering Committee was created and for the life of the project met at least on a weekly basis for between 2-5 hours. Its mandate in relation to the change programme primarily revolved around planning, co-ordination, communications and issues management.

Whilst on one-hand the change programme was driven from the top and considered a key leadership issue, it was also seen as a participatory process with structures put in place to encourage the development of common understandings and to try and learn and derive feedback from all levels of the organisation. It was also recognised by the Steering Committee that once the process was set in motion it would not be "manageable" to every last detail. Due to the systemic and far-reaching nature of the changes, the process was likely to develop a life-of-its-own which would require constant cycles of planning, monitoring and re-planning.

As they related to the realisation of the vision, mission and values statements of the company, strategic objectives were defined. These emerged through
the broader business planning process of the company, which was undertaken through various forums with a lot of support from my side. These strategic objectives were defined as:

- to build a customer service culture
- to build an organisation structure responsive to the needs of customers and the business
- to realise internal efficiencies through improved productivity levels
- to ensure the right people are in the right jobs, and empowered to perform
- to ensure that appropriate training and development is provided to ensure individual competency is aligned with the requirements and challenges of job roles
- to ensure that remuneration and rewards are commensurate with individual contributions and performance
- to build partnerships of trust where everyone is committed to working towards shared goals and benefits

It is not an easy task to succinctly define the organisational change programme, and more detailed aspects are explored in 6.4.2. However a brief overview of key elements of the programme, as they guided the process, is given under their respective headings.

1. Building an effective organisation structure:
   - Building a flatter organisation structure to support key business processes where roles and interfaces are clearly defined and aligned
   - Implementing a phased-roll out of the new structure
   - Implementing transparent and objective recruitment and selection processes
   - Building a strong core management team
• Centralising corporate and network services management, but retaining a decentralised approach to customer service

• Aligning personnel requirements in terms numbers and skills (considering growth + network management concept + IT platform + outsourcing possibilities) with organisation structure

• Recruiting externally for core competencies not currently available within the company

• Aligning HR policies with the above; including introduction of a performance management system

• Resourcing for continuous support and development

2. Improving key business processes

• Setting up participatory teams for reviewing and developing core business processes with an emphasis on improved efficiency, transparency, compliance requirements and checkpoints

• Implementing pilot projects to trial and learn from new business processes before rolling out company-wide

• Supporting implementation of key business processes through appropriate training and coaching

3. Reform of remuneration and reward system

• Negotiating managerial salaries outside of the industrial relations process

• Implementing a new remuneration system that is aligned with roles and responsibilities, supports a performance oriented culture and streamlines cumbersome allowances

• Aligning HR policies with the above
4. **A company exit programme**

- Working in collaboration with the trade union for the reduction of surplus low skilled and non-core personnel
- Providing for former senior and managerial personnel who are not recruited into the new structure
- Ensuring that the impact to individuals through the above is handled sensitively and responsibly

5. **Training and development activities and a focus on communications to support the broader change process**

- Understanding training needs on the basis of job skills, performance improvement requirements, introduction of new technologies and business processes
- Developing and implementing training plans that focus on implementing customised training programmes and put in appropriate coaching and support systems
- Ensuring the alignment of training and development with the new performance management system
- Balancing partnerships with external training providers with internal trainers
- Ensuring continuous forums for the exchange of views and information and for building common understandings.

6.2.7 **Shareholder Dispute**

What however was not anticipated was a media war that accompanied the very high level shareholders dispute, which erupted. It appeared the entire privatisation had indeed been hurried through in order to meet the requirements of the GoT securing an IMF loan, but with elements of the formal agreement between the two shareholders still subject to negotiation
and clarification post-privatisation. Commencing in the middle of 2002, and almost for the remainder of that year, newspaper headlines like those examples below appeared with regular frequency.

**Extracts from various newspapers**

'TTCL Investor should pack up and go home' (Headline of letter to the editor in the *Business Times*, 28th June 2002)

'TTCL on the road to ruin' (Headline of letter published in the *Business Times*, 5th July 2002)

'TTCL staff disappointed in investor'........'Staff who spoke yesterday said the management and the investor act like conmen, something which makes them (staff) unwilling to support them because they have been using money for their personal benefits' (Translation of headline and corresponding text in *Majira*, 5th July 2002)

'TTCL Privatisation: Acceptable or Rotten?' (Translation of Headline in *RAI*, 8th August 2002)

'TTCL workers call for PCB' intervention' (Headline of *The Guardian*, 29th August 2002).

'White foreigners sucking the sweet of TTCL' (Translation of Headline in *Majira*, 29th August 2002).

'TTCL problems are historical – they have been inherited from the government (Headline of Editorial Opinion in *The Guardian*, 6th September 2002).


'TTCL is building for the future' (Press notice placed by TTCL management in the *Daily News*, 24th September 2002).

'Public must not be used to settle personal vendettas' (Headline in *The Guardian*, 26th September 2002, which subsequently explores how the TTCL debate engulfs politics, personal interests, commercial rivalry, the year 2005 national elections, anti-privatisation sentiments, opportunists and workers fearing loss of jobs).

'TTCL investor won’t pay up' 'the strategic investor in TTCL, and the government represented by the Treasury Registrar, failed to agree on the year 2000 accounts...the accounts in question are key to the outstanding payment of 60 million dollars by the...consortium which bought 35 per cent shares...' (Headline and extracts from corresponding article in the *Sunday News*, 29th September 2002).

'Privatisation: Are we biting the bullet?' (Headline of Editorial Comment in *The Financial Times*, 2nd October 2002)
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‘Confrontation between staff and management at TTCL’ (Translation of Headline in Mwananchi, 3rd October, 2002)

‘...the meeting called by the management this week...is to establish a common understanding on issues relevant to activities of the company and shareholder issues...’ (translation of extract in Mwananchi, 28th October 2002).


‘TTCL workers accord their leaders heroes welcome’ (Headline in The African, 4th November 2002)

‘Saboteurs damage TTCL facilities’... the TTCL management believes that the incidents appeared to be more of sabotage in nature than vandalism...’ (Headline and extract from corresponding article in the Daily News, 5th November 2002)

‘Now TTCL Staff Plan March to State House’ (Headline in The East African, 11-17th November 2002).

‘Another conflict brews at TTCL’ (Headline in The Guardian, 16th November 2002).

‘Does Privatisation ignore workers?’....(Headline of editorial in The Guardian, 2nd December 2002 which subsequently traces the shift in the role of workers and other stakeholders in nationalised organisations to those that are privately owned).

The dispute and media coverage created a tense and very challenging environment. It is also important to note that within the context of this dispute for many months during 2002 the Board did not consider and decide on key operational and organisational issues. As a result many formerly proposed organisational activities were stalled thus fuelling perceptions that many stakeholder expectations were not met. These ranged from issues relating to major investment for improving nationwide network infrastructure to imminent retrenchment to salary reform and the flow on of tangible benefits to employees.

The media war seemed to be aimed at stirring nationalist sentiments against the foreign investor and everyone who was associated with it. This created an air of real confusion, with quite serious allegations made about the status of the company and the activities of “foreigners”. For many months, the shareholders; including the GoT, made no public statements on the subject. The dispute seemed to trigger further external stakeholder activity. The
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privatisation path of the current GoT was seriously challenged by other political groups. One of the above mentioned articles, for example, suggested the presidential election imminent in 2005 saw different political allegiances being rallied and power-bases tested. It also suggested that vested interests associated with other operators in the market were also at work. This in turn fuelled rumour, speculation and mistrust amongst staff.

The workers union also became very active; questioning the concepts, strategies and agreements behind the privatisation process itself, and thus developing a very tense industrial relations environment. Management tried to distance itself from the dispute, and bring representative groups of employees together in order to provide clarification on all issues and receive inputs on how to minimise the impact on day-to-day operations of the company. This was however met with a sensationalised walk-out staged by the workers union, and threats in the media to march to the Presidential State House in order to lay workers concerns before the President.

It should however be noted that whilst there was tension between collectives, there was no open hostility at any individual level.

6.3 Reflection on the Five Disciplines of the Learning Organisation in the context of an organisational change programme

6.3.1 Introduction

Broader discussion and reflection on the project case-study have been made within the framework each of the five disciplines of the 'Learning Organisation. Generally, emphasised passages are direct quotations from 'The Fifth Discipline' (Senge 1990).

The five disciplines are stated as:-

1. Systems Thinking
2. Personal Mastery
3. Mental Models
4. Shared Vision; and
5. Team Learning.

The first three disciplines have particular application for individuals, with the last two having group application. Senge writes of the disciplines that they might just as well be called the leadership disciplines as the learning disciplines. Those who excel in these areas will be the natural leaders of learning organisations' (p. 359). 'Systems thinking' has the distinction of being the 'fifth discipline' as it serves to make the results of the other disciplines work together for business benefit.

6.3.2 Individual Discipline: Systems Thinking

6.3.3 What the book says:

Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes (p. 68). 'The Fifth Discipline' proposed a definition borrowed from system dynamics -- which looks at structure in terms of feedback interactions within a system. Systems thinking therefore is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools ... developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively (p. 7). The essence of the discipline of systems thinking lies in a shift of mind:

- seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and
- seeing processes of change rather than snapshots

One of the most important, and potentially most empowering, insights ...... is that certain patterns of structure recur again and again. These 'systems archetypes' or 'generic structures' embody the key to learning to see structures in our personal and organisational lives (p. 94).
The practice of systems thinking starts with understanding a simple concept called "feedback" that shows how actions can reinforce or counteract (balance) each other. It builds learning to recognise types of "structures" that recur again and again. Eventually, systems thinking forms a rich language for describing a vast array of interrelationships and patterns of change. Ultimately, it simplifies life by helping us to see the deeper patterns lying behind the events and the details (p. 73).

In mastering systems thinking, we give up the assumption that there must be an individual, or individual agent, responsible. The feedback perspective suggests that everyone shares responsibility for problems generated by a system. That doesn't necessarily imply everyone can exert equal leverage in changing the system. But it does imply that the search for scapegoats – is a blind alley (pp. 78-79).

Whenever there is “resistance to change”, you can count on there being one or more “hidden” balancing processes, operating within the system (p. 88).

6.3.3.1 A reflection on personal understandings around the concept of ‘systems thinking’

‘Systems thinking’ integrates the other disciplines so many of the comments I make in this section will also be reflected in subsequent sections, and vice versa. It is however a complex principle.

Firstly, it is important to clarify what is meant by “structure”. A “structure”, as patterns of interdependency we enact, and which recur again and again, comes close to Giddens (1984) sociological view of ‘structuration’. Accordingly predominant day to day activity taking the form of routine behaviour is shaped not only by what we consciously know but very importantly by our unconscious knowledge of the world and unacknowledged conditions and consequences of action.
Secondly 'systems thinking' is about looking at situations from "whole" perspectives, rather than fragmented ones. 'Systems thinking' implies that whenever one element of the whole system is changed it will have a corresponding impact on other elements of the system; like a ripple effect. That impact is likely to be either a reinforcing one or a slowing (p. 97) one. Of course when considering an organisational system, broader systemic structures in the external environment must also be taken into account. For example, in the Tanzanian context, the whole system might look like that in Figure 6.3.3.1-1. Giddens (1984) structuration theory also reminds us that each one of those systemic elements is producing its own structures, which will have some impact on other elements at points where they interrelate.

Thirdly, therefore, 'systems thinking' is about interrelationships. As Senge points out, managers in organisations often react to behaviours and the results of them, without being fully aware of the structures that generate them. At the most simplistic level, 'systems thinking' therefore explains why many change initiatives seem to fail. They simply do not go to the core of matters but tackle fragments of the whole, or symptoms rather than the cause. It explains why if you do not address fundamental "structures" that drive certain behaviours, those behaviours simply continue to act as barriers to change.
As an organisational practitioner I have adopted my own theoretical framework which also owes much to the thinking of organisation and management theorists like Drucker (1990, 1992), Handy (1993, 1996) and Senge (1990, 1992), but has evolved through professional experience and reflecting on it. In simple terms however this personal theoretical framework is best captured in Figure 6.3.3.1-2. Fundamentally it also recognises that "structures" are powerful drivers of behaviour. Therefore in seeking to "manage" organisational behaviour, "structures" are seen as requiring alignment with goals sought by organisations and their inhabitants, so that they are ultimately realised or enabled through behaviour.

![Diagram: Personal theory of how structural influences in organisations]

Returning to the notion of "structure", it is perhaps easy to think of "structure" in organisations as relating to organisation charts, or the design of business workflow and processes. Of course, this can be part of it, as they also support the generation of certain behaviours, but it is only part of it. In thinking about "systemic structures" the entire scope and pattern of interrelationships among key components of the system must be considered.

In addition to the very tangible structures we can consciously design and build, consideration also needs to be given to less visible or tangible structures, and which have not necessarily been consciously built and are not
so readily manageable. "Structure" therefore is also inclusive of social dimensions associated with culture, attitudes, perceptions and the way knowledge is constructed, managed and shared.

For purposes of convenience I prefer to make a distinction between two kinds of structures; social structures and frame structures (Figure 6.3.3.1-3). Social structures can be considered as cultural factors, which shape behaviour and views of social reality. Frame structures are also powerful drivers of behaviour but they are evident in more tangible elements both inside and outside of the organisation such as in agreements, policies, economic climate, markets, decision-making processes. Of course in reality the two are highly interrelated, but there is a management tendency to focus on frame structures. The powerful interrelationship with social structures, which according to systemic principles is likely to create disalignment, and/or some kind of dynamic tension requiring resolution, is often ignored.

Figure 6.3.3.1-3: Structures at work in organisations

As discussed in Chapter 2 the culture that develops in an organisation is seen to be a key, but somewhat intangible element, that contributes to whether an organisation is successful or not. Management and organisational theorists...
provide useful frameworks for seeking to understand different dimensions of organisational culture. Schein (1997), for example, advocates that indeed the only way to understand an organisation is to understand its culture; how it is created, embedded, developed, manipulated, managed and changed. His approach explores three levels of culture (Figure 6.3.3.1-4).

**Levels of Culture**

![Levels of Culture Diagram](image)

Handy (1993) makes distinctions between organisations that have a culture built around 'Power', 'Task', 'Role' or 'People'. Hofstede (1991) and Mant (1997) provide frameworks for considering different dimensions of culture, and for making comparisons between dominant cultures associated with different geographic areas. Clear differences between certain cultural elements common in East Africa compared to those commonly found in the West are evident. Certain value “structures” are inherent in each cultural system, which recur again and again.

Whereas cultures, and the philosophies, values etc, which are at the very heart of social communities tend to be more enduring, more interim reactions to organisational life should also not be excluded, as these may impact organisational culture over time. George and Jones (1997), for example define a psychosocial model which integrates three significant dimensions of the work experience; work values, attitudes and moods, into one overarching framework. They explore the interrelationships of these elements, how they influence each other, and their implications for organisational behaviour.
If culture is viewed as collective values and attitudes, the framework of George and Jones (1997) is useful for considering the development and potential change in values underpinning a culture. Values are key determinants of how people come to evaluate their jobs and organisations and form their work attitudes. They are the most long lasting ways of experiencing work and can affect work attitudes and work moods. Work moods are the most transitory ways of experiencing work. However a person, who experiences a negative work mood more or less consistently for an extended period of time, might have their values and attitudes affected. Work attitudes are less stable than work values, but there is still potential for attitudes to affect values, especially in the longer term.

Collective belief systems alongside individual values, attitudes and moods also have a powerful impact on the way people react and behave in the face of change. Whilst presumably socially constructed and informed it is not always easy to explain different individual reactions in the face change. Similarity in the way people can be grouped according to reactions to change is a phenomenon I have observed across every change project I have been involved in. In particular, and as noted by Hammer and Stanton (1995), resistance is natural and inevitable but does not always show its face in readily understandable ways. However, I have found that it is generally easy to classify people’s engagement into four categories (Figure 6.3.3.1-5).
This implies that certain kinds of structures cause those behavioural patterns to be enacted again and again, regardless of context, and strategies for working within the phenomena is usually central to any change programme.

Another point for consideration, and as a natural extension of looking at organisations from a whole perspective, is the corresponding need to look at the people who inhabit them from a whole perspective also. There is much to suggest that organisational structures, including those relating to professional identity groups, as well as of course broader structures surrounding different social identity groups, encourage people to live fragmented or multiple lives. This means that the whole person is not necessarily involved in the organisation, which in turn enables certain organisational structures to be developed and/or perpetuated. Multiple selves constructed according to different contexts (Gergen 1991) also lead to what Argyris (1993) refers to as contradictions between espoused values and values in action, and represent additional complexity to managing organisational change.

The notion of change in an organisation implies a transformation from one state to another (Figure 6.3.3.1-6). 'Systems thinking' certainly helps develop an understanding of the requirements and challenges of managing profound and enduring change. 'Systems thinking' also helps explain why things go wrong, and where conflicts or tensions between key structures are likely to emerge.

![Figure 6.3.3.1-6: Transformation overview](image)
In addition practical strategies are provided for promoting common dialogue around the structures at work. Simple archetypes can be created to understand limiting factors to improvement. For example in Figure 6.3.3.1-7, a *growing action* is something that organisations do to proactively improve a certain organisational *condition*, and creates a 'reinforcing loop'. However when the change initiative is not effective it is necessary to identify what *slowing action* is at work, and the *limiting condition* at its heart.

![Archetype: limiting factors to improvement](image)


Such strategies were drawn on in order to understand the organisational system, therefore these archetypes also appear throughout this discussion.

**6.3.3.2 Application of 'Systems Thinking' to understand and manage organisational change**

**6.3.3.2.1 Overview**

Here I investigate how 'Systems Thinking' was used to both understand change requirements as well to support the implementation of the change programme. Firstly, I look at how key frame and social structures, as they appeared to exist within the organisation at the time of privatisation, were understood as a precursor to embarking on a change programme. Secondly, I
explore how the principles of Systems Thinking assisted during the implementation phase; particularly in terms of emerging challenges.

However this distinction is more for convenience and ease of reading and does not represent an arbitrary cut off point where finding out and understanding stopped and implementation began. Therefore what is reflected in the first section is also inclusive of the continuous process of understanding. I do however try to make clear distinctions about what emerged from the assessment phase as distinct from the broader implementation phase.

6.3.3.2.2 Using ‘Systems Thinking’ to understand the broad requirements of managing an organisational change programme

During the assessment phase, systems thinking provided a framework for seeking to understand the existing organisation; particularly with respect to its potential for delivering according to ambitious business requirements laid down in the privatisation agreement. During the implementation phase, systems thinking provided a framework for building understanding as to why things were not working as anticipated and to assist in making adjustments to activities and plans.

6.3.3.2.2.1 Frame Structures

In summary, the SWOT exercise suggested that almost all the frame structures relating to the internal organisational environment were driving behaviours not considered conducive for an efficient and effective private business entity. Whilst for the purposes of this document I have summarised succinctly core findings in relation to frame structures (Table 6.3.3.2.2.1-1), it needs to be stressed that the way the information was presented within the report was in a somewhat different format. It was in a “SWOT” format that allowed lots of positives as well as negatives to be presented, and written in a
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style seeking to reflect a degree of sensitivity towards the people directly involved with the organisation. However I wish to stress that due to the "assessment" criteria applied, the organisation was generally seen as the antithesis of a "successful western organisation". This implied that an organisational change programme would leave very few frame "structures" unchanged.

Table 6.3.3.2.1-1: Transformation requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived &quot;as was&quot; situation</th>
<th>Resulting in...</th>
<th>Desired structures sought</th>
<th>Resulting In...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extremely hierarchical organisation that was not clearly defined at lower levels</td>
<td>slow and unresponsive</td>
<td>a flatter organisation structure</td>
<td>Improved responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job titles reflecting seniority within the company, which were loosely linked to outdated role descriptions</td>
<td>focus on functions not outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td>team based tasks, rather than functional responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appointment based on seniority and/or nepotism</td>
<td>poor visibility of who did what</td>
<td></td>
<td>better communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-objective and closed appraisal system for determining whether annual increment should apply</td>
<td>poor communications</td>
<td></td>
<td>feeling to be part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inconsistent ways of doing things</td>
<td>pre-occupation with status</td>
<td>explicit definitions of accountabilities that came with each position in the organisation</td>
<td>acceptance of responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practices overruling policies</td>
<td>no incentive to perform or improve</td>
<td>open and competitive recruitment</td>
<td>focus on achievement of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-objective means for identifying performance bottlenecks and internal abuses</td>
<td></td>
<td>focus on, and reward for achievement and results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inconsistent ways of doing things</td>
<td>cronyism</td>
<td>a performance management system that</td>
<td>focus on achievement of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no common understandings of how the organisation worked</td>
<td></td>
<td>learning for performance improvement and elimination of bottlenecks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>internal empires</td>
<td></td>
<td>encouragement of risk taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>abuse of policies (internal fraud)</td>
<td>clearly defined business rules (i.e. processes)</td>
<td>improved efficiency and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emptying the incentives</td>
<td>feedback systems</td>
<td>objective means for identifying performance bottlenecks and internal abuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>little concern for following through on</td>
<td></td>
<td>monitoring and control to ensure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tray</th>
<th>outcomes</th>
<th>within processes</th>
<th>issues are brought to closure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• top down communications</td>
<td>little awareness of business and organisational activity</td>
<td>• open communications forums</td>
<td>• better awareness and understanding (top down/bottom up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• civil service structures with lots of allowances</td>
<td>• little incentive to perform</td>
<td>• a competitive and performance based remuneration and reward system</td>
<td>• motivation and reward for performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• motivation to participate in training and activities that involved travel for monetary benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td>• felt-fair basis for contribution to business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• multiple data sources and &quot;owners&quot; of results responsible for data management</td>
<td>• unreliable data</td>
<td>• &quot;balanced scorecard&quot; of indicators</td>
<td>• Reliable data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reports painting pictures of what it was thought &quot;management&quot; wanted to hear</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Insight into entire organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• little analysis of data, just reporting</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Basis for analysis and strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• inappropriate behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inappropriate &quot;indicators&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited &quot;commercial&quot; know-how</td>
<td>• Unresponsiveness to market and competition</td>
<td>• Business savvy and skills for a competitive environment</td>
<td>• Innovative and effective business development strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Past dependency on international donor contributions to the company</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved cost-efficiencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition frame structures within the external environment were also considered. For example the entire legal framework of the country was made up of legislation introduced during the time Tanzania was under British "protectorateship", and updated through continuous amendments. It was therefore very difficult to clearly understand the status of certain legislation and its intention. This particularly related to labour laws, which in practice tended to favour employees over employers. For example, despite strong cases against employees engaged in internal fraud, it was difficult to bring cases to successful closure in the court system.

A second key external frame structure related to the industrial relations movement. The company was heavily unionised, but with the union leadership not employed within the company. Unions had a tradition of strong political power in Tanzania with strong alliances to different political groups. It
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had its own strong views and its own ways of doing things in relation to retaining its position of power in a changing environment and in relation to protecting “workers rights”.

A third key external frame structure related to the Tanzanian economy. Tanzania is a poor country; one of the poorest in the world when you consider GDP (World Bank 2004), and as one manager said to me, “If you cannot understand poverty, you cannot understand what drives our people. They all know what is to be poor, and they all know what it means to take full advantage of times of plenty”. Within a largely subsistence economy, with limited access to paid employment, and where the employment market had yet to open up in line with the general economic reform movement, employees could be considered as “relatively” quite well-off (i.e. a minimum basic monthly wage of USD200, in a country where the minimum basic wage is around USD30). The consequences of possibly not having that job was widely acknowledged, and the source of concern for many.

6.3.3.2.2.2 Social Structures

The above frame structures appeared as manifested in organisational behaviour, but in line with earlier discussion social structures could also not be ignored. Unravelling social structures however emerged as far more challenging. In line with other organisational change programmes, tools that sought to assess attitudes to change were utilised, but these were not considered as delving sufficiently into social structures at the heart of behaviours.

6.3.3.2.2.2.1 Culture

During the SWOT phase, one Tanzanian consultant initially sought to put the culture of the organisation into its broader social and historical context. She said that in order to understand Tanzanian parastatal organisations it was
“first necessary to understand some of the legacies of the Arusha Declaration”

Parastatals in general had no commercial objectives and were usually heavily subsidised. Whilst TTCL, unlike many parastatals, was able to generate substantial revenues, it was also the recipient of a lot of international assistance. The organisations existed for the people, including the provision of employment for the people. Employment was by allocation. A certain number of people who achieved a certain level of education (but considered not suitable for advanced education) were allocated to the company every year. This meant mass employment. Most people joined the company and never received any further training. Even the daily work was not very much related to the real business of the company, but they were kept busy. You could also get jobs according to who you know. If you had an uncle or a cousin working in the company, then they could help you get a job. The management style was also influenced by socialist policy and based on government policy. There was no accountability for results and the leadership code was based on that we are altogether; all the same level; that no-one is the “boss” (usiwe mnyampara). . . . . even the workers union was heavily involved in the business of the company. . . . . this could mean that a Managing Director could be sitting in a meeting with a union chairman who was also a Messenger. That meant that during those meetings the MD could not ask the Messenger to deliver any documents on his behalf. . . . . The organisation culture is based around “ndugu” and “uswahili”; which is means that everyone are comrades; belonging to the one family.

For those coming into the company from western organisations, there were strong perceptions of a tremendous gap between the culture of the nation and the organisation, and the culture and values generally associated with corporatism and people coming from Western countries.

A picture of the culture of the company, and its internal system, therefore began to emerge. It appeared as a “social service” organisation rather than a “customer service” organisation, with the organisation viewed by most as primarily existing to serve the interests of its’ employees. As a parastatal organisation in a former socialist state, and where there was little access to social support systems, the company basically took care of everyone. In addition to salaries, it financed loans, provided medical care, took care of employee dependents, provided housing and house maintenance, paid clothing allowances, and took care of transportation to work. Depending on whom you knew and the extent of the relationship, there was access to jobs at all levels.

There were many “structures” in place that drove behaviours associated with “what can the company do for me?” This of course was seen as being in contrast to behaviours associated with the idea of “what can I do for the
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company?" considered necessary for a successful business entity, and the reciprocal relationship of being rewarded by the company on the basis of individual contribution.

It was considered equally apparent that the organisation was generally a "rule-following" bureaucracy, high on "risk and accountability avoidance" and low on initiative. The organisational culture seemed to be reflected in common statements like, "Nobody ever told me about that"; "I didn't think to ask about that"; and "I never heard any more about that". Everyone seemed to wait for someone else to tell them what to do, with any kind of efficiency or effectiveness lost in towers of paperwork requiring a never-ever ending list of signatures. These behaviours also seemed to manifest themselves in the rampant fraud within the company, and high levels of dissatisfaction apparent amongst a substantial number of company customers and suppliers.

Within the SWOT analysis these kinds of behaviours were seen as being perpetuated by the norms, expectations and taken for granted habits that made up the very foundations or "structures" of the system. These could also be seen as having their origins in the bureaucracy of British colonial administrative systems, the former socialist system, the traditions associated with "collectivist" societies plus a high dependence on international assistance. Whilst there were clear interdependencies with some of the frame structures discussed earlier, the challenges of changing social structures were seen as the most formidable aspect of the programme.

As the implementation phase commenced attention was given to exploring difference and where likely sources of tension between different cultural factors would emerge. This was considered important because of the "new game" the company was involved in, which would also mean much more integration into a global corporate culture; particularly in view of large numbers of expatriates expected to be working within the organisation. These differences were seen as relating to both the coming together of groups of people representing west and east, as well as in terms of inevitable clashes of
values associated with the old and new organisation. A number of workshops with expatriate and Tanzanian managers were therefore facilitated to explore this issue. These were facilitated by myself, together with an external Tanzanian consultant and a (Tanzanian) company employee and drew on Hofstede's (1991) cultural elements.

The discussion that follows seeks to summarise key outcomes of the discussion and reflection that occurred around the notion of culture. It cannot be seen as a collective understanding because not all contributors participated in all forums and different participant groups tended to focus on different elements. Whilst key aspects were summarised and included for broader distribution in company newsletters, they did not go into the detail of discussion included here.

What is important to note is that this topic was the focus of a lot informal discussion amongst the workshop facilitators and some Tanzanian managers and expatriates. It was a learning process for all, and the nature of the facilitation changed as new awareness resulted. For example it seemed initially that, in relation to each of the cultural elements, there was a tendency to identify binary opposites for western corporate culture and the culture seen as Tanzanian. It was only after some time that this emerged as convenient stereotyping to account for, and in many ways, reinforce difference and in particular idealise notions associated with Western corporate culture. At some point it seemed discussion therefore moved from just identifying differences to exploring in more depth values, identified similarities, the changing nature of culture and many of the myths surrounding cultures. I revisit these points again in Sections 6.3.6 and 6.3.7 in relation to the Team Disciplines.

However before exploring these dimensions in detail, consideration also needs first to be given to the dominant culture commonly associated with the geographic area of Tanzania. Even though Kiswahili is the national and official language of Tanzania, and the development of a shared language was seen as seen as key in building a strong sense of national identity under the
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former socialist leader Julius Nyerere, it would be presumptuous to speak of one “Kiswahili”vii culture and ignore cultural identities associated with different tribal and ethnic groups.

However it is interesting to note that from workshops exploring cultural attributes it appeared that, whilst tribal differences were noted, there was a strong sense of a common cultural or national identity; and these would be commonly labelled as both “Tanzanian” and “Swahili”. This of course may have been out of convenience sake to apply a label or term that created a clear distinction from foreigners, in terms of asserting authentic rights to a specific geographic location. It was also interesting to note that amongst Tanzanian management groups there was also a general acknowledgement of the hybrid and dynamic nature of Swahili and its original integration of Bantu and Arabic language and cultural aspects, the influences of the Portuguese, together with more recent influences of the Germans and British.

Collectivism

The dominant culture evident in Tanzania was generally perceived as very high on ‘collectivism’, with an emphasis on family, tribalism and group harmony. This was contrasted to a general reputation of “Western” and corporate culture for individuality and individual achievement, and a belief that individuals take care of themselves. For example, the emphasis on family was widely acknowledged in company HR policies. However these were generally considered by western eyes as resulting in unnecessary administration, so there were attempts to consolidate allowances on the basis that the company should “just pay you for the job you do, and you decide what to do with the money”.

Collectivism was particularly encapsulated in the Swahili terms “Ndugu” and “Uswahili”. Ndugu, can be loosely translated as “related” or being part of a social group who are considered to be “comrades”. Uswahili refers to the collective group to which individuals perceive themselves and others as belonging. Essentially this meant that within the company everyone was connected; that everyone should help each other, and certainly no-one should
be responsible for causing harm to another. The latter appeared often as regardless of whether individuals were engaged in activities considered unethical or detrimental to the broader organisation. Bribery and nepotism were also widely associated with a sense of belongingness to certain social identity groups within the organisation.

Collectivism also appeared to manifest itself in a general reluctance on the part of people to "stand-out" from the broader group. For example, when open recruitment and selection for positions was introduced, many people were seriously challenged by cultural barriers they had to cross in order to make their applications. In some cases where people did put themselves forward it was negatively perceived by others. This was seen as in stark contrast to western notions based around individual achievement and competition.

"Uswahili" also represented a kind of exclusiveness and therefore implied an opposite state; of being outside the group. To not fit within the collective "uswahili" usually meant being considered as "mzungu"; usually meaning "foreign" or "white", and displaying different cultural attributes. Amongst older Tanzanians there seemed to be a stronger association with the term "mzungu" and people from Germany and Britain, thereby also implying strong associations with former colonisers. When Tanzanian people behaved in ways not considered in line with "uswahili", they were sometimes strongly criticised for becoming like foreigners, or even acting in the interests of outsiders or even "colonisers". This was reflected in terms like eusi mzungu (black foreigner/European).

It was however noted that principles of collectivism extended to different social identity groups in general, and therefore also to expatriates. Discussion identified that whilst on one hand there was a sense of "togetherness" and a lot of talk around "sitting in the same organisational boat", some expatriates and Tanzanians noted their own sense of personal boundary, and boundaries perceived in others, simply because of "cultural difference", or the difference that came from experiencing and viewing the world in different ways.
The changing nature of broader social structures was also noted, particularly as it related to the deliberate break down of collectivist structures. For example, there were employees deliberately wishing to be as far away as possible from their extended family because of constant demands and drains on resources, which often accompanied being employed in full-time paid employment.

**Power Distance**

Dominant culture structures in Tanzania appeared as high on 'Power Distance', and meant that less powerful members of institutions and organisations expected and accepted that power will be distributed unequally. This was reflected in the organisation by people waiting for instructions and information to be passed down from the top, with few opportunities for bottom-up communications (except through formal workers union channels). It also explained the tendency of rarely voicing an opinion contrary to a person who was seen as being in a position of higher authority.

It was also evident in “hiding” behaviours of managers; managers who sat behind closed doors and who had little contact with those below. An emphasis was also placed on written communications rather than face-to-face. The quip of one Tanzanian manager during a workshop in the Board Room located on the top floor next to the CEO’s office was quite telling, “Until we privatised I had never visited this floor, or been in this room”.

Power distance also meant people generally attributed a lot to formal hierarchy and status, which was equated with high levels of respect for age and seniority [and evident in the respectful titles of mzee (masculine) and mama (feminine)]. It was also reflected in people being respected on the basis of “title” or “role” rather than what they actually “do” or achieve. It also meant that workers and management invariably attributed problems to the other, but rarely came together for mutual solution building.
Power Distance was also reflected in very bureaucratic structures and processes. There were no closed feedback loops, with few people understanding where their role actually fitted within a process chain. “I feel happy at the end of the day when my in-tray is empty”. There was usually a long list of signatures required before the process was complete, with much watered-down responsibility as a consequence.

High degrees of Power Distance were contrasted to Western and corporate culture, which tends to place emphasis on more informal relationships and less formal control. The emphasis on formal control and “closed door policies” is seen as being at odds with cultures that value openness, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency and concrete results. It however needs to be highlighted that whilst expatriate managers tended to advocate western corporatism, alongside their own stated-as-preferred “open-door” policies and management styles, as low on power distance, they also acknowledged this reflected a somewhat idealised view of western corporate life. All could recount their own western experiences of power hierarchy, and differences between “words” and “actions”.

**Feminism**

The dominant culture in Tanzania was generally considered as being more oriented towards Hofstede’s (1991) concept of ‘Feminine’ culture. This recognised that good relationships and the caring of others, as well as quality of life and security appeared as being valued more than individual achievement, success and reward.

In Tanzania emphasis is generally placed on communicating in a polite and calm manner. The ritual of greetings is also valued highly. An oversight to greet someone (even if you do not know them) is a likely source of offence. Assertive and aggressive behaviour, which is readily tolerated in the West, together with a sense of openness or frankness, is in direct contrast to communications styles evident in the dominant culture of Tanzania. People are sensitive to the kind of messages they think others would like to hear, and
seek to avoid communicating anything perceived as likely to cause the listener discomfort.

As discussed, "uswahili" is based around notions of togetherness and taking care of each other, with little evidence of an interest in western concepts of leadership and autonomy. In particular, within the organisation it seemed that even people who appeared as having highly marketable skills in an open employment market were more interested in the security of life-long employment than in taking the risk associated with a change of job. This was also attributed to the fact that there was no "safety-net" in Tanzania in terms of a welfare system as there are in most western countries.

To label the general culture as 'feminine' however was not to say that people were not interested in money. Although on a national scale and on the basis of the differences of people still living predominantly within a subsistence economy, compared to those integrated into a market economy, this appears as varying. The structure of poverty and how it can be a powerful driver of behaviour has been previously noted. So people were very much interested in money. But it was not necessarily viewed as a "reward" and connected to concepts of "performance" and "achievement". It was seen as an "entitlement", or an opportunity to "take as much fruit from the tree as possible while the fruit is there". This was also evident in the "human-eye" or "blind-eye" often turned to taking a "bit extra" here and there from the company, because it was viewed as "not causing any person direct harm".

There was considerable discussion around notions of the masculine orientation of western corporate culture and its emphasis on rationality and "technical objectivism", with perceptions that expatriates in some instances did not care about people and the human side of the organisation, and were "cold" and "hard". This was also reinforced by some expatriate notions of being in Tanzania "to do a job in the most professional manner" and "to safeguard company interests"; implying that this should not necessarily be clouded by people issues. However it was also countered by deep conflicts
that some expatriates acknowledged. On the one hand this reflected a concern for local and people issues, but on the other hand being constrained by broader corporate structures, particularly those relating to personal accountability frameworks.

There was general acknowledgement that work, and personal identity associated with work in terms of achievement and professional status, was certainly stronger in most expatriates than amongst Tanzanian counterparts. However this had to be understood in a context where meeting the survival needs of family was also a much bigger concern of Tanzanians (i.e. see Maslow's [1979] hierarchy of needs). It did not mean that amongst Tanzanian managers there was no concern about achievement and recognition, nor that this would not develop.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance pertains to the extent to which people are socialised into accepting ambiguity and tolerating uncertainty about the future. One person made the comment that the, still wide-spread, attraction of "magic" and, in more recent times, religion (introduced by the missionaries), lies in the way it assists people in avoiding uncertainty about the future.

Cultures high on uncertainty avoidance are also characterised by organisations in which activities are more tightly structured. There are more written rules. Managers become more involved in operational details (rather than concentrating on strategy). Within the organisation this was evident in lots of "busy work". People appeared to like performing routine or fairly straight forward tasks, and generally being kept occupied. There were limited opportunities to observe people willing to make individual and risky decisions. Very evident was a high resistance to change.

In Western Culture there is usually evidence of moderate-high levels of uncertainty avoidance (Stening and Ngan 1997). Corporatism tends to
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espouse (or promote and therefore value) low levels of uncertainty avoidance in terms like "Managing risk and uncertainty" and enjoyment in "taking on a challenge". However expatriates noted that strict accountability frameworks acted to avoid high levels of uncertainty. Key differences appeared as lying in the fact that some organisations were far more tolerant and flexible in how results were delivered as opposed to others, which were more prescriptive in following strict rules and guidelines, and that these differences were equally observable in the west.

Confucian Dynamism

There was general agreement that dominant cultural structures appeared as quite low on this dimension, with a preoccupation with making the best out of the situation as it is now. There was little evidence of long term strategic direction.

Cultures rating highly on 'Confucian Dynamism' tend to be those that place great emphasis on the values of perseverance and thrift, and have a strong sense of themselves in the past as well as in the future. In studies, China is usually held up as the embodiment of 'Confucian Dynamism' (Stening and Ngan 1997), with a lot of debate and variation attributed to Western cultures. Corporatism tends to espouse the values of 'Confucian Dynamism, but clearly there is room for debate on whether they are values lived. Certainly from the company perspective the focus appeared as meeting short to medium term business objectives with little consideration of the broader instrumentality of the privatisation in terms of the humanist goals sought through macro reform.

Conclusions

It was generally acknowledged that discussion around Hofstede's (1991) cultural framework had both strengths and limitations. On one hand it exposed that indeed some strong differences in values and beliefs were likely to be a source of tension. On the other hand there was a danger that convenient stereotypes were reinforced through looking for binary opposites.
to explain difference. This also tended to perpetuate myths around an idealised view of corporate culture and that this corporate culture was largely the antithesis to local culture.

With the focus on difference this tended to overlook the issue of togetherness seen as necessary for building organisational unity and teams discussed in subsequent sections. Whilst difference was acknowledged, the broad outcome of this analysis was that effort needed to focus on cultural transformation built around a participatory and dynamic change process. I return to this point again.

6.3.3.2.2.2.2 Language

Another factor considered within the broader framework of social structures was the different languages. Whilst the British Colonial times had left a legacy of English language, and it remains the official business language of Tanzania, Kiswahili is the national language and the language of all Tanzanian people regardless of tribal background. Whilst English language (as the agreed business language) was considered as an important means for developing shared understandings, the power of language and its embeddedness within cultural structures could not be ignored. Similarly the speakers and writers of English can be seen as extending the language of globalisation within development contexts.

6.3.3.2.3 Using ‘Systems Thinking’ to support the implementation of an organisational change programme

6.3.3.2.3.1 General

From the above, it was considered that ‘systems thinking’ gave an insight into many of the requirements for managing change. The organisational steering committee was established to “manage the organisational change programme”. One of the key challenges lay in deciding where and how to start. A fairly standard management model was adopted. It was considered
on a basic understanding of:- (a) what the company was hoping to achieve (vision and strategy); and (b) the basic business rules of how the organisation should work (governance and processes).

The scope of change was seen as formidable, with an extremely challenging task ahead. But it was considered “doable”. As discussed earlier, few tangible frame structures would remain unturned. In the case of the organisation structure itself, certain shareholder conditions were set in relation to the high level of the organisation, but then the internal organisation was free to organise itself in ways that would enable it to deliver according to its key business objectives. Fundamental principles were established:-

- The process should be participatory to build common understandings and promote ownership
- Many things would have to be initiated in parallel therefore requiring a need for regular “alignment checks”.

A high level plan was put in place to build or re-engineer the frame structures discussed in Section 6.2.6.2. It was generally considered that as long as there was a common understanding amongst the team as to the general nature of the change and the direction that the change should head, the change process, once triggered, would develop and gain a momentum all of its own.

6.3.3.2.3.2 Culture: the challenges of managing social structures

The adage of “a significant improvement in performance generally doesn’t occur until the culture of an organisation also changes” was adopted. Efforts were made to try and understand these cultural differences, make them explicit and work towards building a new organisational culture. Figure 6.3.3.2.3.2-1 summarises the inherent challenges perceived in the Tanzanian context of cultural transformation.
From discussion around the "as-is" situation, further discussion focused on the "as-desired" situation. The "as-desired" solution implied a process of constructing a culture that represented a Tanzania solution for delivering corporate success, and not simply importing notions associated with an overriding corporate culture from the west. It was therefore considered necessary that the "as-is" situation should also not only address existing company culture, but also the "as-is" that accompanies commercialism, corporatism, globalism and the arrival of expatriates. This posed a number of challenges. Firstly, it suggested a completely new state, which required a shift in thinking and behaviours on both sides. Secondly, it recognised the "clash of culture" likely to be observed with the arrival of a multitude of expatriates who in principle were representatives of western and corporate culture.

However it should also be noted that whilst there was a general perception of (expatriate) managers that "culture is important", as is the case in many organisations, these "softer" sides of organisational life often get
overshadowed because of more tangible measures of business success. As one expatriate manager said, "I know that stuff is important, but ultimately my boss is not going to measure me on company culture, he is primarily interested in the numbers of 'connections' and 'collections'". This alludes to broader systemic structures, particularly as they relate to corporate accountability frameworks, which mean there is not a sustained focus on these aspects of organisational life. It was also acknowledged that exposing culture can also be a threatening experience for those personally involved. There were therefore different degrees of commitment to consciously addressing cultural issues.

However the change programme progressed, and seemed to gain momentum. Various assessments suggested a core group of people who fell into the category of "Change Agent", with most people in the "wait and see" category, but also a substantial number of "passive resisters". A high level of "active resistance" accompanied the outbreak of the shareholder dispute. However in the first phases, even though it seemed somewhat messy, the overall change programme seemed to commence quite well. It was a primarily a top down process, but with structures in place to seek to try and learn and derive feedback from all levels of the organisation.

Systems thinking also assisted in understanding how interactions between work moods, attitudes and values (George and Jones 1997) were having both positive and negative impacts in the organisation and in relation to broader organisational culture (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.2-2). This is reflected in different statements. One young manager said, "It's really tough at the moment, but I am enjoying the challenge... at the end of the day I know if I am going to stay in this position I have to deliver results. My wife complains that I'm never home anymore, but ...that's the way it is". Another manager said that, in relation to members of her team, "they just don't seem to care anymore....they spend all their time gossiping and talking about how bad everything is...and why work when they are probably going to be fired anyway...and that everything just goes to the mzungus...I think productivity has gone down a lot".
In the first instance moods and attitudes associated with the work experience seemed to be supporting the adoption of certain business and managerial values. On the other hand the second example suggests that moods and attitudes associated with the work experience were not only breaking down work values linked to concepts of lifelong employment security and national or collective identity, but were also at complete odds with attitudes and values that various organisational structural reforms were seeking to promote.

'Systems thinking' enabled a continuous focus on why some things seemed to be working and others not. Some examples are provided below (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.2-3 and 6.3.3.2.3.2-4).
What emerged were tensions between the frame structures being introduced and dominant social structures. Some of these are elaborated in Table 6.3.3.2.3.2-1.

Table 6.3.3.2.3.2-1: Tensions between new frame structures and dominant social structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduced Frame Structures</th>
<th>Dominant Social structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-down re-organisation process</td>
<td>Power distance and hierarchy meant that the drive from the top was generally accepted. However from an industrial relations point of view it was seen as ignoring the voice of workers and the strong role the union had formerly played in the company. Power distance on this issue meant that union and management would rarely come together outside of what was regarded by management as cumbersome bureaucratic negotiation forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory processes</td>
<td>Expectation that those in power have the answers and are probably not interested in listening to the opinions of people lower in the organisation anyway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of saying the wrong thing (Power Distance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never argue against a person who is more senior to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Say the things that you believe someone in a position of power wishes to hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never cause loss of face through making someone else's argument look silly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of a shared vocabulary but divergent understandings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Traditional suspicion of the relationship between workers and managers

"them and us"; "have and have nots", mzungus and uswahili

Dominance of expatriate "experts" and leaders

Open competitive recruitment

Respect for age and seniority

Focus on "role" (status) not responsibility

Don't stand out from the collective

Contract employment:

Fixed term employment for those coming in from external market; fixed term to position and subject to performance for internal candidates

Life-long employment and job security

Performance Management Systems

Never cause harm to anyone who is part of your collective (particularly negative consequences of poor performance)

Empowerment

Risk and responsibility avoidance

Empowerment, ownership and accountability

Rule-following, wait for instructions before doing anything

HR Policies that streamline individual entitlements

Taking care of the extended family

This alludes to tensions between the introduction of specific change initiatives and the dominant culture associated with the organisation, and issues around whether the design of the frame structures adequately took into account and respected some of the dominant social structures.

6.3.3.2.3.3 Impact of external factors

Undoubtedly one singular issue had a substantial and very negative impact on the programme. From the outset the programme was built around shared assumptions that the organisation would have to retrench a substantial number of staff. It was clear to most that the organisation had an excess of
low skilled staff employed in non-core business and administrative areas, and precedents of retrenching had been established with other privatisations. In the face of this likelihood there was understandably a high sense of (nervous) anticipation amongst staff.

However unanticipated was that external factors (predominantly surrounding the shareholder dispute) would leave this issue hanging, with no formal announcement either way, for many months, and with serious consequences for the change programme. From a systemic perspective (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.3-1) the repercussions of not being able to deal with this issue are evident. It implies that very little of what management did in such an environment was likely to be effective or successful.

A very tense industrial relations situation developed. An environment of divisiveness was fuelled. Cries of, "How can you expect us to work with you? You who are the 'haves' and we who are the 'have-nots'", highlighted
perceived divisions between workers and foreign personnel, and perceptions that foreigners were there to simply take what they could from their (Tanzanian's) company. *Eusi mzungu*, loosely translated as "black-white" or "black-foreigner", indicated the perceived traitorous actions of Tanzanian managers working closely alongside foreign ones. This perhaps not only indicated the collectivist "uswahili" working against "outsiders", but also how principles of 'power-distance', and an inability of management to break communications barriers with the union were actually at one point working to seriously disempower management (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.3-2). The expatriate management; particularly the CEO, had very strong views on "open communications" as a means for tackling problems, but traditional structures of power distance did not appear as conducive to this approach. Also without 'collectivist' links to the union, management was in a very isolated position on this issue.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 6.3.3.2.3.3-2: Application of systems thinking to understand core slowing actions which blocked the development of common understandings for going forward

From a systemic perspective (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.3-3) broader consequences of the organisation not being able to deal with these high level issues became evident. Subsequent impacts on the organisation change programme were substantial.
No agreement between major shareholders on key aspects of privatisation

Active resistant to privatisation and investor in strong media campaign

Organisational Change Programme → Improved company performance → Confusion and mistrust

Figure 6.3.2.3.3-3: Application of systems thinking to highlight impacts of key issues

Figure 6.3.2.3.3-3 strongly indicates that unless the root cause of confusion and mistrust could be addressed, any initiatives introduced within the company; including trying to improve communications were unlikely to be successful. Limiting or slowing effects began to emerge on all company initiatives. For example, a fairly straightforward participatory business process improvement initiative, which had been progressing very well, suddenly lost all momentum (Figure 6.3.2.3.3-4). Even though changes were primarily generated through the inputs of existing members of the organisation, they came to be viewed as associated with the "foreigners", with ownership therefore relinquished.

Participatory design process → Standardised and improved business processes → No commitment or trust in change

Figure 6.3.2.3.3-4: Application of systems thinking to understand impact of high level slowing action
In the face of these challenges, suddenly the proactive change management strategy was overtaken by a need to react to the day to day pressures of the media and industrial relations situation. Whilst there is no need to debate the shareholder issue, it becomes clear that once major external factors outside the control and influence of those within the organisation emerge, serious disempowerment is a consequence. Managers at all levels became extremely frustrated, reflecting on the appropriateness of a Kiswahili saying, "when two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt".

From an organisation perspective broader systemic problems emerged (Figure 6.3.2.3.3.3-5). Basic structures associated with the macro level; for example governance and agreements, were having a substantial and negative impact on the company. These in turn were being influenced by attempts to sort out the broader socio-economic structural reform being undertaken at the macro level, and very heavily supported by the international community. It also appeared that at most levels different groups were tackling their own problems and issues, with no-one looking at the entire system, as it comprised both macro and micro levels, and a broader systemic solution. Or at least if they were, it did not involve those in the organisation.

Of course seeing problems from the perspective of the organisation, and witnessing negative impacts, created a real challenge for the people within
the organisation; particularly in terms of their roles. The shareholders made it clear that the dispute was exactly that; a shareholder dispute, and not the subject of those employed within the organisation; inclusive of executive management. Frame structures, such as the extent of formal roles and responsibilities, plus social structures meant those in key leadership positions remained publicly silent. For a number of reasons many expatriates exited the organisation. Company performance was not impressive.

6.3.3.2.3.4 Resistance

Within the framework of systems thinking it became clear that active and passive resistance represented powerful structures at work. Resistance therefore has the potential to become a powerful but insidious structure. Whereas beliefs and practices associated with 'learning organisations' promote an active, grappling and participatory process, resistance implies a counter force outside of this (Figure 6.3.3.2.3.4-1), and can result in maintaining the status quo (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

![Figure 6.3.3.2.3.4-1: Structural impact of resistance](image)

6.3.3.3 Critical reflection on the application of Systems Thinking

In summary, 'systems thinking' helped generate an understanding of the organisation in functional terms, as prescribed by a corporate framework. It did not however address key issues about the nature, worth, substance and significance of matters to do with culture, society and identity. This reflects
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many of the points outlined by Habermas (1984, 1987) in his *Theory of Communicative Action*. The emphasis was on understanding the system (Habermas 1987) but not taking into account the lifeworld (Habermas 1987) and the tensions that exist between the two.

Systems thinking certainly supported looking at the organisation from a whole perspective, including the broader context in which it existed. It also assisted in unravelling structures at work, and how they impact behaviours and outcomes without us often being aware of them. How we deal with that new knowledge is largely a result of approaches to transformative learning, which is addressed in subsequent sections.

How we construct organisational knowledge however emerged as critical. Clearly the organisation was viewed through western eyes. It was evaluated against western organisations and in some cases against idealised myths about western organisations. Whilst broader business objectives in terms of “time”, “purpose” and “audience” can be blamed for lack of attention to finding other ways of viewing the organisation, other lenses could have been better tapped into. Otherwise the risk of losing focus on anything outside a corporatist view is evident.

‘Systems thinking’ emerged as very organisation-centric. Organisations in general have a tendency towards introspection and self protection; that is, it is difficult for them to look outside of themselves and their core interests. Through considering the organisation within the framework of ‘Systems Thinking’ it becomes the central point of focus, and even when the complex set of external systemic factors are considered, they are from business and organisational perspectives. They are seen as issues that need to be solved for the benefit of the organisation.

This relates also to how systemic thinking tends to focus on the organisation, at the expense of people. Analysis of culture in an organisational context tends to avoid any emotional involvement, and too often cultural attributes or
the social structures behind them are regarded as problematic. This was evident in initial attempts to understand social structures around cultural differences. By looking at culture through corporate lenses it seemed that we were unwittingly fragmenting, and only looking at parts of a broader social whole and without fuller consideration of issues surrounding the nature and significance of matters to do with culture, society and identity.

Whilst concerted effort went into understanding the organisation from a holistic perspective, I consider insufficient analysis was given to the interaction between proposed frame structural changes and existing social structures. This particularly relates to the imposition of frame structures commonly associated with the west and corporations that are not necessarily in line with existing social structures. This not only creates the potential risk of introducing unworkable frame structures and unnecessary values struggles, it is also appears as having the unwitting potential of undermining core social structures which may result in negative impacts on the broader social group.

The focus on the organisation also suggested the risk of the micro and macro being conceptualised as different orders (Giddens 1993), rather than interactive. Ways needed to be found in order to keep whole systems perspective of continuous problem-solving; inclusive of key internal and external elements. In addition what became evident from the reflection around resistance was that unless fundamental structures at the heart of resistance were challenged little change was likely.

6.3.4 Individual Discipline: Personal Mastery

6.3.4.1 What the book says:

Personal mastery is seen as the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively (p. 7). From the difference between reality and vision 'creative tension' (p. 150) is used to move forward.
People with a high level of personal mastery share several basic characteristics. They have a special sense of purpose that lies behind their visions and goals... They see ‘current reality’ as an ally not an enemy. They have learned how to perceive and work with forces of change rather than resist those forces... They live in a continual learning mode... But Personal Mastery is not something that you possess. It is a process (p. 142).

6.3.4.2 A reflection on personal understandings around the concept of ‘personal mastery’

The concept of ‘personal mastery’ is integral to Senge’s Learning Organisation because it is considered that organisations cannot begin to learn until their members learn. Personal Mastery is about forever trying to close the gap between a vision and an accurate sense of reality. It therefore requires individuals to look at their “ways of knowing”; the way personal knowledge is constructed in social contexts of shared meaning. As Giddens (1984) argues, our views of social realities are shaped by the social structures that produce us. The challenge therefore is to be aware of the filters surrounding values and belief systems, and being able to see situations through multiple perspectives or multiple-lenses.

Personal Mastery therefore also implies the ability to integrate different dimensions of thinking and knowing. Such ideas have tended to traditionally focus on rational, logical, rule-bound thinking, as encapsulated in logical intelligence (IQ). However, other dimensions of “intelligence” highlight how emotions shape our lives and influence our decision-making (Goleman 1995), and how creative, insightful, rule-making, rule-breaking, transformative thinking support seeing a bigger connectedness with the world (Zohar and Marshall 2000). Having control over emotions and other thought processes is therefore seen as key in enabling individuals pursue and achieve personal vision and goals.
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Personal Mastery is also about personal goal setting in order to systematically achieve a vision, and about understanding personal habits of thought and behaviour and how they may constrain working towards a vision.

6.3.4.3 Application of 'Personal Mastery' to understanding and managing organisational change

My comments here focus particularly on expatriates because of their specific role in supporting development and change within the organisation. Secondly I consider the notion of fostering personal mastery and personal growth within the broader organisation.

6.3.4.3.1 Expatriates

Certainly there were no formal structures in place that formally and proactively supported the development and application of 'personal mastery'. Indeed it often appeared that most international executives and consultants are precluded from the generative work implied by the notion of personal mastery by perpetuated myths of the "international expert" and "hero-leader" (Senge 1990) executive type, and most importantly by the frame structures that support them. The "international expert" or the "hero-leader" tended to be the one with all the answers. They were deliberately recruited or brought in because of their technical knowledge, because they ostensibly had a proven record, and were perceived to have successfully done similar things somewhere else (and I do include myself within this!).

Recruitment, selection and reward systems of international organisations could be seen as supporting perceptions of self-identity surrounding "international experts" and "hero-leaders". Scant, if any, attention was paid to personal assessments which considered or valued other forms of intelligence and cross-cultural competence, or supported personal leadership development plans aligned with the requirements of the organisation and project.
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Bringing in knowledge experts could be justified in such a context, as a means of importing the core knowledge associated with a new "game" and its associated technologies; thus avoiding any "reinvention of the wheel". Unfortunately this appeared as often without full consideration of whether those "international best practices" had delivered anticipated results in home countries (see commonly cited examples of declining share values of telcos such as Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom, Telstra, etc and other poor corporate success stories). Learning loops appeared to have never been properly closed, with outdated (or not necessarily contextually suitable) knowledge and concepts continuing to be transacted, regardless of their validity, and whether they presented workable solutions in different contexts.

From the perspectives of local people there was often a ready acceptance of this purported expert knowledge, fuelled by globalising discourses of "we need to learn from international best practices". Different cultural elements also appeared to contribute to this. Within a dominant culture high on 'power distance', there was an easy compliance established on the basis of the relationship between those seen to be in positions of power and those lower down the power hierarchy. International experts, like traditional elders, were seen as authority figures and therefore regarded with considerable respect. Seen as imparters of wisdom and higher knowledge, the words of the expert were often unquestionably, or almost passively, received and accepted.

Even in cases where those same experts seek to implement more interactive and participatory processes for building specific solutions to address local contextual concerns, this was not always well received. "You're the expert, why don't you just show us the way you do it in your country", was a common catch-cry, which reflect powerful structures that fuel "expert" type behaviours.

Personal vision was also not something explored in depth. Certainly an organisational vision was considered, along with individual instrumentality within that. However it was usually without full consideration of how it was aligned with personal visions and goals. A strong sense of personal vision
amongst expatriates in this sense also seemed to vary. For example there were those who were passionate about being part of an “East African success story” and making a “real difference”. For others it was an opportunity to progress their own professional career and reputation. In the case of some it was difficult to elicit a response that really seemed to speak from the heart; it was just another job, a chance to earn some good money and be in an exotic location for a while.

Both the vision of what the organisation could be, as well as the perceived reality of the organisation as it was, tended to be viewed against the measures of corporatism. Through corporate lenses many other dimensions of that reality were therefore readily overlooked. There was little emphasis placed on tapping into different ways of knowing or seeing the organisation.

Whilst there was no formal mechanism for recognising or developing the discipline of ‘personal mastery’ amongst expatriates, or even an objective measure of behaviours that represent ‘personal mastery’ in a given context, this does not necessarily mean that they were lacking. For example, against some of the elements associated with ‘emotional’ and ‘spiritual’ intelligence, differences could be observed in the degree of emotional involvement or detachment with the organisation, its people and its plight. Differences could be observed in degrees of openness to alternative perspectives and tapping into intuition. These however often met head on with the “logic” of the corporate structures of parent organisations removed from the day to day realities and concerns of the organisation.

Aspects of personal mastery were perhaps also evident in ways that people seemed to deal with values conflicts; particularly the conflicts that often emerge between personal, organisation and corporate values. This could be considered as reflective in the deeply human side that some expatriates showed when dealing with tensions between business and people interests. On the other hand it was also reflected in multiple selves where, for example,
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a deeply caring "family self", switched to a "corporate self", where people issues were dealt with through instrumental and detached business logic.

Personal Mastery however is not necessarily something you can work towards by yourself. For myself, as well as working alongside colleagues, I have often encouraged this discipline through personal reflective and goal setting techniques. I have also worked in a coaching capacity with managers who have a genuine interest in exploring their own values and habits of thought, and how they are translated into leadership and management behaviours. However whilst many people concur on the value of such approaches to personal learning and growth, there are also a lot of excuses for time. Indeed some people also feel threatened by deeply personal learning experiences. Perhaps therefore a fundamental requirement of personal mastery is openness to deep development. This also suggests a need to examine the structures of some competency approaches to management and leadership development, which appear as overly functionally uniform and prescriptive in their approach.

6.3.4.3.2 General

As discussed in Section 6.3.5, considerable focus was on a shared organisational vision. However similar attention was not given to exploring and tapping into personal visions as a fundamental element of supporting ‘Personal Mastery’. It was something only explored in minor ways in leadership development programmes where there was some focus on the alignment of personal goals and vision with the broader organisational vision. Insufficient attention, I would say, was given to tapping into the emotion of the people within the organisation.

When later discussing this situation with a colleague of mine (not involved in the project) he referred to a leadership development programme implemented in southern Africa for political leaders and senior bureaucrats from 17
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southern African nations to help them “Design a Future for Our Children”. It had sought to focus leaders on some fundamental things important to them; their children, for example, as a means for tapping into personal vision and emotion in order to provide a strong guiding force in their professional and social activities. The idea appealed in hindsight as something that was not given sufficient consideration in this project.

In fact, on reflection, the general approach to personal development had a strong instrumentalist approach. The focus was a traditional training one of developing skills, knowledge and attitudes to serve immediate organisational needs and which were more readily linked to measurable outcomes; not the more 'terminal' views associated with generative learning and personal mastery.

6.3.4.4 Critical reflection on the application of Personal Mastery

In such an environment personal mastery appears as a skill and discipline that can enable people to understand better the ‘reality’ of the situation they are within, which includes understanding the multiple beliefs and values encountered and which are likely to conflict with each other. However within the project it appeared that Personal Mastery was not explicitly valued or promoted; either within the context of the organisation itself or within broader structures that recruit, select and reward expatriates working within the international environment.

Everything around learning and knowledge transfer appears as having a dominant technical or skills based orientation rather than broader wisdom building. Even the current popular HR focus on more holistic ways of viewing people and people development, and programmes that familiarise and sensitise people to the diversity likely to be encountered in international settings, tended to be overlooked in favour of more immediate knowledge and technical skill requirements. Learning was predominantly viewed and
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managed from an instrumental perspective, rather than the terminal one more associated with concepts of personal mastery, lifelong development, etc.

Whilst organisational vision was a focus, personal visions on a broad scale also were not tapped into. Indeed it appeared that just a handful of expatriates involved in the project actually brought a strong sense of personal vision with them to the project. Where a strong sense of personal vision was evident it did not appear to really extend beyond the scope of the organisation, again implying that there is a real risk of the micro state being conceptualised as a different order from broader macro perspectives and objectives.

6.3.5 Mental Models

6.3.5.1 What the book says:

Senge uses the notion of 'mental models' or 'deeply ingrained assumptions, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action' (p. 9) In other words, everything gets captured and conceptualised, turned by the mind into something other than what it actually is, one or two steps removed from direct unfiltered experience. According to Senge, our cultural filter systems impact our perceptions of actual experience.

The discipline of working with mental models starts with turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny. It also includes the ability to carry on "learningful" conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others (p. 9).
6.3.5.2 *A reflection on personal understandings around the concept of 'mental models'*

Because mental models exist *below the surface* they act as serious barriers to change. However learning that changes mental models is immensely challenging as it can be disorientating and frightening for those involved, and has the potential to clash with prevailing beliefs and values.

Consideration also needs to be given to learning theories surrounding how 'mental models' develop in the first place, and how they can be challenged and changed. A constructivist view sees learning as an active, constructive, cumulative and goal-oriented process that involves problem-solving (Schuell 1990), and often results from the resolution of an impasse (Van Lehn 1989). Constructivists consider that people are active and don't only respond to stimuli as, for example, behaviourists suggest. They engage, grapple and seek to make sense. The role of learning and development is therefore not to plant something in the mind of the learner, but to extract lessons from the learner's insights and experience. A constructivist approach assumes mental models can be challenged through an active learning process.

But that is not to disregard behavioural views or those which point to how meaning and understanding is developed in social situations; sometimes without us even being aware of it. These can be much more subtle or perhaps even more challenging to change. The 'hidden curriculum' (Casey 1995) undoubtedly drives many organisational behaviours. Whether or not it has been explicitly and formally developed, organisational behaviour has been learned, and one of the greatest challenges in creating new learning is to undo a lot of previous learning.

Gidden's (1984) idea of structuration sees routine behaviour being shaped not only by what we consciously know but very importantly also by our unconscious knowledge. As previously discussed, structures are often planned in order to encourage certain kinds of behaviour.
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Very importantly, learning and the challenging of mental models comes from differences in experience. Sameness and homogeneity reinforce what we already know about our world and ourselves. Authentic engagement with others of different experience, and different views and beliefs is a common basis for intellectual growth.

Views surrounding learning must also be seen as contextually embedded. For example learning is often seen as purely instrumental; that is, for solving a problem, for the acquisition of certificates, or for the purposes of gaining employment. Other views like those associated with "life-long learning", "learning societies", and "learning organisations" can be considered as more terminal in their orientation in that they are working towards a desired or ideal, but perhaps never truly attainable, state. Other cultural differences are evident in the concept of metacognition highly advocated in the west, in comparison to other social groups who more widely view learning as transmittal process that generally works through traditional power structures. Clearly these impact the extent to which mental models can be challenged.

6.3.5.3 Application of 'Mental Models' to understanding and managing organisational change

Again I will comment on the specific involvement of expatriates in this context and their own preparedness to have their mental models challenged. I will also consider the challenging of mental models within the broader organisation; particularly as it relates to more formal training and development practices.

6.3.5.3.1 Expatriates

As Senge also notes, most (western) managers have been trained as advocates; that is they are expected to have answers and strategies for
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corporate challenges. This appears to be evident amongst expatriate managers and consultants operating in offshore environments. Most organisational and management cultures expect quick solutions, which means a corresponding expectation of skilful managers and consultants to debate forcefully and influence others in terms of offering solutions for delivering required results. These skills are often actively recruited for, with inquiry skills going unnoticed, unrecognised and unrewarded.

However advocacy can act as a serious barrier to learning because the focus is on winning arguments and exerting power, not on learning or inquiry. This is particularly evident in highly political organisations, and was a constant game played out between expatriates within the company, as well as with visiting "experts" of the strategic investor/shareholder. It also seriously constrained coming to common understandings of how to move forward. Often this was without even consideration for what people from the organisation actually thought. It suggests there are powerful structures that actually work against challenging mental models.

A constructivist's view of learning sees the resolution of a cognitive impasse. However it seemed that when faced with an environment so outside of mental models associated with a "corporate" environment, there was a tendency (at least in the initial stages) for mental models to be reinforced rather than challenged, and even for the development of idealised views or myths about "corporate" environments. This clearly represented a barrier to learning.

Also evident was a tendency of expatriates to "search" out local individuals who appeared as most similar in thinking to themselves. This was based on recognition of a common vocabulary, and a potential to develop common understandings of ways to move forward. A strong reliance on these people acting as "go-betweens" between expatriates and the rest of the organisation, therefore emerged.
This tendency raises a number of interesting issues. Firstly, on the basis of encountering words that appear to match expatriate conceptual frameworks and business discourses, "shared" understandings are also assumed. However as one expatriate expressed, "it is easy at the beginning to feel that because common words are used, there are also common understandings, but after a while it becomes clear that it is not the case". This reference to what I call common "surface meanings" is important, and I discuss it further in relation to 'team learning'. Secondly it represents a mechanism that simply enables certain mental models to be reinforced, rather than enabling learning opportunities that could come from engaging with true differences that exist in such an organisation.

However there were examples of where this tendency of looking for indicators of sameness was challenged. This can be seen in the following statement of an expatriate manager in relation to a reflective assessment of local management competence.

We have invested a lot in x, and he is good....but he's just not able to get the results outside of a small part of his team......the young guys like him because they are also part of the new club...but he is too much like us.....he is brash and arrogant towards the older guys who are now his juniors.......y is better because he can play both sides of the game.......he can talk our language but translates that into the local context without upsetting anyone.......and z.......well I had my doubts about whether we were doing the right thing by putting him into such a key role....he seemed a bit soft.......but I have the feeling that he is doing a great job.......I don't think we always understand each other......and I can't really pinpoint the qualities that makes him a good manager because they are not the qualities that you or I would normally associate with a good manager or leader.......but I just have the feeling that in his own way he gets people mobilised and gets a lot done.......but really I haven't got a clue as to what makes him a good manager...and if I said something about that now without thinking about it some more.......I'm not sure I could say what I mean

This firstly indicates an acknowledged challenge to that expatriate manager's mental models surrounding management competence. Whilst he could intuitively recognise qualities appearing as successful, they were outside of his own management frames of reference or mental models in order to be able to adequately define them. It also highlights that coming to a learning point where you are able to actually internalise that learning and "know what
you know”, is not necessarily an easy process and one not necessarily attainable without concerted effort and support.

Within the analysis undertaken in relation to ‘systems thinking’ it became clear that much of the organisational change programme was constructed around the dominant mental models of expatriates (including myself). Within the same systemic analysis it also became clear that the dominance of those mental models also appeared to act as a contributing barrier (amongst others) to the development of common understandings and the development of authentic contextual solutions, simply because they remained at variance with other mental models.

A simple example relates to the elimination of “subsistence allowances” for all managers, by an expatriate, on the basis that such allowances drove inappropriate behaviours. “Such allowances only encourage people to travel as a means of supplementing their income, rather than on the basis of genuine business needs”. Whilst from one perspective that argument appeared quite logical, on the other hand it did not acknowledge other genuine reasons delaying broader reforms to the overall remuneration system, and that this action was perceived by those affected as having a benefit taken away. Negative impacts on motivation levels resulted. Trust in the expatriate management in relation to whether they were serious about improving staff conditions was also undermined. That expatriate therefore appeared to be blocked by his own prevailing mental model and failed to check all the assumptions behind it, in order to ensure that his decision was the most appropriate one for that time and context, and addressing issues in a systemic manner.

There was suggestion of a lot of compliance based changes, as indicated in Figure 6.3.5.3.1-1, which simply reinforced or failed to challenge dominant mental models.
However it appeared that the mental models of many expatriates actually came to be more seriously challenged with the onset of the shareholders dispute. The limiting factors that kicked-in and started to cause these mental models to be challenged can be seen in Figure 6.3.5.3.1-2. It turns out the "crisis", which emerged, actually created a powerful learning opportunity that enabled mental models, which may not otherwise have changed, to be seriously challenged.

However in the face of the crisis, powerful learning is not usually the only result. Often there are significant changeovers in staff, resulting in a loss of organisational memory. People leave voluntarily, in other cases they are
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encouraged to depart, and this organisational situation was no different. What this meant however, was just at the point where powerful learning was occurring, in many instances the opportunity to capture the learning that comes from challenging mental models, was lost (Figure 6.3.5.3.1-3).

Figure 6.3.5.3.1-3: Crisis as a loss of organisational memory

6.3.5.3.2 General

Mental models indeed are not easy to challenge, and the importance of creating opportunities for exploring other ways of viewing situations cannot be ignored. This is addressed further under the section dealing with 'Team Learning'. However it is always an assumption that a change in mental models will usually result through some kind of training intervention. Naturally formal training and development programmes formed an extensive part of the overall organisational change programme.

6.3.5.3.2.1 Mini-Case-study: Customer Care

There was a general perception amongst expatriate staff and customers that customer care was very poor. This view was supported in mixed degrees by surveys of local customers. Like many service organisations in a deregulated market, it was considered by management that company customer care would inevitably become a key differentiator. Analysis of the systemic elements associated with customer care also revealed that "lack of
knowledge and a customer-care orientation" were key contributors to poor performance in this area.

A very comprehensive customer care training programme was therefore initiated. Developed in consultation with a European training service provider, it was implemented on the basis of a “train-the-trainer” programme with local trainers. However, despite a very high quality programme; in terms of content, active engagement in the programme and very positive feedback from participants, there seemed to be little flow on benefit or any real change in organisational behaviour. This was also very disappointing because a lot of systemic analysis had gone into understanding why many training initiatives of the past had had little long term effect.

Of course the reasons for this were complex, with clear linkages to a downturn in staff morale and motivation (discussed previously), as well as little support and coaching from direct reporting officers for doing things differently, and still many poorly functioning parts of the broader organisational system. The latter would mean that if a customer services representative was genuinely trying to help a customer the customer would still most likely remain unhappy because there was insufficient effective back-up in the organisation to address the root cause of the problem.

There was however a focus on implementing continuous forums to support the “training events” both in terms of further developing skill acquisition, but also in terms of receiving feedback and engaging in work-place problem solving with work place teams. Interestingly what emerged in some of these forums were the questions surrounding customer care concepts themselves.

Feedback from training participants, who were those who had daily contact with customers in key business centres, suggested that they did not agree at all with the concept of being “friendly” or “nice” to customers. In fact comments like “the foreigners do not understand the kind of customers we
have here.....our customers are constantly trying to avoid paying for services, why should we nice to them? On the contrary we have to be very strict with them", suggested radically divergent views of customers and how to treat them.

Such a comment raises some interesting issues. On the part of expatriates responsible for introducing the programme, it appears that there was insufficient checking of assumptions around contextual issues relating to customer care. In retrospect it appears that key questions were overlooked in terms of: What do we really know about customer behaviour in Tanzania? Will the same approaches to customers within other organisations in other countries be equally applicable here? Will the same training programmes (content and methodology) be applicable here? Some dominant expatriate mental models were therefore not questioned.

On the part of participants in the programme it suggests that training on customer care was passively received by many without leading to a cognitive impasse: does this fit with my knowledge of our customers? If not, which view of reality is wrong? My view of the customers? Or this approach to dealing with customers? Or is there some way to integrate and accommodate both? This perhaps relates to cultural issues surrounding learning, as well as too greater gaps between the existing mental models of participants and the learning material presented, and I discuss this further. However, clearly a valuable learning opportunity was somehow missed.

6.3.5.3.2.2 Discussion: Views about learning and the impact for challenging mental models

There are a number of views about learning that assist in explaining this lack of real change in customer care. A constructivist's view of learning suggests each time we encounter a situation different from a previous experience, efforts are made to account for those differences. If the difference is slight, little learning may result for there is little difference to reconcile. If the
difference is too great, little learning may also result because the new
information may not be able to be contextualised and reconciled. Accordingly
the apparent impasse that was presented during the programme (i.e. "the
customer is king" and all the requirements around it) may have been so far
removed from the existing cognitive constructs of some of those participants
(i.e. "the customers are always trying to cheat the company" or "why be nice
to people who are always complaining and are never nice to me?") that it
was simply rejected and failed to result in any personal cognitive adjustment.

However it was also evident the concepts and ideas could be readily
presented back by the participants. As a result it appeared that two views of
customer care were therefore accommodated by participants; the existing
ones they held in relation to their home Tanzanian environment, plus an
additional one in relation to "the way customer care is done in Europe". The
dominant mental models held however were not really challenged, suggesting
strong cultural factors were at work. In line with the concept of 'distributed
cognition' (Salomon 1993), it suggests that cues picked up from one's
immediate environment also regulate the mental models that will prevail. For
example, this meant retaining behaviours based on "I will continue to work the
way I have always worked because I have not noticed anything that should
cause me to change."

Changing physical work environments was considered an extremely
important factor in this respect, and was being addressed slowly through
other activities. Work places in general, but particularly places where
customers came to visit were generally unattractive and in poor condition;
especially in the eyes of expatriates. When implementing complex change
programmes there are always the additional complexities of managing
parallel initiatives. However evidence suggested there was more likelihood of
challenging mental models when physical environments and tools changed
also. In "new" customer service centres, improved environments seemed to
change behaviours of both customers and staff.
Training programmes also explicitly drew on strategies that sought to unravel participants' views about customer care, in order to create an explicit awareness of differences between personal views and information being presented. However in this context divergent views of customer care did not emerge. In some cases there would be no response to questions like, “what is customer care?” and, “why is the way customers are treated important?” Or there would be the standard responses you would expect like, “we have to keep the customers happy because otherwise they may go to the mobile operators”, because of course many people had participated in customer care training programmes previously.

This suggested again the compartmentalisation of different views, but also that cultural factors were having an impact. In line with cultures high on power distance and high on uncertainty avoidance there is often surprise at why a trainer even asks participants such questions when beginning a training programme. After all the participant is there to learn from more senior personnel with specialist knowledge, and 'uncertainty avoidance' means that in most cases participants will be nervous of being wrong and perhaps losing face in front of peers.

Other cultural factors appear as key contributors to challenging mental models. Whilst not overlooking that transmission is not uncommon in the West, cultures high on 'power distance' also appear to have passive approaches to learning. Traditional African culture sees the handing down of knowledge from tribal elders, without questioning. Similarly the schooling system for most works on a system of knowledge transmittal, rather than metacognitive concepts now common in the "west". The purpose of education for many is not necessarily the acquisition of knowledge and learning, but for certificates at the end of it. As one employee explained:

When I went to Australia to study for my Masters I found it very challenging. Everything was much more open-ended and at first I felt very uncomfortable with it, because I was never sure what I was expected to answer or whether I was going to succeed. You see when I studied in Tanzania it was just a matter of remembering everything that the lecturer told you, and sitting for the exam. That's all we were interested in was passing the exam, and that is the same for everyone. Passing the exam means getting a certificate, and certificates are
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**Important for jobs at all levels. But now I look back I don't think it is a very good learning style.**

Similarly within the company there were structures that drove or supported views of learning and the purposes for participating in learning and development activities. One of these was a “training allowance”. As one person explained, “participating in training programmes has always been very popular, but our people were not interested in participating in training activities in order to learn something or change anything, it has simply been a pragmatic way of supplementing salary”. Motivation to learn, along with concepts of metacognition and broader organisational learning therefore became a challenge when first having to unravel personal expectations of participating in learning activities being a supplemented pay packet.

A behaviourist approach to learning would explain this lack of change through a lack of reinforcement of behaviours associated with new customer care concepts. For example, almost any trainer will espouse that back at the work place those employees needed to be rewarded, recognised, encouraged, etc for their new behaviours. They also needed to be supported when their efforts were not necessarily appreciated by the customers or when then the organisation’s information systems were not aligned with their efforts. Again, however the management of parallel systemic initiatives proved challenging, as did the provision of sufficient coaching.

A view of emotional learning also suggests that there was nothing that really appealed to the “heart” in relation to challenging such dominant beliefs and behaviours in relation to customer care. “It’s the way the mzungus think customer care should be done”, is not a high motivator. The local manager responsible introduced a “Customer Care Club” to recognise individual efforts and to encourage people to feel part of something important, but this also appeared to have little success. Certainly salary reforms lagged behind these initiatives so there was also no financial incentive to change.
The historical legacy is perhaps also important. For example, the company had a history of compliance-oriented changes. Funds from the World Bank for many years had facilitated change programmes, supported by international experts and consultants. There was therefore little evidence of self-generated and self-sustained change, or deep structural change. With the privatisation process this largely continued. More international experts and managers brought in to “change” things.

This is also confirmed by the comment of someone with a long term involvement in the company as an employee. “If I look at the organisation today, compared to as it was 10 years ago very little has changed. We have new technologies but the culture and the ways things are done; nothing has really changed. This is despite many different change programmes”. In other words, fundamental “structures” within the organisation, and as they are linked to mental models, have not been challenged.

6.3.5.4 Critical reflection on the application of Mental Models

Being able to challenge existing mental models is a critical requirement in complex change environments. A number of things become evident on reflection here. Certainly it seems that there was insufficient value placed on inquiry, in contrast to strong advocacy. This particularly relates to the structures surrounding HR practices dealing with expatriates in international development environments. However it also related to training interventions, still not hitting the mark; or more importantly the “heart”.

Challenging mental models involves engagement with ideas on the part of learners and it seemed that whilst there was an emphasis on implementing methodologies that supported learning, insufficient focus was on what actually motivated and encouraged people to actively engage in personal learning and personal change. This also appeared as relating to insufficient explicit awareness of learning processes and particularly how these relate to divergent views surrounding learning in cross cultural environments.
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In this sense work moods also seemed to create a barrier to the challenge of mental models. With the shareholder dispute, and the general air of distrust towards the foreigners, this seemed to create a corresponding distrust for many ideas associated with the foreigners, and therefore contributed to the compartmentalisation of ideas.

A crisis emerged as an opportunity for challenging mental models, but unfortunately this learning was not properly captured because of poor broader systemic capacity to do so; particularly in relation to managing staff who exit in times of crisis.

Ways of knowing are clearly influenced by cognitive filters brought to certain contexts. It was clearly evident that whilst powerful insights came from activities that encouraged people to look at situations from different perspectives, there is still a lot of work to be done to encourage people to trust those different perspectives and ways of knowing in favour of those that tend to focus on the objective analysis of business data.

6.3.6 Team disciplines: Shared Vision

6.3.6.1 What the book says:

The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance (p. 9). Developing a truly shared vision requires openness and building "picture of a future" that everyone buys into. A vision is truly shared when you and I have a similar picture and are committed to one another having it, not just to each of us, individually having it........ Shared vision is vital for the learning organisation because it provides the energy and focus for learning (p. 206). Challenging the grip of internal politics and game playing starts with a shared vision (p. 274).
6.3.6.2 A reflection on personal understandings around the concept of 'shared vision'

Attempts to build a shared vision have become common organisational practices. It becomes part of a process that seeks to build a 'social identity' amongst an 'organisational group' (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Hogg and Terry 2000). A 'vision' is usually also stated alongside "values; "mission" and "goals". Values define how people in the organisation should behave in order to achieve the vision. The mission defines the purpose of the organisation. Goals refer to measurable outcomes and milestones strategically set in order to achieve the broader vision. As discussed in the section dealing with 'Systems Thinking' these are vital as fundamental reference points for reflecting on whether 'structures' within organisations support organisational behaviours considered necessary for realising the vision and its corresponding goals.

However as highlighted by Shapiro (1995), the vision and mission 'thing', has tended to become yet another management fad. Define the 'vision' and then move onto the next management initiative. In a survey across more than 100 members of the Australian Institute of Training and Development (Watts 2000), only 25% of respondents indicated a vision statement (where a company actually had one) was widely known by all members of organisations. Most respondents suggested the vision was more likely to be known and shared by management, or some members of management, rather than other employees.

However it is also clear most people care about their work. Every single organisational survey I have conducted suggests most people like to feel they are making a genuine contribution to their organisation and to be appreciated for it. When organisational theorists such as Senge are talking about tapping into the power of a 'shared vision' I believe they are talking about tapping into and unleashing the power of this commitment and potential.
Having a corporate vision and all it entails is part of this. But also important is how this is translated into corresponding personal or team visions that people can relate to and feel part of. That is, paying attention to the readily identifiable environment where people conduct their daily working activities. As Giddens (1984) highlights, to forget for a minute the presence of many structuring forces which operate at different levels, and which tie the organisation in to the cultural world and personal lives of those who make the organisation real (Wenger 1999) is to misunderstand the nature of an organisation.

Understanding relationships between social and organisational life represents real challenges. Whilst focusing on individual levels of the workplace is key to promoting "ownership" and "buy-in" for a 'vision' or for general performance improvement initiatives, these cannot be removed from the broader systemic perspective of the organisation. Nor can the whole organisation be treated as merely an aggregation of local states (Giddens 1984).

However vision is not just about what an organisation aspires to be, it is also about how to get there. Whilst many organisations pay attention to participatory processes that develop and communicate 'visions', it is usually in the business strategies for going forward that: (1) the respective expectations of all key stakeholders are not fully considered, (2) input for developing commonly understood and accepted strategies has not been sought, and (3) there have not been appropriate communications strategies for building consensus and understanding. Similarly insufficient attention is also given to managing values and addressing the differences, and sometimes conflicts, between espoused values and values in action.

Clearly there are also issues associated with different views of management and leadership to be considered. Many popular management texts have emphasised the role of 'leadership'; particularly the role of charismatic and 'hero' leaders. These commonly make reference to people who through their own sense of vision and interpersonal skills build group subscription to a
vision, and drive an organisation towards success. This interpretation clearly implies the notion of "leaders" and "followers". Alternatively it also raises the prospect for leadership styles that are more instrumental in their approach; the leader who is able to facilitate participation and active engagement in developing a true sense of vision; the leader who is able to empower and in the end have the people say 'we did it ourselves' (Sun Tzu, as quoted in McNeilly 1996)

Here cultural elements affect the way people view their own role when they have assumed a leadership position, and the way people expect leaders to behave. For example, cultures high on 'power distance' (Hofstede 1991) have different views of leadership than those that score lower. Cultures high on 'masculine' attributes have a different views of leadership to those more 'feminine' in their orientation, as will those high on 'collectivism' in contrast to those that are more 'individualistic'.

6.3.6.3 Application of 'Team Vision' to understanding and managing organisational change

6.3.6.3.1 Formal organisational vision

The company, as part of previous organisational development support activities, had already developed formal "vision, mission and values statements". It was also considered that key challenges did not lie in gaining general acceptance of a high level vision. For example, a telecommunications company that is a "world class leader in Africa" and "able to satisfy the requirements of all communications users in Tanzania" is one that appears readily acceptable to all stakeholders.

In fact in the face of an existing vision, an envisioning process was not given a big focus. Firstly it was assumed the envisioning process had already been undertaken and, because the vision as stated seemed to have equal merit for a private company, there was a view amongst the new management of "why change it?" Rather it was seen as important that the new management
team was affirming commitment to the organisation’s vision; not being seen as coming in and doing something different. It also appeared there was an element of scepticism (particularly amongst expatriates) towards the faddishness of activities surrounding building organisational visions, and that time could also be better invested in “getting on with the real work”. So the vision essentially remained as it was.

In hindsight this perhaps emerges as a fundamental error. Varying assumptions and beliefs around what the ‘vision’ actually meant were not unravelled and were not necessarily shared. Multiple interpretations and lack of shared understanding therefore emerged. This also related particularly to the specific assumptions associated with a privatised context, in contrast to a socialist parastatal one.

With privatisation, clearly high expectations had been raised, both within the company and the broader public arena. This surrounded the general economic development policies of the GoT and the support of the IMF and World Bank. However it was clear that personal expectation had also developed around the specific privatisation and popularised figures of between USD60mil and USD120mil. For example, this was immediately evident in a demand from the workers union for an across the board salary increase of 85%. In organisational surveys one of the most common expectations of privatisation was improvement in remuneration.

What became evident was that beyond a relatively small group of senior and professional people, and despite evidence and assurances that the organisation had been “well prepared for privatisation”, there was little shared understanding of what “privatisation” actually entailed. However privatisation clearly meant the company was now required to play a “new game” according to a set of “new rules”. This game and these rules, whilst not necessarily explicit, were also integral to the vision. Alongside the vision therefore were also the somewhat unspoken core values of corporations such as ‘efficiency’,
'effectiveness' and 'growth' (Hodgkinson 1991), which emerged in head-on conflicts with broader social and individual values and beliefs.

Differences in understanding were acknowledged. Concepts like becoming a "world class" and "leading African telecommunications company" may have meant different things to different organisational groups; depending on their experience, but they provided a framework to work towards; something to "talk around" in a business sense; particularly as it relates here to the elements of 'team learning' and 'mental models'. However as discussed subsequently this did not emerge as being sufficient to really appeal to the "hearts" of all various social identity groups involved in the organisation.

6.3.6.3.2 Formal organisational values

The company had also defined high level organisational values. These included "customer service", "honesty and integrity" and "team work". Again the new foreign management affirmed their commitment to supporting and serving these organisational values. At management forums these appeared as concrete reference points for discussions around individual and management behaviour. Similarities emerged, as well as of course differences. However these discussions provided opportunities for communicative reasoning that enabled common understandings to be built. What also emerged, and seemed as a more challenging and time consuming, was the need to consider the other values implicit in those high level values.

Different cultural interpretations existed around values. One example worth consideration here relates to the notion of "teamwork". For instance, there was a tendency to interpret "teamwork" as any forum that brought a group together. However, whilst some people valued "harmonious relations" as an integral element of team work, others (particularly expatriates) tended to espouse the value of "constructive conflict" as an essential requirement of decision-making. Whilst some (again usually expatriates) espoused the value of open communications, others acknowledged that many people valued
organisational hierarchy, which meant a tendency for people in senior positions to not encourage others to speak against their ideas and that a subordinate would certainly be unlikely to do so.

A constant focus was therefore required to build common understandings of the relational values behind those values in order to ensure that they were reflected in organisational behaviours. Following through with the old adage of "what we measure is what we value", these values were also incorporated within a new formal performance management system. This appeared as at least sustaining a focus on these elements, but amongst all the other issues faced by the organisation this focus was often readily overshadowed. Similarly communicative reasoning in relation to these values at that point did not really extend to other levels of the organisation.

Another point is also worthy of consideration. In the Western world the development of teams is something that has perhaps received considerable focus because of the highly individualised nature of western society (Hofstede 1991). In highly collectivist societies however there is already a strong sense of belonging to certain groups, and this was widely evident within the company.

Whilst there were many activities implemented to try and focus on strengthening teams, these activities tended to follow fairly standard team development exercises encountered in western organisations. In workshop sessions, team behaviours were observed and discussed against western corporate frameworks. Consequently there was a tendency to look at the absence of "leadership", "task focus", "decision-making", "problem-solving", with a disregard for other aspects of teams that emerged naturally within 'collectivist and 'feminine' cultures. Being outside of a culture however means it can be extremely difficult to understand and appreciate different cultural attributes, and I suspect rather strongly that the basic sense of "team" and "connectedness" in the local environment was not something that was
sufficiently understood, appreciated and tapped into by expatriate management.

There was also an attempt to factor values along with a mutual respect for the rights and responsibilities of employer and employees into a formal "employee charter and code of conduct". This was negotiated and agreed with the workers union but was however never implemented due to escalating industrial relations issues.

6.3.6.3.3 Different stakes of different social identity groups in the organisation

In order to go forward it was considered essential to bring different social identity groups together and build common understandings. A business vision and a set of unifying organisational values were seen as core foundations in this respect. Certainly the internal organisational environment comprised many different social identity groups, with the possibility of belonging to more than one. Whilst they may share common values and aspirations, they can also be seen as having different interests and views. Certainly there was evidence to suggest that a 'vision' was a long way off building a sense of common organisational identity; particularly with so many divergent interests, understandings and expectations amongst different groups.

These groups can be considered as:-

- Management/workers
- Tribal background
- Expatriate/local
- Professional/unskilled
- Representative of the new organisation/representative of the old organisation
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- Upwardly mobile/career oriented / nine to fiver
- Shareholders/employees
- Change agents/wait and sees/resistors

Traditional collective notions built around the distinctive groups of management and workers were highly evident. Furthermore in the face of the media war and general unrest associated with the shareholder dispute, workers groups came to be associated with notions of protecting national interests.

Collectivist notions of identity were also evident amongst different tribal groups, although the broader unifying identity associated with being “swahili”, particularly as being in contrast to “foreign”, was also highly evident. The latter meant there were clear challenges in building a shared sense of identity amongst expatriates and locals. The latter was also clearly exacerbated by the transient nature of expatriate involvement. This related to perceptions on both sides. For expatriates this related to their purpose for being in a foreign location and what they could realistically expect to achieve during their stay. For locals there was often a perception that expatriates were removed from the “realness” of the situation because they would simply “move-on” at the end of their assignment. There were also perceptions that whilst the coming together of different groups meant an opportunity to learn from each other, many locals appeared to associate expatriates with just another “change initiative” that would eventually dissipate when they left again.

Different interests and stakes amongst locals and expatriates were also clearly evident in different remuneration rates. Whilst expatriate remuneration was usually performance related and therefore implied a genuine stake in the wellbeing and success of the company, differences in remuneration between permanent employees and expatriates remained in very sharp contrast. Whilst differences in remuneration rates are common in...
companies around the world, in this context (even though they could be justified through the logic of corporate discourse) it undoubtedly served to contribute to perceived differences between locals and expatriates and undermined opportunities for a greater sense of “sitting in the same boat”.

It was also clear that most senior positions in the company were largely filled by expatriates. Whilst this could be also justified through corporate discourses it undeniably led to perceptions that positions of power were being filled by outsiders. This in turn also fuelled further opportunities for building perceptions of “them and us”, reinforcing a notion that local people and knowledge was not really valued and a concern that local interests may not ultimately be served.

On the other side there was evidence that expatriates perceived some groups of employees as also not sitting in the same boat, but as acting out of self interest in trying to preserve secondary benefits their positions gave them access to; and which were often seen as “unethical”. This highlights the challenges in building a shared sense of organisational identity and vision where personal identity and cultural lenses range from those vested in western corporatism and business success to those vested in struggles for economic survival.

For expatriates it also raised issues surrounding where the sense of personal belonging and identity lies strongest. For example, almost all expatriates were not employed directly by the company; instead they came through affiliate or service provider companies. However often the perceptions, expectations and behaviours of the employing company and the company in which expatriates were engaged to work were not aligned. “Worlds apart” was an apt description of the differences between the day to day operations of a company operating in Europe and one operating in Africa. Yet the “successful” expatriate could be considering as having to somehow bridge both of these worlds; playing the genuine team member of both sides or facing non-acceptance by one of the key parties. This was a
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real challenge. Clearly it acknowledged the “dilemma of divided loyalties” they are faced with when there were differences in views amongst respective stakeholders.

However undoubtedly, it was the expatriate group who most readily identified with the formal business vision, and became its’ custodians. This was shared by a relatively small group of key permanent employees who also had corporate experience and could also “visualise” change and align it with personal goals and aspiration. For most organisational members however, whilst the principles of change appeared initially as quite readily accepted, any sense of genuine buy-in to organisational vision was often tempered by unrealistic short-term expectations.

Developing a sense of common vision also required people to meet at the boundaries of their own social identity groups and look for the points of commonality and alignment, and opportunities for win-win situations. Whilst all cultural and social identity is based around extended and collective experience, in cultures high on ‘collectivism’ there appeared however to be much higher natural resistance to developing close relationships with “outsiders”, which hampered this. Whilst high levels of “politeness”, “respect” and “co-operation” were readily evident behaviours within the company, the sense of connectedness, as associated with “ndugu” and “uswahili”, meant that it was particularly difficult for expatriates to become anything other than “mzungus”; foreigners and outsiders.

Through the eyes of a social group high on collectivism, there was also a tendency to view those outside of the collective as having their own collective interests, which are unlikely to be compatible. In other words many members of the organisation viewed expatriates as members of one collective, who had one collective-serving interest. This also meant that there was a perception that the expatriate collective was unlikely to be concerned with the interests of anyone outside that collective.
The perception of being outside of, or within, a certain group certainly also relates to other aspects of culture, or "cultural indicators". These include skin colour, dress (e.g. "wearing a suit means being in a key position of power"), mannerisms, greetings (e.g. to not greet someone in the office even if you did not know them or had already greeted them that day was considered impolite and resulted in a lot of perceptions as to the "arrogance" of foreigners who often overlooked this courtesy), occupations (i.e. workers and managers), diet (e.g. someone who refuses pork at a seminar lunch indicates the likelihood of being a Muslim), gender (i.e. a woman is less likely to hold a position of real power) and language. Similarly stereotypes often attributed to people from different geographic locations (i.e. "Germans are hard-working", "Australians are easy-going"), emerge.

In the sense of belonging to an organisational group, it appeared that the greater the number of differences in cultural indicators, the greater the general perception of "difference", and the greater the difficulty in creating a sense of all belonging to one team, or "sitting in the same boat". Specific attention was given to these issues in workshops, and the general outcomes seemed to be that unless explicit attention was given to these more superficial characteristics' or cultural artefacts (Schein 1997) they had a tendency to act as a barrier to developing a common core purpose. However where small groups of people naturally gravitated together to work on tasks where there was a more authentic shared concern, these "differences" appeared as much less important.

This suggests a question of where the "focus" lies; whether it is on real organisational issues, or on people and their "differences", and how to manage this in the organisation. It also supports the need to avoid problematising difference (Czarnlawaska and Höpfi 2002), and instead build coherence. The latter however not only implies Habermas's communicative reasoning but also the inclusion of an ethical heterogeneity, or an ethic of 'responsibility to otherness' (White 1990, p.140), where difference is not overlooked and where individuals are not located in essentialist notions of self (Gavey 1990).
However the strongest sense of organisational identity amongst senior management, developed through a natural "gravitation of like-minds". That is, they shared similar 'mental models' and/or 'power interests' and/or allegiances, and derived a sense of "comfort" or "strength" as a result of that. However this form of homosociability, where people appear to prefer working and engaging with similar people also appeared as an apparent barrier to developing a broader sense of shared vision, because the insularity of the group tended to constantly reinforce, rather than challenge, its existing beliefs and assumptions. Building shared vision therefore requires genuine points of communicative engagement at boundaries that exist between the various social identity groups, and for those boundaries to be crossed.

6.3.6.3.4 Leadership

Interesting issues surrounding "leadership" in such a context emerge. The real challenge appeared to lie in managing expectations amongst the broader organisation, but at the same time getting individuals "excited" and "involved" in that vision. Continuous rounds of workshops and meetings encompassing the entire organisation were conducted country-wide. Processes were put in place to encourage sections within the organisation to develop their own team visions, in a cascading process. However it was a top-down initiative, and there were many indicators that there was more acting out of 'compliance' (Senge 1990) rather than any real sense of genuine commitment.

But there was also an acknowledgement that this compliance was consistent with the expectations and behaviours of a culture high on 'power distance'. It seemed there was an expectation within the organisation that 'vision' would come from the top leadership. It expected management to take up the father/figurehead role and take-care of the collective organisational family. Popular political leader Julius Nyerere was perhaps an example of this kind of leader. Compliance or "following" was at least considered to be a positive start. Certainly most people in the organisation had never been involved in
such activities where senior management spoke directly to them and at least appeared interested in them and their thoughts, so it seemed at least a flicker of interest and the seeds of trust had been sowed.

Building genuine and shared understanding, enthusiasm and commitment to a ‘vision’ however is a fragile thing, and one which requires a mutual sense of togetherness and trust. This unfortunately was seriously undermined with the outbreak of the major shareholder dispute. Constant media headlines, suggesting the two key shareholders were at loggerheads, created the perception that at the very highest level there was no shared vision for going forward. This clearly had implications for any attempts at continuing the development of common understandings and “buy-in” throughout the organisation, with the legitimacy of any power vested in the expatriate management seriously questioned.

6.3.6.3.5 Macro and Micro levels

In line with notions of transition culture (Sachs 1995; Kennedy 1998) changing relationships between stakeholders or organisational contributors (Saul 1996) and the enterprise core (i.e. key shareholders and management) were evident. It was also apparent that these were not necessarily explicit or subject to shared understandings or agreement. There were also different groups involved at different stages of the preparation and finalisation of the privatisation, but apparently with very few linkages between these groups at the various transition phases. What this essentially meant was that any sense of ‘vision’ was interpreted through the lenses and expectations of a variety of stakeholder groups at the macro and micro levels.

Particularly without the final details of the privatisation agreed by shareholders and in place, different groups simply became focused on different issues. For example, the respective shareholders were focused on addressing the complex issues surrounding the dispute. Whilst management was separate from this, and in the absence of any clear strategic direction,
they were focused on achieving assumed plans and objectives related to operational success. Other groups were focused on protecting workers interests and improving their benefits. Other groups were totally confused as to what was going on the company; concerned about “national interests” and protecting their own. Other groups again were focused on maintaining the status quo and their vested secondary interests within it.

Whilst the majority of these endeavours could be considered as valid (i.e. with the likely exception of the last one), a fragmentation of approaches and teams clearly came with different sets of expectations, experiences and priorities and an inability to build common understandings and linkages between them. The ‘wasted energy’, which Senge (1993) sees as a fundamental characteristic of the relatively ‘unaligned team’ (p. 234), was therefore evident.

6.3.6.4 A critical reflection on the application of Shared Vision

Shared vision is important, but it involves a continuous process of building understanding of what the vision means and how it is translated into daily practices and things that have deep personal meaning. This also needs to acknowledge relationships between macro and micro environments. It also raises issues in relation to leadership requirements, particular as they are impacted by social structures.

It becomes difficult however to build a sense of shared vision when different stakes are not explored and explicitly acknowledged and addressed within an environment of trust. It is also exacerbated when “difference” rather than common ground becomes the focus. It therefore requires a genuine commitment of different social identity groups to engage at cultural borders.
6.3.7 Team Disciplines: Team Learning

6.3.7.1 What the book says

Team Learning is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire. It builds on the process of developing shared vision. It also builds on personal mastery.... But shared vision and talent are not enough (p. 236) .... Team learning is a collective discipline. Within organisations, team learning has three critical dimensions. First, there is the need to think insightfully about complex issues. Second, there is the need for innovative, co-ordinated action. Third, there is the role of team members on other teams (ibid).

Team learning also involves learning how to deal creatively with the powerful forces opposing productive dialogue and discussion in working teams (p. 237).

The discipline of team learning involves mastering the practices of dialogue and discussion, the two distinct ways that teams converse. In dialogue, there is the free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep "listening" to one another and suspending of one's own views. By contrast, in discussion different views are presented and defended and there is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at this time. Dialogue and discussion are potentially complementary, but most teams lack ability to distinguish between the two and to move consciously between them (ibid).

6.3.7.2 A reflection on personal understandings around the concept of ‘Team Learning’

The two words, “team” and “learning”, are common in organisations. “Teamwork” is a concept often drawn on in organisations as a means of promoting “participation”, “collaboration”, “ownership”, and “solution-building”. Similarly the term “learning” is constantly interchanged with “training”,

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"educating", "teaching", "coaching" etc. It is surrounded by multiple theories and practices associated with the way knowledge is constructed and transferred and about ways people "learn".

The concept of 'team learning' therefore entails a collective and active grappling process of trying to understand certain situations as part of a broader transformative process. In line with some of the principles of social theorists (Habermas 1984) this only occurs after a critical examination of our relationships, our actions and ourselves.

Team learning acknowledges that people are social beings and that language, behaviours and social relationships, which exist in organisations, are all socially constructed. Team learning therefore needs to consider:

1. Deep levels of structure: the norms, expectations and taken for granted habits that make up the very foundation or structures of an organisation or social system that drive behaviours at both the systemic and individual levels.

2. Language and Discourse: this recognises that language is socially constructed and is inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings. Language also appears as value laden; it carries the values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world.

In cross-cultural, or diverse cultural environments, there are many factors likely to add to the challenges of team learning. These include the existing mental models of the team members, the extent to which they are bound together by a shared vision, the language they have to draw on as a means for generating common understandings, and beliefs that are held about learning. Also useful to consider is 'social identity theory', where distinctions are made between social structures in which the strategy of individual mobility is possible, and structures in which the predominant belief is that boundaries
between groups are impermeable, thus precluding individual mobility (Tajfel 1974; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

6.3.7.3 The application of 'Team Learning' to understand and manage organisational change

6.3.7.3.1 Facilitating Team Learning

Encouraging team learning appears as impacted by many structural factors at work in organisations, and these are each discussed separately.

6.3.7.3.1.1 The way people are grouped together in an organisation

This refers to whether people work in power hierarchies or as participatory teams, and whether people are grouped according to function or on a multidisciplinary basis, etc. As previously discussed, the organisation could be considered as a 'role culture' (Handy 1993), and emerged as not that open to change (Handy 1993) and not possessing a strong learning orientation. Dominant cultural behaviours associated with power distance and uncertainty avoidance also meant that in many cases problems and ideas simply did not come to the surface to provide a learning focus.

With the arrival of expatriate management however, employees at all levels, who were not accustomed to discussion with anyone outside of their hierarchical level, often found themselves in forums representing many levels and encouraged to express their views. The existence of these forums in some instances; particularly where there was a shared work focus appeared quite powerful in encouraging interactive teams. Strong social identities, previously discussed, around "expatriate" and "local"; "manager" and "worker", "skilled worker" and "unskilled worker", and "black" and "white" became somewhat irrelevant. In this sense the boundaries between different groups appeared as quite permeable. Certainly this permeability seemed affected by the potential for lower status groups to move "up" (i.e. workers and professionals lower in the organisational hierarchy).
However where this potential to enhance social identity was not evident, then the boundaries between different social groups appeared quite impermeable. This was evident in industrial action reflective of impermeable boundaries between workers and management, and the passive resistance of high status managers from pre-privatisation who did not find themselves in roles of similar status in the new organisation.

6.3.7.3.1.2 The nature of tasks people are responsible for

This refers to whether people are to follow routine instructions and the kind of passive learning that comes with acquiring routine know-how or whether they are engaged in tasks that involve the solving of complex problems, and which requires a more active, constructive kind of learning.

Certainly in the existing organisational culture there was a strong tendency to train people according to functional requirements only. The training elements of the organisational change programme reinforced this but also recognised that organisational problems required engagement amongst involved people at all levels. This represented a major shift from the existing organisational culture as, in line with previous points, most employees tended to see themselves as information and knowledge recipients, not knowledge constructers.

Also as previously discussed, the shared view of expatriates as custodians of "expert knowledge" and having "solution provider" roles, often constrained the realisation that everyone had a learning role. Whilst this was justifiable in terms of expediency and not "re-inventing the wheel", strong advocacy can block the emergence of issues that may question the assumptions behind ready-made solutions. "Mistakes" of this nature can be damaging and costly. It also means that other individuals involved in the solution are generally acting out of compliance, rather than commitment and conviction. This ultimately may affect their sense of ownership and involvement and therefore the overall sustainability when the solution-owner departs.
However there were positive examples. A team working together to introduce standardised key business processes generated exceptional amounts of learning in relation to what "was working" and what "was not working"; together with reasons why. This could be attributed perhaps to a number of things. Firstly, the expatriate consultant facilitator constantly reinforced "you don't have to agree with me". Secondly the team was focused on a tangible result, and when it came to evaluating progress, the focus was "don't tell me the good bits; tell me what the problems are and what has to be done differently". Thirdly, there were some key individuals who responded to the "empowerment" which they derived from involvement in the team, and appeared to have a "snow ball" effect on others. Fourthly, after time their focus shifted from just data analysis and other business issues, to one that explored the deeper structures; particularly "social structures", at work. Finally, their achievements and the way they worked were highly acknowledged throughout the organisation.

This however also acknowledges that team learning was not necessarily going to emerge naturally, when years of organisational "conditioning" through the presence of structures had encouraged otherwise. On that basis it was considered essential that certain behaviours associated with team learning would need to be encouraged and reinforced. For some time there was therefore a focused effort to notice those behaviours, even if they were just emerging, and acknowledge them and praise them as a means of reinforcing them and encouraging others to also adopt them.

6.3.7.3.1.3 The way learning is viewed and the values associated with learning

Views about learning and learning behaviours are considered as key "structural" issues at work. They are shaped by the life experience of individuals; by what is consciously known about learning, but also very importantly by unconscious knowledge of the world. In relation to the organisation it therefore appeared that the dominant culture in the
organisation had its own views of learning, the new corporatism had its own versions, and various individuals had theirs.

Genuine team learning implies a kind of open-endedness; that through the learning process new understandings will be developed and new possibilities emerge. In reality, most formal learning in the new organisation was commonly equated with “training” and was usually aligned with predetermined learning outcomes linked to business needs. Cultures high on uncertainty avoidance are usually considered as likely to steer away from open-endedness and exploring new ideas or trying out new things. Therefore some of the approaches accompanying the change programme also supported the existing environment where most people felt more comfortable with clear guidelines and instructions rather than open-ended learning possibilities.

As also previously discussed, cultural issues emerged in relation to learning methodologies, and what were seen as the best means for achieving learning outcomes. In many cases; particularly as they were first introduced, many learning methodologies were regarded as quite challenging by participants as they demanded much more active interaction in contrast to the passive learning methodologies (i.e. lecture modes) that had been the norm. This also leads to apparently confused perceptions, because, despite positive feedback and substantial volumes of such learning sessions, they were not regarded as “serious training” activities, thus raising issues associated with “why are the foreigners not providing real training?”

Of course in addition to more functional training approaches, more open-ended learning was acknowledged and evident within the organisational change strategy. In reality, and simply as a result of the wealth of experiences thrown up, everyone involved was on a tremendous learning curve. However, it also seemed there were a lot of barriers to capturing and deriving leverage from this learning.
Senge (1993) highlights the importance of team learning facilitators who guide the process and 'holds the context of dialogue' (p. 246), which also implies a neutral role. However it was very often observed that "facilitation" was deliberately "technicist" in its orientation; that is, participatory and active learning methodologies were used to actively guide people towards predetermined outcomes. Even in situations where efforts are focused on trying to ensure the neutrality of facilitators, it was commonly observed that the facilitator's role was not free of his/her values, beliefs and experiences. Certainly the 'authenticity' of the learning generated is impacted, with little 'freedom to learn' (Rogers, 1994) outside of a structured process.

Different kinds of facilitator roles therefore need to be considered and may be distinguished in terms of Habermas's (1984) knowledge-constitutive interests as 'technical', 'practical' or 'emancipatory' team learning. 'Technical' team learning was particularly evident in the approaches of many training programmes. 'Practical' team learning was also readily evident in terms of strategic and project planning, and performance improvement initiatives.

Of course one of the assumptions for this kind of team learning is the principle of "openness". All organisations have their "power" agendas, but the assumption of openness in complex-cultural environments has a real tendency to be constrained by many of the powerful social structures discussed previously. It can therefore not be assumed that this will occur naturally or quickly, even with the most skilled facilitator. Furthermore cultures low on power distance; of which most expatriates (including myself) are representatives of, seem to have no problem in considering to be authentic members of teams which have the power to influence and change things. This is not necessarily so in cultures like that in Tanzania where there is a strong expectation that decisions and actions are usually outside of direct spheres of influence. This means that many voices often remain silent, and opportunities for improved learning lost. It also implies the very nature of the team, its' membership, its power relations, etc, need to be unravelled if a genuine team is to be created.
However insufficient attention appeared to be given to the latter. In addition the role of the facilitator usually appeared as far from neutral, with a lot of evidence of a guided process that to varying degrees built ownership amongst participants but again was strongly influenced by the beliefs and ideas of the group facilitator or those of dominant management groups.

'Emancipatory' team learning however is seen as involving a team taking shared responsibility for developing a deeper understanding of the socially constructed and interactive processes of organisational life, and for developing new organisational practices on the basis of that understanding and continuous critical reflection. There was however in practice little emphasis on checking that learning was genuinely communicative; that is, it built common understandings. On the contrary in discussion forums there was usually an emphasis on succinctness, rather than "stories".

It was only in relation to broader discussions around culture (i.e. the model presented in Section 6.4.2.3.3.2) and values that deeper understandings of the organisation and the requirements of change began to emerge. However "culture" is not something that an individual can be responsible for, and is not readily measured or rewarded. It is therefore easily overshadowed by more tangible business and technical outcomes. Whilst cultural issues were generally acknowledged as instrumental to the success or otherwise of the organisation, there were many other issues that received more learning focus.

Emancipatory approaches imply not only a critique of the systemic nature of the organisation; inclusive of both internal as well as external elements, but also consideration of both micro and macro issues and the power relations at work. However the reality of organisational life rarely means there is a mandate, time or even the freedom to engage in this kind of team learning. Such learning even also goes beyond the principles of the Fifth Discipline, which also appears as quite firmly embedded in an instrumental business or corporatist perspective of the organisation itself. As indicated earlier, learning tends to be situated around specific organisational and/or business problems.
The organisation is therefore reduced to a microcosm operating within a broader set of macro structures and values representing the fundamental framework conditions of the operating or organisational environment. These were not up for questioning or transformative learning processes by those from within the organisation.

Within the project there were unfortunately no forums for generating learning around common issues being addressed by organisations in similar situations; that is those that related to purely micro challenges. Nor were there any forums for exploring broader issues associated with the relationship between the micro level of the organisation and the macro environment in order to consider any adjustment requirements at either level in view of emerging and better understandings of the broader change that was transpiring.

In general it seemed there was insufficient skill for effective facilitation of team learning. It appeared that unlike other technical skills, facilitation skills were either overlooked or simply assumed. However without skilled facilitators assumptions are rarely challenged or suspended, many voices remained silent and the strong voices of advocacy ring out loudest. Interestingly however what became evident was that the most powerful and genuinely communicative kinds of learning actually began to occur within less formal and unstructured group settings, and where groups shared common problems or dilemmas.

This tended to emerge only after substantial time periods had lapsed and imported solutions were not considered to be working. “Why after all of these efforts are we still not really hitting the mark?” On this basis different groups appeared to naturally gravitate together and/or there was more preparedness on the part of individuals to admit they did not have the answers. Rather than skimming over succinct points about organisational life, more detailed stories were told that management were prepared to engage in. Still however it was
clear that a facilitation role was required in order to “guide” discussion towards valid and genuinely communicative learning.

6.3.7.3.1.4 The way learning and general performance is measured and rewarded

This refers to how many learning structures within the organisation reflected the old adage of “what we measure is what we value”. There were common global HR challenges and tensions clearly evident within the organisation in relation to learning. For example, whilst the transformative aspects of learning were widely acknowledged, the constant challenge for the effectiveness of organisation development and learning activities to be measured, in terms of business contribution, was also felt. As previously discussed there was a clearly identified need for training to improve knowledge and skills in key technical and business areas. These more tangible aspects of learning around skill and functionality, as encapsulated in the Greek term techne, were relatively easy to manage and “account” for; particularly in the short term. However learning around more emotive and cultural sides of the organisation, and as encapsulated more in Aristotle's phronesis, or practical wisdom-building (i.e. “We are doing a lot, and on a micro level these appear to be achieving success, but I still have the feeling that we are not pressing all of the right buttons....What's missing?”), proved to be much more challenging, and required a much longer term orientation.

Efforts however were also made to put in place some appropriate "structures" to drive less tangible elements of organisational behaviour. For example, in an attempt to encourage a focus and dialogue around effective team work and team learning most managers’ performance plans also had a focus behavioural elements associated with ‘team learning’. However it was not so easy; particularly in the short-term to demonstrate the value-addedness that came from more informal learning sessions aimed at addressing complex systemic problems.
This essentially means that, because of the challenges of building and institutionalising structures that account for and indicate the value that comes from deeper levels of learning, the very absence of these structures actually contributes to a continuing lack of attention to them. This was evident in the loss of organisational learning that occurred when key expatriates began to leave the organisation to be replaced by new ones. Time and priorities tend to be channelled towards the more tangible aspects of organisational life, and Senge and Argyris's argument, that a pre-occupation with measuring often ignores authentic learning, is unfortunately confirmed.

Previous discussion has also focused on how there was little understanding amongst expatriate management of managerial competency outside of western management frameworks (Section 6.4.4.3.1) and how a lot of standard western corporate structures were at odds with existing social structures (Section 6.4.2.3.3). Similarly the discussion relating to the value of team work (Section 6.4.5.3.2) indicated that unless inherent assumptions and values were unravelled divergent behavioural outcomes were likely to emerge. Clearly structures and views about competency and competency measures are value-laden. Therefore unless they are linked to genuine team learning (i.e. based around communicative reasoning and reflexivity) there is not only the potential for misalignment between such "structures", and individual and team mental models', but at worst some of those structures and competencies may not be suitable for the context and actually work against the broader transformative changes sought.

6.3.7.3.2 The discourse and language surrounding team learning

Certainly there are many issues associated with working across two different languages. One meant that in order to communicate messages and develop training materials etc, there had to be substantial transformation of English text into Kiswahili. The very notion of transforming or translating a set of ideas into another language also usually implies a one way communication process. The other issue relates to barriers that remain difficult to bridge when different
groups are constrained in direct communications simply through not sharing a common language.

In playing a new ideological "game" (i.e. one of privatisation and corporatism, rather than socialism), and where there is a clear perception that the new ideology has taken over from a previous one, the discourse and language associated with that new ideology comes with its own dominance. Again referring to cultures high on 'power distance' where ideology tends to be handed down there is perhaps a perception of ready acceptance of the new ideology and the language and discourse with which it is associated. That is of course, until the consequences of that new ideology start to be seen in the conflicts between different value sets.

The experience and knowledge plus the tendency towards advocacy, of many expatriates, is often supported by references to management literature and what is held up as management and organisational "best-practices". This contributes to the language of "management" and "corporatism" becoming a dominant discourse, and because of its often perceived superiority can actually block attempts at genuine learning. It is also reflected in discourse around associations between technology, organisational excellence and modernisation. This was certainly evident in discussions around the introduction of call centre technology.

Whilst at the time of writing there was no final strategy surrounding the introduction of "call centre" technology, there had certainly been a lot of discussion around the concept in relation to improving the quality of customer care through more "efficient" and "effective" management of customer information and customer relations. Having "state-of-the-art" technology was also seen as integral to notions of being a "World Class" and "Leading" telecommunications service provider, and therefore appealing to sentiments associated with a process of modernisation. However there was little discussion around the potential redundancy of employees in favour of
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automated technologies like IVR (interactive voice response). This is perhaps particularly significant in an environment where labour costs are relatively low.

People whose experiences do not put them in a position to participate fully and equally, combined with factors associated with a strong sense of 'power distance' become afraid to speak. Again there is a need to pay attention to the facilitation of team learning that takes into account issues surrounding relationships of power in order that, as Senge suggests, the focus does not just become one of winning the argument and that the right balance is found between inquiry and advocacy. There is also a need to speak from the perspective of different elements of the system. For example in the case of the call centre technology there is scope to discuss the impact on the human side of the organisation. However, for reasons of expediency, and an apparent lack of focus on softer skills in such environments, these voices often go unheard.

In addition there are issues associated with how the dominant language and discourse impacts the facilitation of genuine team membership. Even when done in a completely unwitting manner on the part of expatriates, the language and discourse evident in formal written materials and memos, together with informal discussion often carries with it a sense of "superiority". The weaknesses and/or inferiority of the organisation are repeatedly reinforced. At best this invokes a silent and passive acceptance; at worst it invokes resentment and resistance. However in either scenario it does not promote authentic team learning.

However as previously mentioned it was evident that people are quick to pick up the words associated with a dominant discourse. After gaining familiarisation with common key terms through participating in training programmes, and also to indicate an ability to participate in a new corporate game it seems that many people tend to identify and use words perceived as being closely associated with belonging to a new "club". This can even act as a further barrier to organisational learning, because it builds assumptions on
the part of all that because people share a common vocabulary they also share common understandings about their meanings. When efforts are given to exploring this further, this is often clearly not the case. More time needs to be invested in discussing and clarifying what different team members understand as being encapsulated in certain words. Without this there is a tendency to be lulled into a false sense of very superficial change.

6.3.7.4 Critical reflection on the application of Team Learning

Again many issues emerge. It appears that in such an environment there is a necessity to understand and unravel some of the differences associated with people ostensibly belonging to teams, and the different views about the nature, purpose and means of learning. It also appeared that the most powerful team learning occurs when the focus is shifted from purely business issues to the powerful structures that at work.

In a complex environment where micro changes are part of a broader macro change strategy it is essential that a broader sense of team is created; that is, it extends beyond the organisation. Otherwise key linkages between the macro and the micro are lost.

6.4 Conclusions

The five disciplines are reinforced as exactly that; disciplines, and there was a lot to confirm that the discipline of deeper learning and reflection remains a challenge within the broader context of organisations. This particularly relates to a preoccupation with day to day activity, and what can be defined as the surface features of organisational life rather than the deeper structures behind them. Indeed within this reflection there were numerous examples of what was constraining this particular organisation's learning.
Many of these appeared as socially and culturally embedded. In relation to distinctive group identities associated with expatriate and local personnel, there were barriers to learning identified amongst both groups. However these learning barriers or learning challenges were not necessarily the same and appeared as directly linked to the broader life experiences of the people. 'The Fifth Discipline' however does not pay any attention to this, and by not addressing this issue seems to imply that it is unproblematic. On the contrary this study suggests that there is another dimension of learning that needs to be explored; one which takes into account different social structures around the process of learning and the reasons for learning.

'The Fifth Discipline' also emerges as very organisation-centric. In this case study the broader context of macro reform, and the instrumentality of organisations and the market ostensibly serving humanist interests, were noted. However this conceptualisation was not a focus in the project and is also not acknowledged in the Fifth Discipline. On the contrary the systemic perspective of the organisation tends to see everything, both internal and external to the organisation, as instrumental in serving or confounding the organisation's interests.

For example, with respect to the people within the organisation and the learning that occurs insides the heads of people; whether individually or collectively, those people, and that learning, are seen as instrumental in serving the interests of the organisation. Albeit the mutual benefits or win-win situation, which arises when personal and organisational aspiration is aligned and realised, is acknowledged. These however can also be seen as ways that reinforce and build subscription to corporate discourses, and do not take into account broader issues surrounding culture, society and identity. This tends to reflect many of the points outlined by Habermas (1984, 1987) in his *Theory of Communicative Action*, where the emphasis was understanding the 'system' but not taking into account the 'lifeworld' (Habermas 1987), and the tensions that exist between the two.
Although the Fifth Discipline acknowledges organisational politics and the need for 'challenging the grip of internal politics and game playing' (p. 274), it does not deal with the politics and power that surround knowledge. Again by omission this implies that this is unproblematic, which is not the case. For example, in the reflection on ‘Systems Thinking’ it became evident that the organisation was largely viewed by expatriates on the basis of western corporate knowledge, with changes envisioned on the same basis. The corporate language of the Fifth Discipline does not suggest any possibilities for doing otherwise, and does not deal with the challenges of diversity that exist outside of corporate constructs.

Whilst the Fifth Discipline acknowledges the importance of personal learning (‘Personal Mastery’) and shifts in mind sets (‘Mental Models’), it also does not deal with this outside of corporate constructs. It was noted expatriates, recruited for their expert knowledge, were brought into the organisation with preconceived mental models about what needed with to be “done” to the organisation. These were often difficult to challenge, with changes in mind set mainly seen to be the responsibility of the existing members of the organisation (i.e. “they need to be corporatised”). This difficulty in challenging expatriate mindsets could be partially attributed to local knowledge appearing so outside of those dominant corporate constructs that it was invariably disregarded (at least in the early phases of the project). Insufficient attention was therefore given to different discourses in the project, and further focus needs to be given to this aspect in terms of the recruitment and development of expatriate consultants and managers.

The insidious effects of resistance became evident in the project; particularly as the shareholder dispute escalated. ‘The Fifth Discipline’ also deals with resistance; particularly in relation to challenging mental models and sees resistance as implicit in ‘traditional norms and ways of doing things’ and ‘power relationships within which the norms are imbedded’ (p. 88). However, whilst this was part of it, resistance emerged as significantly more than a reaction to changing the way things are done. It appeared to be more associated with identity; the separateness of different identity groups and
suspicion surrounding “difference”. Furthermore, while there was an attempt to build common understandings and a sense of common purpose around an organisational vision, managing in a context of tremendous diversity meant that this was something that remained elusive. Dealing with identity, particularly identity (or more importantly difference in identity) that is built around spaces outside of organisations, is also something that requires additional focus.

The Fifth Discipline therefore emerged in one sense as a very useful corporate tool. However, it needs to be acknowledged as exactly that; a “corporate” tool. In this sense the strengths and limitations can be better recognised in relation to the project that has been considered here. Whilst ‘The Fifth Discipline’ appears to offer a lot to any organisation that aspires to learn and improve, it also appears to be based around and directed at assumptions of organisations already being in a “corporate state”, and a wish to become better at being corporate. For example, all of the case-studies are well known corporate entities and the book is constructed around, and reinforces, corporate discourse. However the organisation under consideration, whilst subject to macro level strategies to become “corporate”, certainly could not be considered to be in that state.

As the changes in the organisation unfolded it was clear that corporatism however was acting as an imposing and dominant discourse, which set up and reinforced notions of identity seen as either inside or outside of “being corporate”. Power relations and struggles therefore ensued. Social theorists such as Habermas argue that for the purposes of genuine transformative processes these power struggles should be exposed and explicitly addressed. However the learning in the organisation as well as that defined within “The Fifth Discipline” does not appears as extending to Habermas’s (1984) knowledge-constitutive interest of ‘emancipatory’ learning but remains within the ‘technical’ and ‘practical’ domains. Some of the structural issues behind this were also noted.
It therefore seems that in meeting the challenge of authentic organisational learning more consideration needs to be given to processes that encourage deeper levels of learning, which are also committed to exposing strategies of power. In such a case it may not only assist in learning how to play the corporate game better and more equitably, but may actually result in a different way the corporate game is played, or even a different game altogether, which enable better solutions for challenging contextual issues.
7 CHAPTER SEVEN: Analysis: a postcolonial critique

7.1 Overview

The previous chapter provides an insight into some of the practices and events which transpired in this particular organisational change programme. They also represent a critical reflection of associated professional theories and practices. In this sense, and returning to Habermas's (1974) knowledge-constitutive interests, this reflection can be seen as representing a "practical" kind of learning, where the emphasis is particularly on looking at and assessing the practices themselves. However in line with my discussion about reflective and reflexive processes in Chapter 5, very importantly this does not necessarily consider "otherness" and means that reflection can remain firmly embedded in its own context.

The intention therefore is to further critique these theories and practices within a framework of 'postcolonialism' in line with my professional concern discussed in Chapter 1. The first challenge however lies around defining a framework for undertaking this critique, along with defining boundaries of the context of interest. Much current postcolonialist debate relates to intersections of language and power within colonial discourses evident in literary texts (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989; Brydon and Tiffin 1997). However postcolonial critique also allows for wide-ranging investigations into power relations in various contexts.

For example, the formation of empire (Greenlee 1979; Fieldhouse 1973, 1982; Huttenback 1973, 1976; Kesner 1982; Chatterjee 1993; Hardt and Negri 2000), the impact of colonisation on postcolonial history (Bhabha 1992, 1994), the cultural productions of colonised societies (Fanon 1997; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989), feminism and postcolonialism (Spivak 1981, 1997; Mohanty 1988; Hooks 1989; Suleri 1994), agency for marginalised people (Nandy 1983; Hall et al. 1996; Bhabha 1997; JanMohamed and Lloyd 1997), and the state of the postcolony in contemporary economic and cultural
contexts (Mommsen and Osterhammel 1986; Hall et al, 1996; Ahmad, 1997; Gilroy, 1993 & 2000; Fanon, 1997; Radhakrishnan, 1996) are some broad topics evident.

Three areas of focus that commonly appear within postcolonial literature are also valid to reflect on this context. They are:

1. Postcolonialism explores colonial themes, both in the past, the present and from a perspective of the possibilities that come with dynamic change.
2. Postcolonialism describes the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day.
3. Postcolonialism investigates how power, rule and domination get played out.

These three areas of focus are used to explore different dimensions of postcolonialism in relation to the organisational case study in order to determine what further meaning can be derived. The first area of focus considers the general environment in which the change occurs; also taking into account Tanzania’s colonial history. It however more broadly considers the instrumental role of the organisation in serving macro economic reform agendas, and challenges arising in relation to balancing business interests with people interests in an environment of change. The values framework of Chapter 4 is therefore also drawn on to support this. Within this context it is also possible to explore some general colonial themes such as those relating to "exploitation", "economic control", "dominance", "dependency", and "resistance".

The second area of focus relates to cultural change. Consideration is given to how one "culture" may be perceived as indicating superiority over another, and how the dominance of one culture by another impacts that existing culture and may be seen as robbing a group of its original or existing culture. How differences in cultural attributes enable one group to exert a dominating
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influence over another group, and in the process potentially secure wealth and power, are also explored.

The third and final area of focus explores specific domains where colonial or imperial themes may be played out. This takes into particular consideration knowledge and learning, and its embeddedness in language and discourse.

**7.2 Colonial themes: the past, the present and from a perspective of the possibilities that come with dynamic change.**

**7.2.1 The context**

The organisational change programme can be seen as a process seeking to incorporate both past and future into the present. Within the broader framework of "globalisation" and "structural adjustment" (Chapter 2), the company privatisation is projected as instrumental in building a future of improved national economic performance for broader benefits to the nation's citizens. It emerges from a past associated with poor economic performance and the inefficiencies of the socialist era, together with lingering vestiges of the colonial era.

Indeed the organisation itself originated from the British colonial period. Whilst no literature specific to Tanzania has been located, Harvey (2002) draws on substantial literature to argue that both colonisation and decolonisation left an indelible footprint on business and organisational landscapes in Africa. Certainly many of the bureaucratic processes and structures that existed within the company could be seen as originating from British Colonial administration. Undoubtedly over time the way organisational structures were utilised had been influenced by local cultural influences, including those associated with socialism, but it appeared that as a fundamental organisational foundation that bureaucracy remained. The well noted structural inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of the organisation, together with
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its strong role culture (Handy 1993), which was considered as not that open to change, could therefore be seen as historically linked to the colonial era.

As also discussed there were popular local perceptions that many of the nation’s problems were attributable to colonial legacies, thereby implying “colonial” forces are negative and should be resisted. A kind of collective memory of colonialism was also noted and, amongst some groups within the organisation, there were perceptions of outsiders; particularly expatriates, as potential “colonisers”. The country’s colonial past could therefore be seen as lingering on in the structures of the organisation itself, as well in relation to local perceptions of outsiders.

7.2.2 The challenge of change: building on to the structures of the past

Corporatism was seen as instrumental in the attainment of a future vision. However as noted in Chapter 4 there are often tensions between the values of humanism, which corporatism ostensibly serves, and the values of corporatism itself. Furthermore it was well noted that many of the corporate structures arriving with expatriates, and introduced into the company as part of a change process, met head on with existing structures. As argued by post/critical scholars, at the basis of values conflicts there are usually power struggles based on conflicts of interest.

The framework, developed in Chapter 4, is therefore drawn on here as a means of reflecting on the relative dominance of certain kinds of values at work within the organisation, and the meaning that can be further construed from that reflection. This particularly relates to perceptions of whose interests are being served, and the implications for the change process itself where certain kinds of values dominate.
7.2.2.1 Reflections

7.2.2.1.1 Balance between universal values and metavalues

Giddens (1994) and Donaldson and Dunfee (1999) have argued that universal principles and values, such as personal freedom, physical security, human dignity, human development, etc can unite multiple perspectives and have real purchase in today's world. Whilst Cultural Relativism views seek to temper and condition the extent to which such universalisms apply, particularly as it relates to local cultural situations prevailing in distinct regions of the world (Oloka-Onyango 2000), this view is certainly broadly supported by “legitimising” certain activities undertaken by a wide variety of international organisations. For example such universal values are readily espoused in mission and vision statements of development banks involved in supporting countries like Tanzania down paths of socio-economic reformx.

Despite the subtleties of the universalism versus cultural relativism debate, the context of the organisational case study exists within a general framework of basic human rights and human development objectives. For the purposes of discussion here there is not really much scope for divergence or conflicts at this level in terms of whose broader interests are being served. Development and progress views (Anderson and Michael 1995) were widely upheld as the means for achieving end states associated with universal values, and their dominance could be seen as emerging through hegemonic processes (Smith and Hoare 1971).

Of course this does not suggest there was no divergence from this view. In particular divergent views were widely apparent within the vestiges of socialism/ Marxism, and strongly expressed concerns about the way the “west” tends to exploit people and technology to serve the purposes of different political and economic interests. Consideration can also be given to how hegemonic processes represent the interests of those in power, while those outside power structures may not fully understand their situation or realise the situation is unjust (Carver 1991).
There are also general views that such high level universal values are never fully attained but rather are more permanent guides for experience (Rokeach 1973; Nord et al. 1990; George and Jones 1997). From this perspective, macro socio economic reform strategies, including privatisation and the role of the organisation, are seen as instrumental in working towards these higher long term ends, but appear also as quite a way from concrete attainability. Indeed it can be argued, it is not sufficient to assume that benefits will automatically flow (Sen 2001).

It can be further argued that because there is such a gap between an existing situation and the attainability of an envisioned future, the terminal focus is readily displaced by more immediate and instrumental concerns. This means it also becomes inevitable that those impacted along the way, or those who are ostensibly to benefit, may be unable to see tangible improvements in the short term and therefore unable to see any benefits of change.

The broader instrumentality of the organisation's privatisation and corresponding reform in macro socio-economic reform was certainly broadly acknowledged. However once formal shareholder agreements were signed, it appeared relationships between the macro and micro were not sustained (Giddens 1993). There was therefore a diminishing consciousness of the broader contract out of which the privatised entity emerged.

Whereas the organisational change programme may have existed within a broader context of reform seeking to uphold certain universal values, these values did not speak out loudly in the organisation. Whilst the values of 'effectiveness', 'efficiency' and 'growth' (Hodgkinson 1991) were also not explicit, they emerged as integral, and more tangible, elements of the privatisation and organisational change programme, which were also at odds with other values systems operating in the organisation.
7.2.2.1.2 Relative focus on well-being: individuals, social identity groups or organisations?

The paradox has been acknowledged in that whilst people are reflected in the terminal orientation of more humanistic values, in relation to organisational roles they are also part of the means (Anand and Sen 2000). The dilemma of whether the aim is the wellbeing of an individual or the broader wellbeing of all (Golebiowski 1982) also clearly emerges.

Certainly there was a focus on the well-being of the organisation, but this was also essentially seen as serving the interests of all stakeholders. In addition it was not without consideration of the potential impacts on individuals; particularly in relation to imminent retrenchment. However the unspoken agenda of retrenchment meant there was no means of getting statements out that indicated a sense of taking care of those likely to be impacted. It could therefore be also argued that at the macro level, insufficient attention was given to factoring social impacts and mitigation strategies into high level agreements.

Reference has also been made to how corporate values of efficiency and effectiveness, particularly as reflected in changing HR practices, had the potential to override values of family and collectives associated with dominant social identity groups. There are therefore certainly grounds for building perceptions that corporate interests dominate, giving rise to a new corporate colonialism (Goldsmith 1997; Grace and Humphries 1997).

In this context two grounds for resistance are therefore also created; the resistance of the "old organisation" in protecting its interests over the "new organisation" and its broader corporate interests, and the resistance against serving corporate interests which came to be strongly identified with the interests of external parties.
Within the case study a strongly instrumental view of people and the value they can add (or don’t add) to the business is evident. In particular however, the arrival of new corporate structures meant that suddenly people’s worth and future in the organisation were measured against new criteria. In contrast to the existing organisation culture, efficiency questioned the role of a substantial percentage of employees within the company ("low-skilled", "performing roles in non-core business activities", "substantial cost", etc). Effectiveness, as a measure of output, also questioned the worth and contribution to business outcomes of a substantial number of employees.

This not only suggested that the values of alternative cultural structures tended to be disregarded, but that this disregard was a likely source of resentment and resistance in the organisation. Within the framework of corporate discourses however resistance was simply attributed to different, but "normal" personal responses in the face of change. This perhaps failed to adequately acknowledge and take into account the deeply human impacts of those changes.

This is not to say that the intrinsic worth and rights of people were not valued and respected by people in leadership positions. It simply did not emerge amongst dominant corporate discourses and many of the new corporate structures put in place. The tendency of HRM to speak the "language of business" at the expense of a "language of people" was evident. In addition, there was strong evidence of valuing technical competence (relating to both managerialism and technologies) over people who had developed an understanding of the broader challenges associated with working within transition culture, together with the skills to work effectively within that. This suggests the requirements of some kind of cultural competence and cultural knowledge, but this remains an undeveloped area.
Few would disagree that with rights, come responsibilities. This can be translated from the lowest level of the organisation that with "rights" of employment, come the responsibility to perform entrusted duties. Similarly in leadership positions the right to staff an organisation, according to its needs (i.e. "hiring and firing"), comes with the responsibility of treating employees with respect and dignity. However interpretations of those rights and responsibilities vary according to the nature of the social context, and it could be said that insufficient emphasis was placed on communicative reasoning. In the face of such a tremendous change and the merging of different world views, there were many challenges to building common understandings of exactly what those rights and responsibilities might be in a new business and changing cultural context.

Again, the unspoken agenda of imminent retrenchment meant there was no means of getting statements out that indicated a respect for the rights of those who might be impacted, together with the obligations of the organisation. The change programme, from both a macro and micro perspective therefore struggled to find the right balance between the two value sets; the one dealing with how organisations treat people, and the other with what organisations must do everyday to be successful in the marketplace (Lebow and Simon 1997).

7.2.2.1.4 The value of knowledge

Certainly there was substantial emphasis on technical and practical knowledge associated with the business of telecommunications and western managerialism. This heavily commoditised knowledge was also strongly associated with commercial contracts involving international consultants. This knowledge also appears as being readily managed within corporate frame structures.

This however is seen as in contrast to phronesis and emancipatory knowledge. Phronesis, or practical wisdom building, did emerge; particularly
as key people became more engaged in complex organisational challenges, but this knowledge was not formally captured and in many instances was lost with the turn over of key expatriate staff.

Learning and knowledge construction tended to be formally embedded within the neo-liberal corporate principles that brought the privatisation about, without tapping into other ways of knowing and viewing the world. As previously discussed it appears that there needed to be a much stronger linkage maintained between the macro and the micro levels if genuine contextual solutions are to be found for realising socio-economic reform, and for building a business success story aligned with the specific social and cultural context.

7.2.2.1.5 Ways of knowing

The importance of emotion and intuition were noted in discussion around Personal Mastery, however this did not ring out loudly against discourses associated with the science and rationality of business managerialism. It certainly did not feature in formal organisational documentation. This also extends to valuing knowledge associated with corporatism and business managerialism over different forms of cultural knowledge.

Capturing stories, as alternatives to bounded corporate discourses, did emerge as a powerful way to capture alternative insights into organisations and organisational life. However whilst emotion and intuition often spoke out quite loudly in informal discussion forums, there appeared to be challenges in capturing this in formal organisational discourses that guided organisational activity.
7.2.2.1.6 People development

In line with previously mentioned debates around whether the goals of programmes, which purport to uphold universal values, are interested in the well-being of individuals or broader human-kind, there is a debate about whether human capability or functioning is the ultimate political goal of development (Nussbaum 2002). Certainly in the organisation there was a strong emphasis on building functional competencies.

Whilst there was a focus on developmental processes for the acquisition of certain kinds of skills, the same attention was not applied to the development of self as it relates to identity (Wenger 1999) and related aspects of personal values, attitudes, and so on.

On the other hand the notion and importance of Personal Mastery and tapping into the whole person was well noted in the case study; particularly in relation to leadership positions. However it was apparent that many structures relating to recruitment and competency development did not support this. A strong emphasis was also seen on developing functional or technical competence, with little acknowledgement or focus on the development of cross-cultural competence (not just definitions of competence defined within frameworks of western managerialism). This emerges as a complex area; particularly because of different cultural views surrounding learning and development in terms of both purposes of learning and modes of learning.

In relation to Habermas’s (1984) knowledge constitutive interests, there was a very strong orientation towards the development of technical knowledge, with some evidence of the development of practical knowledge, but little focus on emancipatory knowledge. I return to this point in substantial detail in Section 7.4.1.2.
7.2.2.1.7 *Masculinist culture*

It was noted that the existing organisational culture had a strong ‘Feminine’ orientation (Hofstede 1991). This meant that good relationships and the caring of others, as well as quality of life and security, appeared as being valued more than individual achievement, success and reward associated with many of the corporate structures that were introduced. There was also a strong suspicion that the new management did not care for the Tanzanian people, and this was exacerbated by the expected but unspoken retrenchment subject. Again this relates back to some structural arrangements at the macro level regarding human and social impact. However it also requires consideration for the way structures and behaviours carry messages about whether the organisation cares or not about its people.

7.2.2.1.8 *Technology*

In the organisation there was a natural focus on the alignment of people, processes and technology in order to improve internal effectiveness and efficiency, and quality of service. Consequently there was the introduction of new technologies associated with telecommunications infrastructure, information management and communications. This was also widely viewed as an integral part of becoming a modern and internationally respected telecommunications service provider.

Gopal, Willis and Gopal (1999) however trace the manner in which formerly colonised societies, even after decolonisation, have never been allowed opportunities to enter into autonomous technological dialogue. They argue that information communication technologies, instead of unlocking indigenous potential, actually re-impose rules that existed in the repertoires of the colonisers of yesteryear. This raises a number of interesting themes.

Firstly, of course, whilst the links between telecommunications and broader socio-economic development are readily espoused by development agencies,
it could be argued that with privatisation, a key information communication technology organisation was taken out of national hands. Whilst it is out of the scope of this document to comment on the nature of the agreements between the parties, in the context of the organisation such agreements could be considered as a contributor to the lack of “buy-in”, and apparent ambivalence of indigenous employees, to the privatisation and broader change programme.

A more organisation specific example related to the introduction of “call centre” technologies. Here the potential for a form of technological imperialism, and the broader and independent influence of technology on human activity or organisational properties is acknowledged (Roberts and Grabowski 1999; Giddens 1984). For example, call centre technology can certainly be instrumental in improving efficiency and effectiveness, and therefore serving the broader interests of the organisation. However it can also be seen as technology for technology's sake, and the accompaniment of western culture and the capitalist social order where technology is devised and deployed to serve the purposes of political and economic interests (Golebiowski 1982). In this sense it can also be seen as being at odds with Marxist and more humanist concerns for those impacted in the workplace through the introduction of technologies. Particularly where local skills are not sufficient to manage the technology, it provides another opportunity to be exploited by foreign organisations.

Potential redundancy of employees in favour of automated technologies like IVR (interactive voice response) is particularly highlighted in an environment where labour costs are relatively low, opportunities for paid employment are low, skills of the general workforce are low which further denies access to higher skilled or knowledge-based employment, and where there is no form of social security system for those who find themselves out of employment. Whilst corporate and technology values may be served, broader sight of the values associated with macro economic reform and poverty alleviation is at risk of being lost. This suggests that decisions surrounding the introduction of
technologies therefore need to be evaluated against a holistic framework, and within a broader sphere of "communities of interest".

7.2.2.1.9 Identity

As discussed in Chapter 6, the organisation was made up of multiple social identity groups. There was also little focus on understanding the organisation in terms of what Wenger (1999) views as 'relations among localities with their own perspectives on how they belong to the organisation, their own interpretation of its charter and their own forms of knowledgeability' (p. 195).

In line with the view that an organisational vision provides a unifying focus, there was an attempt to build a common sense of organisational identity based around an existing organisational 'vision' and following through with the logic that everyone involved with the organisation would benefit from being part of a business success story. Problems with building an organisational vision and a stronger sense of organisational identity were systemically linked to delays in being able to introduce many planned reforms which would have had flow-on benefits to employees.

However further reflection within Wenger's (1999) framework of 'social ecology of identity' and the principals of 'identities of participation' and 'identities of non-participation' (p. 190) provides much more insight into broader issues associated with personal identities. In particular it highlights the way in which changes did not engage employees, appeal to their imagination and "hearts", or work towards an alignment of world views (Table 7.2.2.1-9), and indeed the way in which certain structures constrained those processes. Deliberate strategies to "corporatise" the organisation and its people, along with not so intentional aspects of corporatism (i.e. how extended family identity was being broken down by more individual self interest) reflected corporate encroachment into all aspects of life and Habermas's (1984, 1987) notion of a colonisation of the life world.
Table 7.2.1-9: Reflection within Wenger's (1999) framework of ‘social ecology of identity’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identities of participation</th>
<th>Identities of non-participation</th>
<th>Modes of belonging</th>
<th>Identities of participation</th>
<th>Identities of non-participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and collective groups [supporting] but tempered by perception of the new organisation not caring about the family [detracting]</td>
<td>Experience of boundaries through a faux-pas (i.e. an expatriate overlooking to greet someone, expressions of anger, causing someone to lose face)</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Having one’s ideas adopted (i.e. participatory processes) [supporting]</td>
<td>Marginality through having one’s ideas/knowledge ignored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity felt by workers to the possibilities that accompany change, as it related to high expectations at the beginning [supporting]</td>
<td>Prejudice through stereotypes (reinforcement of difference “expatriates only care about business”, “expatriates as colonisers”, “locals are lazy”)</td>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>Vicarious experience through stories (shared understanding and communicative reasoning built at workshops) [supporting]</td>
<td>Assumption that someone else knows what is going on – it’s in some else’s control, feelings of helplessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegiance to the workers movement and the nation [detracting where disalignment became evident at the macro level]</td>
<td>Submission to power (acceptance of power distance)</td>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>Being influenced by the meaning that is derived from experience (i.e. that makes sense to me) [supporting]</td>
<td>Accustomed to compliance-based change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In principle it also seemed that expatriates invested more personal identity in being associated with business and organisational success. Although there was undoubtedly a sense of identity associated with being part of one the largest national companies, the majority of local employees appeared as
much more interested in work from a perspective of making money in order to look after one's self and family. This was seen as in contrast to western and expatriate interests in the work experience itself. Whilst this also suggests variations based around differences in the nature of the work experience, differences in economic standing (Maslow 1970) and differences in the power relations of organisations, it nevertheless meant that expatriates tended to use a language reflective of corporate discourses that put the organisation's interests first.

As part of a process of building a set of shared organisational principles, alongside a vision and mission, organisational values were also stated. These included "honesty and integrity". Previous reference has also been made to how bribery, and other means of deriving indirect benefits from involvement in organisations are subject to different cultural interpretations in relation to beliefs and values surrounding "honesty" versus "dishonesty". However these provide another example of how different views of different social identity groups create different perceptions about whose interests are being served.

Certainly specific corporate interpretations of "honesty and integrity" could be seen as at variance with the interpretation of other social identity groups (i.e. "bribery is an unacceptable and unethical practice" versus "bribery is an accepted practice that enables access to certain groups and decision-makers and supports extended families") or with the interpretation of an individual (i.e. "arranging unnecessary travel for the purposes of claiming per diem is tantamount to internal fraud" versus "no-one is being hurt if I supplement my monthly income a little through a bit more travel"). It indicates how there is room for a perception that a form of ethical imperialism is being applied, which is also serving corporate or organisational interests over those of individuals and different social groups. As discussed invariably those corporate interests were readily associated with "outside" interests.

Discussions around such values about "right" and "wrong", or ethical debates surrounding "universalism" versus "cultural relativism" versus "moral
absolutism" become irrelevant in relation to immediate points of "perception" and divergent mental models. Unless specific attention is given to challenging existing mental models, those previously referred to perceptions surrounding whose interests are being served, or whose interests are being jeopardised, through the respective changes are likely to remain, and of course invoke resistance to them.

Certainly cultural elements relating to different social identity groups were acknowledged in the organisational change programme. On the one hand efforts were made to generate discussion around the creation of an organisational culture where everyone made a "cultural" shift to become part of building a new organisational culture. On the other hand discussion tended to reinforce notions of difference and the barriers that inevitably existed between different groups. Dealing with cultural and identity issues therefore emerged as one of the most challenging, and perhaps inconsistently and inadequately treated elements of the programme.

7.2.2.1.10 Diversity

The coming together of diverse social identity groups meant the coming together of different world views, values and belief systems, knowledge, understandings, and expectations. Whilst "difference" was acknowledged, there was a tendency to portray the organisation as largely homogeneous and not acknowledge or seek to develop deeper understandings of the tremendous diversity that existed across the various social identity groups and communities of practice (Wenger 1999). This was also evident in a tendency to somewhat simplistically portray an ideal corporate culture, and to develop strategies that would bring the organisation inside that in order to build sameness in relation to other (successful) corporations.

Whilst certain shared values were stated alongside the organisation's mission and vision statements, there was no values statement or policy that
specifically addressed (cultural) "diversity". This appears as somewhat strange given the attention to diversity now found in western organisations (even if it is sometimes only for political correctness). However amongst many expatriates, who almost without exception had worked extensively in foreign locations, "diversity" simply appeared as a given. As one expatriate said, "we expect diversity, and we know how to work within it, there is no need to make a big deal out of it". But the same expatriate further noted that, "whilst we respect and know how to work well amongst people who are different, essentially we are trying to change people", and "I encourage my team to "listen"; to listen to the concerns and the ideas of all the people in the organisation......because I know that there are a lot of people out there who know a lot about this organisation, its customers... and how things should be done, but I also know that sometimes I have trouble recognising a good idea, and a genuine concern that is not an excuse, when I hear one".

There are number of interesting points to examine here. Firstly there is recognition of the diversity that exists, but it is primarily something that has to be navigated through, not something that is necessarily valued. However there is also an acknowledgement that the manager intuitively recognises knowledge in the organisation that he does not have, but that he also does not really know how to tap into it. The latter not only reflects the personal issue of the expatriate manager, but also points to certain social structures at work, such as those referred to in Chapter 6 relating to some local employees adopting expatriate behaviours, not wanting to be the bearer of bad news to a person in power, not wanting to speak out in front of seniors, and the fear of failure that encourages excuses rather than risk-taking, which all work to keep many aspects of diversity contained.

Furthermore the full nature of diversity and what diversity in the organisation actually represented was never fully explored. Rather it appeared that diversity was usually viewed: (1) in terms of cultural artefacts, (2) as a means of explaining different kinds of behaviours associated with the social identity groups to which one did not belong, and (3) to account for organisational problems and inefficiencies. Rarely was it linked to specific cultural and
contextual knowledge and how that knowledge could "add-value" to the situation.

This expatriate comment also links back to discussion in Chapter 6 surrounding personal mastery. It suggests that on one level the manager "knows" something about diversity, based on previous experience, but his own personal learning or personal mastery has not developed to such a stage where he is able to capture and really "know what he knows", and develop that knowledge for better application in a practical sense. As was noted there were also no mechanisms in place to support these learning and development processes.

In addition the instrumentality of the ‘technical’ and ‘practical’ approaches to learning also did not usually encourage or support diversity coming to the surface. As has been noted, even in the case of fairly open-ended workshops structured around strategic planning, project planning and performance improvement planning, the role of the facilitator was never really neutral. Instead they drew on participatory processes that had a tendency to lead people to predefined outcomes and simply encourage ownership and acceptance of them. Only when ready made solutions, arriving with expatriates, were not working as well as envisaged was there stronger evidence of listening to a variety of voices and divergent perspectives.

The management of diversity represented a significant, and inconsistently treated, challenge. Diversity was not really valued for either for its intrinsic cultural value, or for its instrumental value in supporting organisational learning.

7.2.2.1.11 The professions

Within the case study there were examples of individual perceptions of personal professionalism, particularly amongst expatriates, which were at odds with dominant values within the organisation. The abolition of
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subsistence allowances relating to travel, on the basis that it “encouraged inappropriate behaviour”, but without consideration of broader systemic perspectives, is an example. This was broadly perceived as being linked to corporate power regimes and interests associated with the expatriate management and foreign investor. It could also be seen as linked to serving the individual interests of that particular expatriate in proving his “professionalism”. That unwillingness to compromise professionalism within the broader corporate arena was therefore seen as being at the expense of the interest of the local manager group. Notions of professionalism therefore emerged as being aligned with corporate discourses and interests.

Another example included where a sense of professional value, and an apparent fear of compromising professional standards tended to encourage some expatriates to distance themselves from the organisation, or set higher expectations than were realistic within the existing context. This not only created perceptions of superiority and the subsequent inferiority of others, but were in some instances perceived as being linked to the power regime and interests associated with management in highlighting that inferiority (i.e. justifying the continuous role of expatriate managers in favour of local managers). These kinds of values tensions of course act as contributors to resistance, but also support a concern (Argyris and Schön 1974) about whether the professions serve all members of society or only the advantaged.

In addition the role of different professionals as agents of different knowledge, along with the valuing of different kinds of professional knowledge has also been noted (Freidson 1986). Demonstrating professional knowledge, and therefore professional value, has been referred to in relation to the way in which many expatriates assumed "expert" and "advocate" role, and suggests a kind of knowledge imperialism. It implies a broader corporate valuing of advocacy skills in favour of more inquiry-based skills in professionals, and a valuing of certain professional knowledge fields more highly than others. For example in relation to the latter knowledge around financial and technical matters appeared to carry more weight than knowledge about people and cultural issues. This creates a paradox in that what is ostensibly valued within
corporate structures may also be at the heart of undermining broader organisational interests through an inability to create genuine transformative learning opportunities.

7.2.2.2 Summary of meaning derived

From the above reflection it becomes apparent that values, which have a strong corporate or instrumental orientation, are seen to have a tendency to dominate over those that are more people or humanistic in their orientation. This dominance also appears as legitimised through the instrumentalism of the principles of corporatism in serving more universal and humanistic values. However such values at work, and where they are not unravelled and explored, can create divergent perspectives of whose interests are being served.

In addition an overemphasis on instrumentalism can actually interrupt the change process because those who are inside corporatism have difficulty in seeing outside of corporate frameworks. This in turn creates boundaries to generating participatory forms of identity and learning processes, which support new forms of social identity and generate new forms of knowledge matching contextual requirements.

7.2.3 The possibilities

The case study clearly takes place in a general environment reflecting a dichotomy of all the possibilities and hope that comes with dynamic change, as well as the potential for doubts and resistance that can also surface. As noted in Chapter 6 impacts of resistance were evident.

The concept of resistance is important in postcolonial theory; resistance through subversion, resistance through opposition, or resistance through
mimicry (Lye 1997, 1998). A power struggle is implied, but one where resistance is the only means of a relatively weak power group to struggle against a dominant one. Resistance can be seen as emerging in response to power struggles based upon values conflicts and conflicts of interest.

Resistance is a theme that emerges throughout. However if we view resistance as producing ‘cleavages in a society’ and as ‘fracturing unities’ (Foucault 1978; p. 96), then within the broader context of the existing environment and in view of the “international” assistance being provided, systems thinking assists in summarising the logical outcome of unsuccessful change (Figure 7.2.3-1).

A number of interpretations of this phenomenon can be derived. The first interpretation sees the systemic problem lying primarily with the resistors; i.e. “the international community is trying to help but this is being blocked”. However if we draw from Foucault (1980) again and consider that resistance occurs in relation to a ‘strategy of power’ (p. 101) then other possibilities emerge. For example, it can also be argued that resistance is occurring in response to strategies of power associated with imposed changes from the international community, and that the international community is actually the root cause of the systemic problem. Or more realistically, and given the general acknowledgement that changes are required in response to broader
macro systemic factors, then both groups can be seen as complicit in the lack of change. This can be attributed to a lack of genuinely coming together in search of more authentic transformation based on communicative reasoning.

Furthermore if we think of "resistance as an experience that constructs and reconstructs the identity of subjects", which "may equally result in confirming or strengthening existing identities, ironically contributing to maintaining the status quo" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 19), then resistance in organisations can be attributed to the poor management of diversity; evident in terms of world views, beliefs, knowledge, values, expectations, identity, etc. Where, as a consequence of poor management of diversity, positive change is not an outcome, and where international assistance is also complicit within that, Systems Thinking assists in identifying how themes associated with unequal development and continuing dependence on international assistance, may be perpetuated (Figure 7.2.3-2).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 7.2.3-2: A systemic perspective of the potential perpetuation of themes of unequal development
7.2.4 Conclusions

Important boundaries emerge between corporate and humanist values, and the boundaries between different social identity groups and the cultural systems that unite them. Where tensions develop at those borders, and they are not exposed, and power struggles around conflicts of interest result, it could be argued fundamental structures of colonialism are perpetuated, and which can give rise to and legitimise resistance. Regardless of the cause however, the structures of resistance can result in unsuccessful change initiatives. Furthermore this can be despite international assistance, as well meaning as it may be, and result in the perpetuation of structures associated with dependence on outside assistance, and the commercial opportunities that accompany it. This suggests that in planning for change, strategies need to consider how these fundamental structures are to be interrupted.

7.3 Culture: impacts of the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day

7.3.1 Introduction

The emotionalism attached to potential cultural impacts in the face of changing conditions; particularly those associated with globalisation were referred to in Chapter 3. Bhaba (1994), more specifically, reminds us that subscription to a notion of culture as interactive and constantly recomposed from a variety of possible sources, points to an important political act. This also suggests potential for a "colonising" act, and is in line with post/critical scholars who argue that at the basis of values conflicts, are conflicts of interest based on power struggles. It has previously been discussed in relation to the particular dominance of values associated with corporatism. There are however many issues associated with trying to unravell claims associated with notions of cultural imperialism.
Within this theme it is possible to consider the development of organisational culture, from its origins in the British Colonial era, right through until the present organisational change programme. There are a number of dimensions to this. Firstly it is possible to consider how powerful narratives surrounding transition and corporate culture view culture instrumentally. These narratives consider how culture either contributes to or detracts from achieving objectives associated with structural adjustment and free enterprise. They also justify the almost unquestioning imposition of certain kinds of cultural change. Transition and corporate culture tends to arrive with expatriates whose work and professional experience have been framed within corporate contexts. Their “expert” status also adds legitimacy to the corporate culture they bring.

Secondly, in cross-cultural environments, one culture may be perceived and represented as being inferior in comparison to another. In particular this draws on postcolonial themes associated with “otherness”, “knowing” and “representation”.

Thirdly it is possible to consider how, in cross-cultural environments, the dominance of one culture over another impacts existing culture and may also be seen as “robbing” a social group of its original or existing culture. Here the postcolonial theme of ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha 1994; Hall 1996) provides a useful reference point. Furthermore, it is possible to consider how differences in cultural attributes enable one group to exert dominating influences over another, which may also result in the ability to continue to secure wealth and power at the expense of groups over which dominance is exerted. Within this context it is also possible to consider how colonialism contributed to building structures that enable this dominance to be exerted and/or perpetuated. Finally, as has also been discussed, because organisations tend to wield tremendous power in modern society with the potential to condition their own members and the public at large, organisational culture vis-à-vis Tanzania society should not be overlooked.
As noted by Kennedy (1998) the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank automatically imply cultural change, and this is within a framework of what is often defined as transition culture (Sachs 1995). At the structural level 'transition culture is a transnational community of discourse organised around questions of how to make market economies out of centrally planned economies' (Kennedy 1998 p. 19), where cultural change is viewed as instrumental in contributing to the success of structural adjustment programmes. Furthermore transitional culture represents powerful narratives based around scientific models and comparative research, and when discussed at the structural level the local conveniently disappears because of the level of abstraction and generality at which transition culture is identified (ibid).

Certainly the entire project in Tanzania emerges out of narratives around transitional culture and economic reform. Structural change at the macro level, as it relates to privatisation, tends to imply that the organisation will adjust to suit the demands of a changed external market environment and that necessary cultural adjustment will also follow as a natural and required consequence. The need for organisational change also appears as uncontested and uncontestable against powerful corporate narratives that draw on "international benchmarks" and "international best practices" associated with what successful business organisations do, where again the "local" appears as almost irrelevant.

The adoption of instrumental views of organisational culture, within a context of macro-economic reform, can however be seen as reflecting a one-way systems perspective in that impacts of transition and corporate culture on local culture are not considered beyond what is perhaps encapsulated in the following statement of one expatriate manager. "Undoubtedly there will be examples of how changes taking place in this country impact local culture, and although I might have some sentimental views on that, I cannot say
overall whether it is right or wrong or good or bad. All I know is that we are in
the business of building a successful organisation... cultural factors may
impact the business, but we can't measure culture... we can only measure
business results”.

Such instrumental perspectives of organisational culture certainly emerge as
divergent from those surrounding the celebration of local cultures and the
intrinsic worth of local cultural elements often reflected in the Arts and
Anthropology, as well as the concerns surrounding global impacts associated
with loss of cultural diversity (George 1989). They also do not value how
existing cultures can also be a contributor to solutions sought. However whilst
transition and corporate culture narratives tend to be built around
deontological perspectives primarily concerned with the thinking behind
actions ostensibly linked to serving the greater good, the very dominance of
one set of values over others suggests a colonising or imperial act.

Furthermore, whilst culture in general may be viewed as dynamic (Jameson
1991, 1998), where this occurs within a framework of explicit economic
strategising without any consideration of impacts on the local, or without any
engagement with social identity groups whose identity is based around the
local, then this suggests Habermas’s (1984,1987) notion of a ‘colonisation of
the life world’ is upheld. However as previously discussed, issues and
tensions arise when elements of local culture become more apparent. The
emergence of the local; particularly as it relates to different social identity,
means the structure of transition culture becomes less stable (Kennedy
1998), and this represented a challenge to the entire change process;
particularly through resistance.

At the level of the organisation, “culture” tended to be considered within the
framework of a homogeneous corporate ideal and reflected in global
discourses of benchmarks and best-practices. However it could also be
regarded as being about legitimacy and conforming to certain kinds of
corporate rules and rituals, rather than about real efficiency and improvement
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(Orrú et al. 1991). This could be seen as upheld in the way many corporate imports were not necessarily bringing business improvements or providing contextually suitable solutions, and again reinforcing the potential for colonial themes of dependence.

The very act of bringing in expatriates as agents of corporatism is linked to encouraging local culture to adapt to changed conditions; particularly through the legitimacy of their expert knowledge. It however also suggests that there is no explicit need to actually manage cultural issues, but that cultural change will occur through a kind of natural osmotic process; particularly as new frame structures are introduced and shape organisational behaviour accordingly. However again (regardless of the validity of that assumption), without any consideration for local impacts, or engagement with local social identity groups this nevertheless implies a colonising act.

Attention to cultural was therefore broadly viewed as an instrumental requirement in achieving broader goals associated with structural reforms and business success. However cultural aspects, and giving attention to them, emerged as one of the most challenging and inconsistently treated aspects of organisational activity. On one front, attention to cultural differences focused on the avoidance of misunderstandings and inadvertently causing offence by exploring behaviours commonly attributed to people coming from different geographic locations. On another front, cultural change was considered from a perspective of bringing the existing organisation inside a kind of homogeneous corporate culture. On yet again another front, and alongside attempts to build a shared sense of corporate vision, there were discussions amongst management groups on collaboratively constructing a new organisational culture; a point I return to.

In addition sociological aspects relating to the company were not extended the same levels of inquiry, analysis and strategic planning as other more tangible aspects of the organisation such as those relating to business planning, technology planning and organisational frame structures. It was
also generally not reflected in the recruitment of technically oriented skill sets of expatriates, nor a focus of substantial time and investment in comparison to other technically oriented human development activities.

Despite a tendency to treat organisational culture as being homogeneous, as Kennedy (1998) notes, transition culture itself is certainly not homogeneous. At the macro level transition culture is rife with debates over proper forms of ownership, the right sequence of reforms, and these narratives, whilst outside of the control of the organisation itself certainly overflowed into the organisation during the media war surrounding the shareholder dispute.

At the micro level of the organisation transition culture was rife with debates over the nature, requirements and timing of organisational reform. However again there was a view amongst expatriates that a fairly standard corporate recipe could be applied to the organisation, regardless of the international context, and that the logic of this would eventually prevail over other local cultural narratives. Whilst this also reinforces the notion of a kind of corporate cultural imperialism, it also has to be noted that there were further cultural reasons that prevented these different narratives from being openly explored amongst the various groups. I return to this important point again in another section.

7.3.3 Representations of the superiority and inferiority of cultures

In the case study work of popular theorists, who address issues surrounding organisational culture; particularly those that accompany differences associated with different geographic areas (Hofstede 1991), was drawn on heavily. Resultant discussion, analysis and reflection in relation to systems thinking around the topic of organisational culture however usually pointed to a tremendous gap between the culture of the Tanzanian organisation, and that generally associated with the West and/or corporatism. The implication that almost everything about the culture, prevalent within the Tanzanian
organisational context, as being the antithesis of that required for building a successful privatised organisation and therefore needing to be changed, certainly also hints at some kind of cultural imperialism. Ironically, the existing organisational structures however were not usually linked to former European/western interventions (see previous section).

Whilst it was recognised that there were a number of cultures at work in the organisation; including powerful sub-cultures, in principle corporate narratives were drawn on to paint a picture of a somewhat homogeneous problematic organisational culture. Narratives around western benchmarks and best-practices legitimised notions of the organisation being outside of corporate ideals. This in turn legitimised solution-oriented change programmes, which were also built around narratives of what other successful companies do.

This also emerges as consistent with postcolonial themes. Said (1994), for example, exposed how ways of knowing the 'other' were central to the establishment and maintenance of colonial rule, and that the West produced knowledge about other peoples in order to prove the truth of their inferiority. Ways of knowing others have tended to develop around branches of European knowledge, science, and modernity which portray a further conviction that the world is only knowable through those categories (Chakrabarthy 1992). In the case here “knowing” and “representation” are embedded in the context of Western corporatism and its “benchmarks”, and inevitably pointed to the Tanzanian organisation as being outside of those constructs. In line with the argument of Czarniawaska and Höpfl (2002), ‘difference’ tended to be regarded as problematic.

Furthermore when business or corporate competence emerge as dominant measures, over any other forms of competence; including in this case local cultural competence, perceptions of inferiority and superiority become inevitable. When “corporatism” is used as the benchmark against which a newcomer to the “game” is evaluated, the newcomer is invariably considered as lacking in many of those attributes, with a strong implication of inferiority.
Furthermore this leads to ethnocentric assumptions that values and culture commonly associated with the changing conditions (i.e. in this case expatriates) are superior (Wood 1995).

This also meant there was little scope for recognising and valuing diversity. The ethnocentricity of these assumptions is reflected in value-judgements about "successful western organisations" and knowledge relating to an envisioned entrepreneurial future. Consequently knowledge associated with a past that is considered little beyond being "socialist" and "unentrepreneurial" tends to be discounted with little evidence of assessments of what constitutes, or should/could constitute, a "successful African business organisation".

Another postcolonial theme surrounds the location of personal identity and culture, and when I reflect back on my own reports on the company I realised they probably said more about me than the company. They were certainly reports written through my eyes. The company was interpreted through my experience and against western corporate benchmarks, and written for an audience that "I know and understand". Part of this also relates to issues surrounding the application of the language of business and corporatism as the discursive medium, and I will also return to this point in a later section.

Inevitably this means however, that so much of the life and experience of the organisation and the people is overlooked simply because of this somewhat singular or narrow view of the organisation. Nevertheless this tendency is generally applicable for most expatriates in this particular context. Expatriates are of course a product of their own life experiences, which in this case are usually heavily equated with corporate experiences, and therefore appear as unwittingly acting within, representing and perpetuating the structures that have shaped their own social and corporate selves.
This means that so much local identity is not tapped into, and the "diversity of the organisation" and much of its potential is not unravelled and therefore becomes undervalued. This however was not necessarily a one-way process. As has been previously discussed, in transition culture there are many counter-narratives to those associated with western corporatism. However there are also many local narratives that reflect hegemonic processes, which encourage subscription to broader western corporate values.

Not only did the language of expatriates tend to see the organisation and its inhabitants as the "other", or as being outside, of western corporatism, there were narratives that were also reflected and supported by groups of local employees. There were many examples of expressed aspirations to lose the sense of otherness associated with lack of modernity and socialism and become part of a future associated with narratives of entrepreneurialism and material progress. In the words of one Tanzanian manager, "under socialism we all learned to expect everything for nothing...I want to learn as much from you so that I might also be able to work for other international companies. I think the work is very interesting, and it certainly would enable me to give my children better opportunities".

This means that both those who are inside as well as those that are outside of western corporatism perpetuate notions associated with the superiority of western corporate values and knowledge over more localised knowledge and values. Whilst this emerges at that level as almost a sub-conscious act, and not a deliberate colonising act it is still reflective of how structures of corporatism tend to represent what Habermas (1987) described as a colonisation of the lifeworld.

During the project "difference" was the focus of much discussion, highlighting in many instances common stereotypes and a variety of cultural indicators. On the one hand stereotypes enable the unfamiliar to be translated into coherent terms by seeming to account for the apparent strangeness of other peoples. On the other hand the use of stereotypes can be seen as supporting
the dualistic nature of Bhabha's view of colonial discourses where the 'colonised subject' is seen as the 'other' of the Westerner; essentially outside Western culture and civilisation. At the same time colonial discourses attempt to abolish their otherness and bring them inside Western understanding.

Certainly the organisational culture, and therefore logically the Tanzanians, were represented as outside of western corporate culture, and the entire organisational change programme was based around bringing them inside that. However the other side of this representation was also evident. For example, "Westerners" were portrayed as being outside of "uswahili" or "ndugu". Common stereotypes of foreigners, as "colonisers" and "exploiters", were applied. This also has a duality to it in the sense of historical legacy and perhaps as evidence of an embedded resistance to the "coloniser", but also as a general human reaction to difference when people are faced with people who fall outside of their own experience and understanding.

There were also other examples of how Tanzanians reflected on how they perceived Western culture. For example, one local manager said to a small group of expatriates, "you are always so busy, and don't you miss being away from your family and friends? ........and I can see how you are sometimes frustrated when people are away from work for a long time because they have to travel upcountry for a family burial, but Tanzanian people spend a lot of time on family matters.....for us family is very important". This comment also reflects how expatriates were generally viewed as being much more focused on business than family and relationships than indigenous employees, and that this, from a different perspective, could be construed as an inferior value or cultural system.

This again reflects how indigenous employees could also "other" expatriates in a negative manner. However on further discussion most of those same expatriates considered themselves as "caring" "family-oriented" people. This however also meant that through discussion around "difference", groups
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could also identify foundations for sameness as the basis of common aspects of organisational culture.

This raises some issues for consideration in terms of seeking to "manage diversity" within organisations. Certainly exploring "difference" cannot, and should not be avoided. As discussed earlier, without unravelling and understanding where values and beliefs systems diverge and converge there is potential for misunderstandings and conflicts. In this respect the sense of "otherness" cannot be avoided, and it therefore becomes more of an issue of how that sense of "otherness" is used, and who is being "othered".

Where "otherness" is used as the basis for imperialism and imposition, the prevalence of a colonial structure is implied. Where "otherness" is used as the basis of resistance then an anti-colonial structure is also implied, but as resistance is a common response in any "change programme" it cannot be assumed that it is solely representative of colonialism. However "otherness" can also be used to understand one's own culture better. It is sometimes only through seeing one's own culture through different cultural lenses that it is possible to understand and reflect on it, and be alert to its' strengths and weaknesses, and the appropriateness of various value and belief systems to various contexts. On the basis of understanding the foundations of "otherness" or difference, groups can also identify foundations for sameness, particularly as it can relate to common senses of identity and aspiration.

There were many instances cited in the case study where expatriates and local employees were faced with divergent values and sets of knowledge. Expatriates, with their technical knowledge and values associated with corporatism, were confronted with unfamiliar knowledge relating to local culture and practices. Local employees, with their own knowledge and value sets, were confronted with the knowledge and values of western corporatism. In addition however this diversity was not homogeneous within those conveniently labelled groups of "expatriate" and "local". It therefore becomes more of a challenge of how to bring that full range of diversity of knowledge,
cultures and values out into the open, and how to consciously consider the issues surrounding them, without inadvertently reinforcing simplistic notions around groups of others. There are however many structural barriers to achieving this, and this is another key point that I return to.

In addition, but also in relation to the notion of otherness, Said (1994) argues that colonisers never admit other peoples are not really different from themselves, as this would undercut the legitimacy of colonialism. Previous reference has been made to the tendency of expatriates to look for similarities in local personnel they relied on most in the organisation. Therefore on one hand this points to the way in which people wanted to find others who are not really so different to themselves, and tends to counter this argument of Said. Of more consequence in this sense as a potential colonising act however is the lack of valuing of difference and diversity in an organisation and acts of 'homosocial reproduction' (Kanter, 1977).

At a broader level where change is unsuccessful, and particularly where this may be so because of inadequate diversity management in the organisation, collective and homogeneous references, rather than individual and heterogeneous ones, tend to dominate. In this sense there is a tendency for expatriates to shift the responsibility of any lack of success away from corporatism (and therefore also from themselves as individuals) to the "other". This in turn tends to build stories of "the western world can manage business this way, why can't they ('others')?" In this sense Said's notion is upheld, because the "collective" other is represented as still being essentially different and outside of corporatism, which in turn justifies further assistance in terms of being further corporatised and being brought "in".

One of the problems associated with the way cultural difference is portrayed within the frameworks drawn upon (Hofstede 1991) is the temptation to view culture in general as static. Culture is viewed within a window of a certain place at a certain time. Rather culture should be considered as a process in practice or in action (Swidler 1986; Ortner, 1984), or as a dynamic force in
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reconstructing societies (Kennedy 1998) where ‘culture is about how people with various stocks of knowledge, including different stories, symbols and rules, make and transform the world’ (p. 5). However Kennedy also argues that when culture is viewed ‘as practice studied through narratives of identity in familiar and transformative moments, one can revisit more static forms of cultural analysis and consider how cultural typologies can be used as resources for strategic action, as bases for claims to competence’ (p. 6).

Within the framework of transition culture, which previous reference has been made and which is not considered homogeneous or static, Kennedy (1998) argues that both expatriates and indigenous employees are both unequally positioned. Expatriates are constrained in their appreciation of the cultural dimensions of transition because of their lack of familiarity with local culture, as well as ‘their own stake in highlighting the importance of more global dimensions of transition culture’ (p. 19). Tanzanians on the other hand are constrained in their familiarity with global or western culture.

However it generally appeared that the Tanzanians, who are being seen as integrated and changed, come out looking the most inferior in this relationship, with a lot of evidence of undervaluing local knowledge. This therefore suggests that there is a much stronger requirement for expatriates to be more open to local knowledge and level this relative positioning if imperialist structures are not to be perpetuated. As in the case here, where the management was largely expatriate, it implies there is also a need to ensure the treatment of diversity, as it exists at a certain time, does not occur outside of genuinely transformative and participatory cultural change processes.

As been noted within the organisational change programme, as challenges surfaced, emerging narratives started to question whether the application of Western corporate recipes and some of the competencies of expatriates were really so appropriate for the Tanzanian context. Examples of these were highlighted in relation to organisational structural reform and how more
consideration could have been given to better alignment with some dominant values sets. Another example related to the standard application of certain customer care strategies. A further example was also acknowledged within an expatriate’s reflective assessment of the competencies of a number of local managers, and the questioning of looking for similar qualities in others. Importantly it indicates that these were narratives some expatriates in the organisation were engaged in and trying to grapple with.

However in many cases it also appeared they were constrained in doing so. The broader corporate structures associated with investors, management and consultancy contract agreements, etc, and their focus on challenging business outcomes and milestones were not conducive to considering, understanding and acting on these narratives. For example, the requirements of Personal Mastery, (Senge 1990) and related aspects of emotional intelligence and developing "intuitive feelings" for the local context, were generally not qualities that appeared as explicitly valued by the foreign shareholder organisations responsible for the recruitment and selection of expatriates.

Knowledge about the culture of the organisation and the people certainly did not carry the same weight amongst various international shareholder representatives in comparison to knowledge relating to technology and markets. Furthermore attempts were not made to keep expatriates who were grappling with such issues within the organisation for longer periods of time. These therefore also represented structures at the highest level that reinforced imperial processes and perpetuated representations and relationships of inferiority and superiority.

7.3.4 Hybridity and the dynamics of cultural change

Bhaba (1994) suggests that it must be recognised that porous borders exist between cultures, and that they are always leaking into each other, and criss-
crossing supposed barriers. Swahili culture is perhaps a living example of this in terms of the fusion of cultures associated with African tribes and Arabic traders. Interestingly in management forums, which discussed culture in the context of the organisational change programme, the hybridity of Swahili culture was generally well acknowledged by many local managers. Thus, in turn, suggested a better understanding of cultural hybridity amongst that group than amongst the expatriates.

The organisation itself could also be viewed as a hybrid of "British bureaucracy" "socialist welfare" and "tribal collectivism". Certainly the current organisational context, and the coming together of peoples representing western corporate cultures and those representing local cultures, implied some kind of integration and cross-fertilisation of culture. Furthermore, all involved would somehow be affected in the process. Postcolonial theorists are however concerned with what lies behind those cultural border crossings.

As previously discussed, the project brought together the boundaries of what has been described as the "existing" organisation cultures, and another boundary associated with "western corporate" culture that was largely represented by a number of expatriates. Clearly some kind of border crossings are implied through the interaction of these cultures, and a model was presented as to how to try to manage this inevitably in a positive and not so imperial manner. This was based on a premise that whilst the principles of universalism may have validity, in relation to previously discussed high level humanistic values, it cannot be accepted that some kind of universal norm of international organisational behaviour applies at all levels and in all contexts.

This also considered the different perspectives of the treatment of culture by members of the organisation, which can be seen in the following comments on the subject.

I have my professional standards, which I believe are applicable in any organisational environment, and I do not intend to compromise them.

(statement of expatriate manager)
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We need to try and take the best of both cultures in order to create the organisational that we want. (statement of local manager)

When you people come to our country you should respect our ways. (statement of local employee)

It is therefore useful to consider the way cultural relativism is often used to justify how certain cultural elements should dominate and therefore determine the directional flow of those border crossings, and reflect on some of its limitations. Consideration is then given to views on managing organisational cultures and some impacts of existing social structures on this.

7.3.4.1 Cultural relativism

Cultural relativism, which basically espouses “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”, or “when in Tanzania, do as the Tanzanians do”, on one hand suggests complete and unreserved compliance with existing local practices within the organisation/company. For people coming in from “outside” this implies compliance even if those practices conflict with the clear requirements of a changed external environment and with some of the ethical and legal standards of the home company or environment (Rogers et al. 1995).

Conversely this can also be re-interpreted as “when wanting to play the game of Rome, also do as the Romans do”, or in the Tanzanian organisational context this implies “when wanting to play a capitalist or corporate game, do as the capitalists or the corporatists do”. This suggests that organisations going down a corporate path should unreservedly adopt certain universal values or principals associated with corporatism, even when those values conflict with the local environment. Many of the narratives associated with business managerialism and corporatism, which accompanied expatriates, often reflected a tendency towards this version of cultural relativism. Furthermore this was also reflected in my initial role as external “organisational expert”; that is somebody who “knows” the structural (including cultural) requirements of a successful organisation can examine the
organisation against some kind of benchmarks and make recommendations of the changes that should be made.

Clearly both views seek to justify their dominance, and the coming together implies that “border tensions” and power struggles become inevitable. Both perspectives of cultural relativism however have a number of shortcomings, including the tendency to again paint homogeneous pictures of organisational culture. The first view of cultural relativism requires complete acceptance of an existing culture, regardless of its suitability against changing conditions. On the other hand, the other side of the cultural relativism view implies that when the “game changes” a more suitable culture that is in line with that new game should be introduced. Furthermore it is common that that culture is considered as “known” or “knowable” and often represented as a kind of corporate absolutism, which is outside contention.

In this way, and also because of the legitimacy accorded to the dominance of instrumental corporate values corporatism legitimises its own right to dominate. It however appears as having no respect for other value sets; particularly those of other social identity groups associated with the geographic location. Furthermore “rules” associated with the “game” in one context are not necessarily applicable or workable in a different context. Inevitably however, where both cultural relativism perspectives are present and result in “border” tensions, power struggles emerge.

### 7.3.4.2 Managing organisational culture

The suggestion that corporate culture is “knowable” tends to create a perception of culture as something that an organisation “has”, rather than representing what an organisation “is”. Whilst the two views are not necessarily mutually exclusive, there is perhaps a key difference in the views towards cultural development and change and therefore has implications for considering the issue of cultural imperialism, so it is worth exploring these differences.
The first view implies that culture can be manipulated or engineered; that it can be 'managed' (Deal and Kennedy 1982), and this view was certainly adopted within the organisational change programme. Albeit this was predominantly based on a belief by those on the organisational steering committee that introducing certain frame structures would have a powerful influence on organisational behaviour.

There was also an implicit assumption it would be organisational leaders and persons in managerial positions who would determine the nature of that culture and attempt to build structures that support the development of certain cultural attributes in what Cope and Kalantzis (1997) refer to as the 'cloning organisation' (p. 272). This also included keeping an 'eye out for cultural match' (ibid) when recruiting people into key positions from both inside and outside of the organisation, as well as the removal of those who are considered not compatible with a new organisation culture. This view was further reflected in relation to the proposed retrenchment programme, in that it was also seen as supporting “sweeping out the dust of the old culture” in order to facilitate the development of a new one. It implies that in the transition process previously mentioned power struggles between different value sets can be managed and that in the end a different, and ostensibly desired, shared set of values and culture will prevail.

Regardless of whether in fact this is an achievable endeavour, through a deliberate intention to ensure certain value-systems prevail over others there is certainly scope to consider that it constitutes a deliberate form of cultural imperialism. Whilst it also may be justified according to the cultural relativism view discussed previously, it suffers the same limitations and does not necessarily accept responsibility for the full range of outcomes of cultural re-engineering or for the resistance that may be generated as a result.

The second view however sees culture as embedded in social interaction, and as something socially produced and re-produced over time. As noted by Wenger (1999), it is not the mandate that introduces changes in
organisational practices, it is the organisational communities themselves. Similarly, and in line with Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, every individual employed by the company is not just seen as being physically there and undertaking a designated role, they are seen as part of a process that creates the company and its culture. Everyone is producing the structure of the company; drawing on company rules, roles and resources in order to take advantage of what the structure is there for and in the process the social structure of the company is actively created. In reality the culture (and all its elements) is therefore not so readily discovered or mechanically manipulated.

It is of course easy to simplistically associate aspects of the culture that are linked to the dominant ideologies of former times as well as the cultural features of dominant social identity groups, with the organisation culture; i.e. "British bureaucracy" associated with colonialism, "unity and solidarity of the workers" and "people's organisations" associated with socialism, "ndugu" as a common feature of Swahili culture. Whilst historical reasons for the development of certain "structures" may be of interest, the critical point however becomes the ways of describing and interpreting the structures as a requirement of understanding how the culture may be altered in the process of social reproduction in accordance with the changing external environment.

Gidden's theory of structuration is a constructionist theory. It is a theory which holds that humans are social constructs and that their institutions are constructs upheld by humans acting according to their images or mental models of what reality is. In accordance with the divergent mental models within the organisation there were many examples of cultural and values conflicts between those associated with Western corporatism and those of bureaucratic institutions, socialist administration, as well as those associated with traditional family/tribal life. Examples have included: "profits and growth first" versus "welfare first" and "family first", and "productivity" and "efficiency" versus "security", "job for life" and "job for family member". Social theorists such as Habermas argue that for the purposes of genuine transformative processes these power struggles should be exposed and explicitly addressed.
As an extension of a constructionist view of culture, Cope and Kalantzis (1997), with their concepts of 'productive diversity' and 'civic pluralism', argue that instead of focusing on homogeneity, diversity needs to be acknowledged and negotiated.

Instead of attempting to create one culture out of many, the Productive Diversity paradigm sets up two new kinds of cross-cultural dialogue. In one dialogue, the cultures that different people bring to the organisation are all recognised and valued as a resource. In this sense, all cultures have direct access to the organisational culture, through its patterns of belonging, workplace participation, self-attribution and rewards and services. In another dialogue, the different cultures people bring to the workplace engage with each other .................... Instead of attempting to make everyone the same by cloning them to the organisational culture, the Productive Diversity organisation recognises their differences and uses these as an organisational resource (pp. 269-270)... Instead of fixed, readily identifiable and relatively unchanging cultural differences that are linked with notions of 'heritage' and 'tradition', civic pluralism proposes understanding culture and understanding as multi-layered, hybrid, shifting, dynamic and contingent (p. 278).

In Chapter 6 I presented a model that represented an attempt to “construct” a new culture and expose those potential power struggles. It identifies how in the case of different cultures or value sets coming together there are likely to be clashes and power struggles, where one set will constantly seek to dominate another. However it also represented an explicit collaborative constructive process, which characterised the potential for hybridity. As a participatory "instrumental" process it also supported opportunities to collaboratively determine desired sets of organisational values and enable potential conflicts and power struggles to be exposed. It also implied that all participants were actively engaged in the process and committed to reflexivity and a personal change process, and for "border crossings" to be made by all parties. The latter is particularly important in relation to leadership roles.
Numerous challenges were identified in the process. For example, different sub-cultures, developmental processes and economic strategies. Stereotyping of cultural differences, potential for clashes of cultures and value sets, organizational cultures and the need to move across a border.

Envisaged organization cultures require collective commitment to move across a border and understand and respect diversity.

Cultural subsets

Figure 7.3.4.2-1: The challenge of developing a new organisational culture

Furthermore it inferred that all involved in the process, and "sitting on the border", are empowered to actively engage in the transmission of cultural inheritance of both the existing organisation and those that come with corporatism and expatriates, rather than accept or resist their variable customs and self-justifying wisdom. All involved could question, modify or activate new or incoming ideas. All involved therefore are empowered to be involved in the process of change and act as agents of change.

As a theoretical model of course it therefore offered a possibility for countering one-way border crossings and claims of the potential for cultural imperialism; particularly as it relates to the dominance of western corporatism. As a discussion framework it certainly stimulated interesting debate around why people in the organisation behaved in certain ways and how some of those behaviours were not aligned with building a successful organisation. It also exposed values tensions and challenged personal mental models.

However in view of previous discussions surrounding different social identity groups or communities of practice that inhabit organisations, such a model has to be considered in terms of its multiple replications throughout the
organisation and organisational change process. Whilst hybrid processes may turn difference into sameness and sameness into difference, but in a way which makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different (Young 1995), differences will still inevitably remain across different social identity groups.

Aspects of hybridity, for example, could certainly be detected across the management group. Clear examples included where local managers appeared to become much more assertive and confident to speak out openly and question things in management forums, and where expatriates became more engaged with local ideas and ways of doing things. However whilst there may have been evidence of a shared sense of organisational identity appearing amongst certain groups, this of course did not necessarily extend across other social identity groups evident in the organisation.

What therefore appeared as important was that whilst cultures may shift, diversity would and should always remain and that it should be explicitly valued. Whilst organisations should strive to build a global vision that can be meaningfully translated into the local (Wenger 1999) and establish high level shared values, inclusive of relational values that enable differences to be navigated (Frazer and Lacey 1993; Hernández 1997; Hill Collins 1993; Prilleltensky and Nelson 1997), it is the ‘borders’ (Bhabha 1992; Wenger 1999) that become the important focus of the organisation. For it is at the border between different social identity groups and the cultural systems that unite them, or at the border between the values that are associated with corporatism and humanism, that organisational learning can truly occur. Again as noted by Wenger, the fundamental principle should not be to connect and combine the diverse knowledgeabilities that subsumes all others, but on the contrary to co-ordinate multiple (diverse) kinds of knowledgeability into a process of organisational learning.

In terms of the process of hybridity that was perhaps naturally occurring, in one particular management forum almost all of the 15 participants could identify personal behaviours, attitudes or values that had changed as a result
of working in a changing environment. However some of the participants noted that these new behaviours could emerge as either positive or negative. There is therefore a lot to suggest that indeed the process has to be managed in some manner. This includes a need for "coaching" and continuous professional development support, which integrates personal and professional reflexivity, and considers how this can be meaningfully integrated into organisational life.

The management of diversity and personal development in such an environment therefore emerged as one that undoubtedly needed to be facilitated in some way. In this organisation however there was no real competence for managing diversity. Whilst it was acknowledged by the Organisational Steering committee as requiring attention, at that point in time it did not emerge as a priority amongst more tangible technical and business issues facing the company. Whilst the "principles" and business-case for managing diversity (Thomas 1991, 1992) may be receiving explicit attention in the western world, it remained a particularly underdeveloped notion in this context.

Taking reflective discussions further and managing the translation of ideas and words into practices emerged as a substantial challenge. Finding time for continuous focused discussion, planning for action and personal change, and reflecting on those actions emerged as outside of busy schedules around more tangible business activities. In addition finding suitably skilled personnel to facilitate these processes and continuous coaching and reflexivity proved difficult and sometimes outside of the development budgets (including time).

In addition it is evident corporatism itself tends to act as a key structure that represents a serious challenge to such a model for cultural change. In particular challenges were noted in fostering personal mastery implied in such a process. Views of education associated with transformative learning processes are not in line with views of learning usually reflected in corporatism, and the way they are instrumentally linked to direct business
outcomes. "Efficiency" and "effectiveness" work against time that needs to be invested for what can be perceived as little direct or measurable output.

Expatriates involved in the project came for their technical inputs rather than dealing with complex cultural issues. Despite increasing international popularity of such programmes, prior to arrival in the project no expatriates had any familiarisation or sensitisation with the local environment. The degree (or lack) of sensitivity they applied to operating in a cross cultural environment depended more on their own personal qualities than any formal selection criteria or personal development programmes. In addition "cultural" issues were generally not seen as part of their responsibilities and appeared as something that there was generally little awareness of, or interest in beyond the personal problems that might arise from cultural faux pas.

There is also the difficulty faced by expatriates of sometimes having to juggle two worlds; that is, belonging to the dominant culture of the home company organisation, as well as trying to integrate with the cultures to which one is temporarily assigned. Furthermore a tendency of the headquarter personnel of western consulting companies to look suspiciously upon staff members who seem to adapt too well to local conditions (i.e. "gone native") is noted. There are therefore quite strong structures in place that prevent expatriate consultants and managers to make those border crossings where doing so may result in them being considered as "outside" of their home organisational culture.

When the bottom-line is returns on investments and ambitious milestones associated with national policy reforms (also driven by the investment community), it also appears there is little genuine interest or commitment to explicitly addressing organisation issues and long term change programmes amongst key external stakeholders. Whilst on the side of some investors; in particular the development banks, there is an indication of a wish to see evidence of sound social and environmental impact statements and/or policies, in my experience these do not extend sufficiently to cultural issues.
and cultural impacts. This remains an undeveloped area and one which lacks conceptual maturity. However without further development and an explicit focus on this area it appears there will be an inevitable tendency for a form of corporate imperialism to prevail.

### 7.3.4.3 Impacts of existing cultural structures

It also appears certain cultural structures exist, which not only constrain participatory and transformative approaches to organisational culture, but also support the tendency of one culture to dominate over another. Such an example was referred to in the discussion around 'systems thinking' where it became apparent that, within an organisational culture that tends to be high on 'power distance', there are many barriers to frank and open discussion that can expose different interests and power struggles. This is even further exacerbated by the tendency towards strong advocacy over inquiry evident in western corporate culture, which in itself can represent a strategy of power.

Indeed there are different structure and agency perspectives associated with identity surrounding collectives and individuals. This was evident in different views to the notion of "change" itself. In an organisational culture with a high power distance orientation, change is usually seen as something outside of direct control and influence and not an active process one can be part of. On the other hand elements of resistance were evident, but without any discussable solutions for win-win solutions given the changing context and framework conditions. Different views towards learning are also another example. Active and transformative learning processes are implied, but as was previously noted there was evidence of different views surrounding the purposes and ways of learning. This related both to the instrumentality of "corporate culture" as well as aspects of local cultures.

Another structure, which is useful to refer to, corresponds to what is often referred to in postcolonial literature as 'mimicry'. This is reflected in a tendency of expatriate managers to seek out local personnel who appear as
being most like themselves or reflective of corporatism. Kanter (1977) describes this tendency of managers to promote those who resemble themselves in manner and style as 'homosocial reproduction'. Kennedy (1998) notes this as a key issue facing organisations in transitional economies and especially multinational firms. Given greater organisational uncertainty in the early stages of organisation development, homosocial reproduction is more likely. In particular linguistic difference and searching out those individuals who are competent with English is noted.

In postcolonial literature, mimicry however has two interpretations. One view sees mimicry as a symbol of colonial subservience, whilst the other sees mimicry as a base for a kind of anti-colonialist insurgency. For example according to Fanon (1970) the notion of mimicry is considered a condition of colonisation and in particular the colonised's subservience and crisis; the measure of their powerlessness. On the other hand, Bhabha (1994) explores how the ambivalence of the colonised subject becomes a direct threat to colonial authority through the effects of 'mimicry'. Bhabha describes 'mimicry' as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge.

For example, 'mimic men' were seen as those who learned to act 'English' but do not look English nor are accepted as such. However these mimic men were not necessarily the disempowered, slavish individuals required by the British colonial empire (Bhabha 1992), which stereotypes anxiously try to conceal. Bhabha sees mimicry as a much more insurgent thing. For example, by speaking English, the colonised have not succumbed to the power of the colonised. Contrariwise they challenge representations which attempt to fix and define them.

Both elements of the above discussion are worthy of consideration because both elements were evident and both elements are counterproductive to true organisational learning. Clearly if one accepts the Fanon view, there is a tendency of people to adopt certain behaviours and values because there is a
perception that this will lead them to being successful in a new (corporate) environment. This strongly implies the overriding of certain elements of one culture over another, and a disregard for, as well as potential loss of cultural diversity, which certainly implies a kind of cultural imperialism.

On the other hand if one accepts the Bhabha view, there is potential for a kind of insurgency against the introduction of corporatism just through a passive resistance to change, which becomes difficult to detect or unravel because “surface” behaviours may suggest compliance with, or adoption of, a changing environment, whilst 'mental models' and more covert behaviours may actually be at variance with them. However whilst one implies a perpetuation of cultural imperialism, and the other a resistance to it; neither helps. Both drive behaviours that deny opportunities for genuine participation and learning, and the development of genuine solutions for that particular context.

As has been noted, the organisation reflected its' colonial past, with the legacy of bureaucratic processes and procedures, together with its socialist era and a strong sense of workers rights. These factors could be seen as having contributed to the shaping and reproduction of certain structures enabling everyone in the organisation to take advantage of what the structure was there for and actively create the social structure of the company as it existed in reality, and which was often outside of formal policies and internal “rules and regulations”. In the face of change these structures were highly resistant to change.

However as was acknowledged within the organisational case study, in relation to broader systemic analysis, unless some of these structures could be challenged the commercial success of the company was at risk, because there was little focus on “growth” or “effectiveness and efficiency”. Furthermore this also presented the risk of perpetuating broader structures of unequal development, as well as dependence on and justification for further
international assistance. This in turn enables the continuation of colonial themes that allow others to continue to secure economic benefits as a result.

7.3.5 The continuing dominance of corporate values

A final theme for consideration concerns the way in which organisations tend to wield tremendous power in modern society. With the potential to condition their own members and the public at large, organisational culture vis-à-vis Tanzania society should also not be overlooked. For example, corporatism in particular brings a kind of utilitarianism which implies that for the greater good of the organisation company interests override individual interests and values. However as has been previously discussed this focus on corporate welfare fails to provide sufficient guidance for focusing on more humanistic values and its broader instrumentalism in macro strategies.

In Chapter 6 consideration was given to the strong ‘collectivist’ orientation of culture within Tanzania; together with the importance placed on family groups, and the way in which many HR policies recognised and provided for this. The tendency of corporate values associated with effectiveness and efficiency to convey a more individualist thinking that implied “the organisation does not care about your family, it just wants to pay you for the job you do, and you decide what to do with the money”, was also discussed. Furthermore this was seen as reflecting what Connell (1995) refers to as the construction of masculinity in everyday life, and the way masculinity tends to dominate in economic institutions. This is also reflective of Said’s (1994) notion of colonial constructed views surrounding ‘others’ and the ‘exotic’, which are essentially outside of the masculinity of corporate frameworks.

Concern was expressed about the power of organisations in manifesting a kind of ‘selfishness’ (Lasch 1977) and overriding of the family (Deetz 1992). Consideration therefore needs to be given to how in pursuing its own ends organisations consider the full range of consequences that can emerge, and
in this case move beyond what is essentially reflective of transnational masculinity.

Cheney and Frenette (1993) highlight that what corporations communicate is important, as major corporations cultivate and reinforce particular values and legitimate themselves and social order. To continue with the above example, in a country like Tanzania, which is in a major transition phase, where the chances for direct engagement in the market economy are small and where the state does not have the resources to provide social services, the potential of overriding the emphasis on the family constitutes a risk of building a further gap between the haves and have-nots.

Cheney and Frenette also consider it important that corporations integrate a humanistic concern into the way they operate. There is therefore a suggestion of a need to be more mindful of the utilitarian nature of the values that business structures represent and how they may override and impact key values critical for the broader social environment. But this of course is not an issue that can be addressed within the context of one organisation. The power of marketing of capitalist organisations in promoting a consumer culture, which undermine the generation of community values in general, is often seen to be at the very heart of corporatism (Mukherjee Reed 2003).

Indeed even the presence of expatriates, and the high salaries, life-styles and material wealth they are associated with, also seems to reinforce perceptions of the desirability of capitalism and many of its accompanying values. Whilst this concern is one that is reflective of postmodern society in general, in developing economies where it also implies structures that perpetuate cycles of poverty and dependence on international assistance, it suggests that in addition colonial or imperial themes are at risk of being perpetuated.

7.3.6 Conclusion
Certainly within the organisation change programme there was a tendency for a corporate culture to exert itself over local culture. Corporatism, combined with transitional discourses, puts up powerful structures and narratives that justifies, legitimises and encourages its dominance. This dominance can be viewed as representing an imperial process. It does not really consider local knowledge and culture, other than as something that needs to be changed and brought inside corporatism. Colonial/imperial themes are therefore also implicit in many of the ways of "knowing" and "representing" culture, and ways in which corporatist frameworks create a sense of "otherness" that also suggest the inferiority of "others" who are outside of that framework.

There also appears to be myths surrounding notions of successful organisations and that by "knowing" what constitutes a successful organisation, formulas can be applied for building replicas. This view tends to neglect and undervalue the diversity that exists within an organisation, which in turn means that opportunities for building solutions and structures that match specific contexts are also overlooked. In addition "difference" tends to be rendered as being problematic. There are however substantial challenges in unravelling and tapping into organisational diversity, as all people see and interpret culture through their own cultural lenses. It however suggests a requirement of giving more attention to different ways of "knowing". Furthermore cultural differences create challenges for openly discussing cultural issues and the tensions that can exist between them.

It appears that in such a context the dominance of corporatism, and the issues it creates, is likely to continue unless consideration is given to a more explicit focus on culture, social identity and diversity at the level of structural adjustment programmes. However if such programmes are to be truly postcolonial and assert the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change that is following colonialism then there is an implied need for more engagement with different social identity groups in relation to the broad range of changes that come with economic structural adjustment and its transitional culture.
Whilst this can be considered as relevant to broader social groups, in this case it is of particular relevance to those who have direct stakes in such an organisation and are therefore subject to "organisational change programmes". This is essential from the perspective of not only eliminating imperial processes but also the way in which those imperial processes may be counter productive for achieving organisational success, and thus unwittingly perpetuating broader structures of colonialism associated with continued economic dependency and exploitation.

This suggests a requirement of exploring cultural and social identity issues in more depth, and avoiding the temptation to look at culture simplistically through homogeneous frameworks. More attention to cultural issues and organisational diversity also means more attention to the skills and qualities of organisational leaders in managing that diversity.

### 7.4 Investigating domains where power, rule and domination get played out

Clearly within the context of this paper and its focus on organisational learning, consideration must be given to postcolonial themes relating to learning and knowledge, and their embeddedness within language and discourse.

#### 7.4.1 The domain of knowledge and learning

A number of key postcolonial themes emerge here. Some have already been touched on previously but will also be re-examined. This includes consideration of the way in which certain kinds of knowledge are created, represented and legitimised. Legitimised knowledge is seen as able to dominate and therefore represents a form of knowledge imperialism, as well as able to prove the inferiority of others (Said 1994). This also justifies those who have certain kinds of knowledge to speak and act on the part of those who do not (Spivak 1988). Secondly, in relation to learning,
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needs to be given to whose interests are being served through learning processes, and whether learning processes seek to dominate through one-way flow or whether they are genuinely communicative; in that they build common understandings, and are transformative; in that they seek the best solutions for the specific context.

Learning relates not only to the way knowledge is created but also how it becomes embedded in its own context. Views of organisational learning can be seen as based around 'adaptation to the environment', 'error detection and correction', 'or 'problem solving' (Robinson 2001, p. 60). All views however mean that learning associated with corporatism has its own duality. In focusing on instrumental approaches to learning to serve organisational ends, learning tends to lose sight of its own instrumentalism in supporting the broader objectives associated with economic reform. Failure to conceptualise the macro and the micro as related orders however threatens to undermine the authenticity of the reform, further representing the potential for structures associated with unequal development and dependence to be perpetuated.

7.4.1.1 Knowledge

Said (1994) points to not only how knowledge is deemed to be the enriching possession of the 'scientific' West and must be taught to those who do not have that possession, but also how the process is not reciprocal. An Orientalist hierarchy is asserted between a knowledgeable, civilised West and an ignorant savage East. The education of "others" is seen as fulfilling a purpose of consolidating power, which is legitimised by seeming morally just and improving.

In the face of changes in government policy and reform at the macro level and the privatisation of parastatal organisations, most participants were seen as having to play the capitalist corporate game from a relatively low knowledge/experience base. On the other hand, expatriates, brought in to support the company in playing the new game, came because of their
supposed superior knowledge and experience base. Certainly in the organisation case study, emphasis was placed on importing knowledge in order to enhance local capacity for "playing" the capitalist and open market "game" more effectively and "equally". That is, a strong emphasis on technical (techne) knowledge was evident. In the sense of ostensible alignment with broader reform and improvement and universalism, this is also legitimised through being seen as morally just.

However as has been previously discussed, knowledge is not value free or neutral, and needs to be considered within the context it is constructed. A social identity group tends to preserve itself through its ruling consciousness, and the knowledge it constructs, values and perpetuates. It has trouble liberating itself from itself own ideology (Adorno 1987). Western capitalism and corporatism therefore can be seen as legitimising its own knowledge and seeking to exert influence over other kinds of knowledge; thereby developing its own sense of universalism, and therefore also representing a form of knowledge imperialism.

Furthermore this "knowledge" is very often reflected in technical knowledge, and it is again necessary to reflect on the relationships between micro and macro levels. The application of techne may be justified in terms of bringing in, and developing, skills and knowledge associated with technological advancement and progress, and according to the broader instrumental requirements of the universal objectives sought. However, it is also necessary to keep in mind Aristotelian (Drucker 1990; 1992) and Habermasian (Habermas 1984) distinctions between different types of knowledge.

In line with a view that phronesis does not reside in techne (Drucker 1990, 1992), in the case of techne without phronesis it becomes impossible to reflect on whether reforms at the micro level are compatible with the context and whether they are ultimately able to support the delivery of broader improvements sought. Therefore the importation of techne without proper attention to episteme and phronesis potentially represents a colonial structure
in so far it is not fully considering the consequences of its application and the ends it is ostensibly serving. In the organisational context this means the pursuit of corporatism as an end in itself, but without focus on its broader instrumental suitability.

Knowledge also clearly has value. Within a capitalist view knowledge is transactional (James 1997) and knowledge value-added management strategies (Ulrich 1997) are readily promoted within commercial organisations. In order that value-addedness is created the focus of knowledge has clearly tended to be on skill and utility. Knowing how to do something; whether it involves knowing how to operate a piece of transmission equipment, knowing how to answer a customer’s enquiry, knowing how to raise the market value of shares, knowing how to conduct a cost-benefit analysis, knowing how to introduce a new remuneration system is all basically technical knowledge. Such knowledge is also heavily commoditised. It formed the basis of commercial transactions between those in possession of technical knowledge and those who don’t.

Certainly there were strong suggestions of foreign specialists as custodians of superior technical knowledge associated with the business of telecommunications, and as being responsible for transmitting particular technical know-how. However technical approaches to learning, discussed further in the next session, are also based on certain assumptions; particularly as they relate to common beliefs that those skills and knowledge match the context in to which they are aimed, and beliefs about how different groups and individuals learn. The mentioned failure of some “training” programmes to be translated into “action” and/or sustainable behaviours however implies that these assumptions are often not necessarily valid.

Also ‘technical’ knowledge; particularly the knowledge that relates to managerialism and that is readily, but somewhat loosely, associated with what “successful organisations do”, appeared as being readily imported as frame structures. This was often without checking assumptions of its
suitability for the specific environment, and without validation that some years down the track it is still or actually reflective of success in the organisations in which it has previously been implemented.

It was also noted that whilst certain practices associated with corporatism, such as open-competitive recruitment, were presented within corporate discourses as more objective and therefore superior to some of the existing practices in the company, there was also an acknowledgement of cultural similarities in reality at work; i.e. in terms of deeper structures of awarding positions on the basis of relationships. Such examples raise issues about the multiple interests in knowledge transactions, and about whose interests are being best served in the process of knowledge transactions, and I will come back to this point in the next section.

In addition “superiority” is often seen as being attributed to, or assumed by, those who possess certain legitimised knowledge, which justifies having the right to speak and act on the part of those who don’t have that knowledge, who are “uneducated” “lowly skilled”, “oppressed” “disadvantaged” (Spivak 1988). This was also evident to a certain degree in the behaviour and attitudes of expatriates; particularly those in leadership positions. This not only related to being in possession of superior knowledge, but also to a perception of having a sense of the “bigger picture”. The role of reliable mediator was also assumed; taking into account the interests of all stakeholders, including those of the potentially exploited and/or oppressed workers. Particularly in relation to the workers, and the media war that raged around workers issues, there was a tendency to adopt positions similar to how a parent might view a child, as “workers” not having sufficient education and experience to understand the change and bigger pictures around them. It was however noted that there were many cultural factors that also prevented opportunities for genuine communicative reasoning.

7.4.1.2 Learning
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A reference point for exploring the domain where power, rule and domination get played out in relation to learning can be from a perspective of the micro and macro levels. For example, one perspective might be that in an emerging economy with a former colonial background, which has decided to open up to capitalism, the emphasis must be on bringing local skill levels up in order to be able to play the capitalist and open market “game” more effectively and “equally”. That is, a technical (techne) learning orientation is implied. On the other hand if mechanisms for monitoring whether ideological decisions at the governmental policy level, and corresponding strategies and actions, are the “right” ones, and serving the broader aims of equitable socio-economic development, a more critical and reflective approach to learning is perhaps required. As Nankivell (1995) points out, economic models, which suit particular cultural contexts, need to be found, and this implies more than just importing knowledge from the west.

Different beliefs about learning are also important. The strong tendency of many expatriates towards advocacy poses serious barriers to participatory learning. So too can cultural beliefs that see learning as a passive transmittal/acquisition process rather than an active, grappling and constructive one. Views associated with the purposes of learning, such as whether learning is serving defined in organisational outcomes, or whether it means per diem for learning participants, or whether it is for the creation of new knowledge, are also important.

Earlier reference was made to how, because of its embeddedness in corporatism and organisations, the learning in the organisations tended to be focused on serving organisational interests. Whilst, in the organisational change programme, substantial attention was given to implementing formal learning programmes and forums, it was also acknowledged that a lot of behaviours and beliefs are acquired through the presence of different “structures”. Attention was therefore also given to building structures that encouraged the development of certain behaviours, which were seen as more in line with a “successful” corporate environment.
The building of such structures however can be considered as having a surreptitious element to it, as they seek to engineer employee behaviour without necessarily exposing and building shared understandings of the principles that underpin them. Whilst it might be justified in terms of building a successful organisation and its broader instrumentalism, it is reflective of themes of manipulation and control referred to earlier. It can also contribute to values tensions and resistance. Structures therefore need to be built and introduced not just on the basis of instrumental reasoning, but accompanied by communicative reasoning.

Early reference was made to Habermas’s knowledge-constitutive interests as ‘technical’, ‘practical’ or ‘emancipatory’ team learning, and this again provides a useful framework for exploring these perspectives further. A learning focus on techne here clearly implies, as per other discussions, a focus on building skills and understandings commonly associated with business management and corporatism (in a capitalist environment). It assumes that such knowledge and skills are also readily available in the world; particularly amongst those who have experience of the corporate world, and that it can be readily transmitted to, or acquired, by others who do not have them.

In the reflections on ‘Team Learning’ it was acknowledged that ‘technical’ learning was the most common form of learning observed within the organisation; particularly from the perspective of “formal” learning and the kinds of learning considered to be readily manageable. It was also noted substantial corporate know-how was imported without checking assumptions regarding its validity in the context. Similarly technicist approaches to learning, which also drew on technical know-how about western views of learning, focused on instrumental means that sought to ensure that knowledge and skills acquisition or transfer, and corresponding behavioural change best occurred.

The emphasis was therefore primarily on one-way transfers of functional knowledge and skills rather than emancipatory learning, which implies the
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production of new knowledge. Most expatriates also saw themselves as a source of "know-how", which is also supported by the way the consulting companies which recruit them reinforce the value that is attributed to technical knowledge and reflected in "expert" and "specialist" roles. The role of the "expert" also appeared as being supported by the hierarchical nature of the dominant culture in the organisation.

Another key issue for consideration however becomes that of the potential failure of know-how transfer, and the consequences of the failure of such a knowledge transfer process; that is who ultimately "loses". Certainly it can be argued that there are multiple stakeholders in the process; the organisation and its shareholders, permanent employees within the organisation, short term expatriates employed within the company, and consultant expatriates, etc, who are involved in knowledge and training service delivery. In relation to the latter groups, there are a number of relevant perspectives to consider. Firstly there is a common perception of the transience of expatriates; that they came to do a job and that when it was completed they would leave again. Even with genuine commitments to know-how transfer, there appeared to be many perceptions that "they did not have the same stake" in knowledge transfer as those on the "receiving end".

On the other hand, it is possible to argue there is also potential for those that bring knowledge to "lose" because they have not "done their job properly". For example, it is currently common practice to include measurable learning outcomes and/or performance criteria in contracts concluded for training activities, with consequences of non-compliance. Financial impacts and/or impacts to professional reputations of varying degrees are therefore implied for individuals or service provider companies in the case that outcomes are not met. However reference has already been made to the difficulty in measuring genuine and sustainable contributions of training activities to broader business and organisation development objectives and strategies, against the ready manageability of measuring outcomes of training events themselves. This means that in reality, any expatriate who does a "reasonable job" in implementing formal programmes or working closely alongside local counterparts is unlikely to suffer any personal impact from the
non-translation of technical learning into organisational practices, or poor sustainability of such initiatives.

Another related issue is the way in which knowledge transactions emerged as a result of contractual relations established between the company and external service providers. The ways in which measurable outputs of such contracts are specified tend to frame the possibilities for the ways in which training services will be delivered and their likely results. Certainly the focus tends to be on learning outcomes and not the generation of “new knowledge”. In addition there were internal issues in moving beyond providing for the training events themselves to being able to demonstrate the value-add that might come from providing for less tangible and quite a high cost per trainee coaching approaches. It can also be considered that service provider organisations play a language game in the way they also draw on corporate narratives to market their products and solutions, which also sometimes obstruct or excuse deeper internal investigations into the management of more sustainable forms of learning.

In addition as was also discussed there are many factors that may impact the real outcomes of such learning programmes. This includes whether or not knowledge and/or skill development is tailored to match that particular environment. In addition elements within the broader systemic context of the organisation may get in the way of them ever being translated into practice. In this case the real loser inevitably has to be considered as the organisation itself. This has a number of possible dimensions or even escalating consequences. Poor organisational capacity for example may result in a continued dependence on “outsiders” to import and provide technical expertise; declining confidence in international investors; and even the ultimate failure of the organisation to play its role in the broader macro economic reform strategy.

Furthermore failure of know-how transfer, rather than reflecting badly on those who were ostensibly involved in facilitating the learning process, can
further add to the sense of "otherness" and the inferiority of "others". There are multiple systemic factors, both "frame" and "social", which act as "excuses" for non-success. This however in turn can represent justification for the need for further international assistance and thus perpetuating the dependence and unequal development ostensibly being mitigated.

Habermas’s ‘Practical’ team learning was evident in process facilitation roles, which most closely equated common views of organisational learning. However there were issues surrounding their effectiveness in terms of time requirements, and there were also cultural issues that also appeared to impact the levels of active involvement. Previous discussion also highlighted that facilitators were not usually neutral and that this implied some kind of power or knowledge superiority over the rest of the team; particularly as it relates to the potential for “advocacy” to dominate “inquiry”, and to a certain degree perpetuated cycles where the same ideas were reproduced. However in some instances it did appear to provide scope for improved opportunities to develop “Tanzanian solutions” for “Tanzanian business problems”, and a heightened sense of “ownership” of them.

Emancipatory team learning on the other hand was not so evident. Such approaches imply a critique of the systemic nature of the organisation; inclusive of both internal as well as external elements, together with all its power relations. Certainly there were hints of this kind of learning, and I have referred to this in the case-study in relation to dialogue amongst the Steering Committee. It was evident in discussions around cultural issues and “constructing” a new organisation culture and the border crossings involved. It was also apparent in the way frank and open insights often emerged in informal settings, and the way in which mental models were challenged when the organisational situation became particularly testing. However it was difficult to capture and manage this learning within the framework of corporate structures and processes as whole system critique and cultural knowledge were generally considered outside of more business and technically oriented knowledge and information management processes.
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The challenges surrounding the latter point have been previously discussed. Previous reference has also been made to broader learning requirements, and how in an environment which was substantially impacted by key external structures; particularly as they were linked up within the politics of the shareholders dispute, there was no mandate, forums or support from respective stakeholders at that stage to try and bring all the complexity out into the open and develop common understandings and strategies for dealing with them. Unfortunately there was therefore also no evidence of any learning at that stage which could result in the capturing of a broader organisational change theory. The inability to construct new knowledge that matches the specific context also means there is no new knowledge developed that is able to legitimately counter the tendency for universal approaches to corporatism to dominate.

During the programme there also appeared to be little learning captured, which had any links to the macro level as they related to broader privatisation and economic development and reform issues. Understanding and treating relationships between macro and micro levels are clearly important when dealing with the broader issues of social and organisational learning. Broader reforms occurring in Tanzania were reflective of the macro level and activities associated with government policies and international agencies. However once privatisation agreements were in place there appeared to be little concern or linkage to the micro level. At the micro level within the internal organisational environment struggling with all of the systemic obstructions to change that appeared as outside of the realm of influence of the organisation, there was little linkage back into the macro level and the broader systems perspective. This therefore suggests that the macro and the micro were being treated as two separate things.

At the time of writing however there was a suggestion that there would be a review at the macro level of the activities surrounding the privatisation of parastatals. Whilst it appeared that the concern was more with investigating
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the economic impact and relief of fiscal burden on government budget, there was also some scope for investigating privatisation from a broader systemic perspective. Clearly, however the results of such a study will ultimately be dependant on the selection and mandate of consultants undertaken to perform the task. This is in view of considering any kind of research as a social act, which is constructed within frameworks of certain disciplines or legitimised “knowledge” areas, as well as within certain socio-political and historical contexts.

This relates to not only the skills and methodologies of consultants and ways in which the “knowledge” is gathered, interpreted and reported, but also in relation to how macro and the micro levels are conceptualised in relation to each other. In addition, how the political implications associated with outcomes of such a study are treated; particularly surrounding the power interests of stakeholders, also have to be considered. As one representative of a potential bidding consulting company noted, “I don’t even know if we want to get involved in this one, because it is a political hot potato and to bring out issues that need to be brought out are unlikely to be well received by the key stakeholders [Government of Tanzania and World Bank]”.

However without these key learnings, where a deeper understanding of the socially constructed and interactive processes of organisational life and how they fit within broader macro reforms, together with how the socially constructed and interactive processes of the key players at the macro level support necessary changes at the micro level, it is very difficult to ultimately understand and portray whose interests are being served in the reform process. Without genuine transformative learning that exposes the interests and stakes of all players the focus is likely to remain on a broad instrumentalism, which implies a blind adherence to and acceptance of corporatism. Corporate instrumentalism implies an imposition of solutions not necessarily in alignment with broader socio-cultural requirements of Tanzania, and therefore the perpetuation of an imperialist structure, which may result in the broader objectives not being met.
7.4.2 The domain of language and discourse

In post colonial discourse there are many contributions to critical inquiry and debate about the language of "Africa" after European colonialism and about the proper place of language, and literature, in a post-colonial Africa struggling to find its place within the modern context of cultural globalism. Much of this discourse focuses in particular on literary text and literary language, emphasising that literary texts and literary language, in particular are not neutral (Mahood 1977; McLure 1981; McCracken 1991; Bagchee 1992; Behadad 1994).

Whilst the concern here is not with "literary" language and "literary" discourse per se, these debates remain relevant in considering the use of language in general, and its' potential to promote and sustain forms of cultural and knowledge imperialism. Certainly the dominance of the English language, over local languages, as the common shared language of the business world, and the particular language associated with the ideology of the business world, organisations and learning, is an issue worthy of consideration. Indeed in the face of many theorists and writers, who suggest the introduction and sustained use of European languages in Africa has contributed to a continued 'colonisation' of the mind and that working within the confines of a 'world language' could only mean a capitulation to European cultural standards crudely disguised as 'universalism' (Ngugi 1989, 1993), this issue cannot be ignored.

For example, when cultural essentialists such as Ngugi (1989) assert that "language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history", he implies that it cannot be separated without undermining the particular culture represented within a certain language. Ngugi argues that language does not just passively reflect reality; it also goes a long way towards creating a person's understanding of his/her world, and houses the values by which we (either willingly or through force) live our lives.
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Similarly, according to Ngugi (1989, 1991), to dismiss a language is to dismiss a whole culture. Culture is seen as embodying moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses through which a people come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people’s identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried in language. This means that we not only speak in particular languages, but more fundamentally become the person we become because of the particular language community in which we grew up -- language, above all else, shapes our distinctive ways of being in the world. Language is the carrier of a people’s identity, the vehicle of a certain way of seeing things, experiencing and feeling, determinant of particular outlooks on life (Bell 1993, pp. 158-59).

Under colonialism, colonised people are considered as being made subservient, through language to ways of regarding the world which reflect and support colonialist values. Language is considered as the vehicle for which a particular value-system is taught as the best, truest world-view, and therefore cannot be separated from ideology. Clearly the concern raised is the consequent loss of the sense of “Africanism” through the dominant use of a European language.

However it is perhaps important to draw distinctions between the importance of language as a cultural representation, as well as language as a dynamic tool around which understandings are built and shared. The second argument is based around a counter-thesis, which is supported also by African theorists such as Afolayan (2002), of language as a ‘neutral category’. In other words, the relationship between a particular language and any ideology is regarded as a contingent one. This argument draws on Chomskian conceptions of language and how it bears on ideology (or how it does not). The lesson deducible from the Chomskian view is that language is reducible to a certain universal element that finds replication in particular languages. According to Chomsky’s commonsensical view of language, when a person knows a language, s/he is taken to know ‘what makes a sound and meaning relate to one another in a specific way, what makes them “hang together”’ (as quoted
in Botha 1992, p. 172). From this fundamental structural point of view, the use of a language can therefore be moulded to suit a culture's purposes.

According to Afolayan (2002) many cultural theorists fail to distinguish properly between ordinary (Chomskian) language, with its communicative imperative contained in grammaticality, and ideological 'language.' The problem is that in associating language with ideology, cultural essentialism fails to see the link precisely as that, a mere association of one with the other without there being any logically necessary connection. It therefore becomes not a subject of the language itself (i.e. whether it is English or Kiswahili), it becomes more of an issue of the discourse and, as Eagleton (1991) rather succinctly puts it, ideology is a matter of 'discourse' rather than 'language'. This argument acknowledges how there is an inherent logic in specific discourses. It therefore also acknowledges the existence of a language of imperialism, but simultaneously acknowledges how the English language can adequately incorporate multiple perspectives.

Afolayan advocates the evolution of a new language: the adaptation of 'African' intention, need, and aspiration on the one hand, and 'African' nuances, ideas and imageries on the other, to the functionality of the English language. In his view the result can be a 'new English' that carries the burdens of African experience and global interdependence, and which can be invested with an ideology that accords with postcolonial ambitions. Whilst, as Bamgbose (1991) points out, debate continues amongst African writers, inevitably the issue comes down to a choice between a Language of Wider Communication and a Language of Narrower Communication.

What emerges from these arguments, perhaps more importantly than the theorising behind, is the intention behind the use of language. In the organisational and business setting under consideration, it becomes an issue of whether the use of certain language seeks to impose and dominate, or whether it seeks to find common mediums for facilitating genuine participation and building common understandings. This also has to take into consideration
the real barriers in fulfilling the latter intention when there are real perceptions of feeling "stupid", "inferior" or "lacking in confidence" when one is either unable to participate fully or at all in a language that is not one's own; particularly when that language is seen as belonging to those who have the real "power" in an organisation.

Certainly if one looks at the dominant use of English over Kiswahili in the organisation, and where most people within the organisation are unable to use the English language, a form of language imperialism is implied. Certainly much vocabulary surrounding business and corporate life is not found in Kiswahili. Again however it becomes an issue of whether the introduction of those constructs implies a cultural imperialism; particularly in the sense that they are being imposed on the culture from a powerful external source, or whether it simply implies the continuous development of language in general to accommodate changing external conditions, and in specific relation to Kiswahili, the continuous development of a language that has its origins in hybridity.

Certainly however, with the absence equivalent concepts or terms in Kiswahili language, there is room for perceptions of the superiority of English language and the people who use it when it brings with it knowledge deemed as the enriching possession of the "scientific" West and must be taught to those in an emerging economy like Tanzania. Earlier reference was made to Said's (1994) claim that the West produces knowledge about other peoples in order to prove the truth of their inferiority, and it has been evident that when corporate concepts and discourses are used as measures for evaluating organisations and individuals who are essentially outside of those constructs and experiences, a sense of "inferiority" is inevitably construed.

Business language and justification frameworks are drawn upon to present weaknesses in ways that appear as almost irrefutable. By the very nature of their representation; that is, through being strongly linked to power constructs associated with "money", "expert knowledge", positions high up in
organisational "power hierarchies", that knowledge is legitimised and a sense of inferiority is implied over those people internal to the organisation by "outsiders". This is not necessarily a deliberate intention, but certainly again linked to Giddens (1984) concepts of structuration and how certain roles and rules continue to be enacted. In this instance I am referring more to roles of the outsider/expatriate as "experts", as "professionals", as "change agents", etc and the rules they follow. Rules, for example, are considered as including "improving efficiency and effectiveness", "following certain standards and protocols", "generating opportunities for further business and personal employment", etc. The discourse therefore is confirmed as reflecting and serving power interests.

Educators and Action Researchers, such as Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), have long espoused the need for considering how certain discourses serve the agendas of different power groups and interests. For genuine change initiatives, people whose interconnections constitute the wider webs of interaction which structure social life in discourses, in work, and in the organisational and interpersonal relationships, they consider it essential to recognise and open up for scrutiny these relations of power. These issues however are rarely explored in business environments. They appear as so embedded in corporate contexts, where corporatism further legitimises itself through its own instrumentalism and values rationality, that it is almost as if they are not open to questioning. Of course however the very dominance of one discourse over another implies an imposition of an imperial structure of power.

In addition so much life and experience of the organisation and the people also appears as being overlooked when the language of business and corporatism is applied as the discursive medium. Strategies, such as building metaphors and story telling, which were often applied in workshops were much stronger in invoking language captured more of the experiences and realities of the organisation as seen through different lenses. Unfortunately
however they did not represent dominant modes of discourse, or the kind likely to emerge in professional reports relating to the organisation.

What these strategies did however reveal were the substantial differences in understanding surrounding commonly used words of business. Reference has previously been to the way in which people tend to pick up jargon and “buzz” words associated with a particular environment, often leading to incorrect assumptions that common understandings are shared. For example, the term “manager” was a word readily used without checking the assumed meanings behind it. However it emerged as one that needed to be unravelled because of the different understandings it invoked, and issues that emerged surrounding those different meanings. For example, whilst there were common assumptions of managers as “leaders”, “problem-solvers”, “deliverers of results”, within the culture of the company there were also many other contradictory views. These included “manager”s as “bosses”, or assumptions of being appointed as a “manager” meaning attaining a position in the power and status hierarchy that was out of reach and contact with workers, and reflective of a “reward” for past efforts with “no need to continue to strive in the future”.

Another example is the term “change”. This example relates not so much to the semantics of the term but the personal meaning associated with the concept of change. In workshops about “change”, managers were asked to plot “change curves” according to axes of “time” and “magnitude of change”, which reflected their perceptions of change that had occurred in the organisation during the period of their employment. A common result was that, whilst many people would plot curves according to broader company perspectives (i.e. new CEO, introduction of new technology, major restructuring, network expansion, changes in policies, etc), a substantial group only plotted changes on the basis of personal perspectives (i.e. salary increase, promotion, demotion, loss of privileges, etc). While “change” and the “need to change” was constantly discussed from a company perspective (i.e. in order to meet ambitious connection targets, improve network performance and the quality of service) these responses also reflected the
different personal representations about change, and how these often appeared as deeply personalised, further reinforcing some of the comments earlier about 'Team Vision' and the challenges of generating a shared commitment to organisational vision when there was a strong focus on self-interest.

Clearly there are challenging issues needing to be addressed; particularly considering the pragmatic requirements of working in an international setting where Kiswahili is considered the national unifying language, but where English is considered the official business language and where English is commonly spoken by only a relatively small percentage of the population. There are clearly major barriers to communicative reasoning, and even where concerted efforts are made to develop the English language skills of employees and Kiswahili language skills of expatriates, there remains a clear need for communications to be undertaken through interpreters, which appears as a skill not accorded sufficient attention and importance.

Often there is a ready assumption that people who are fluent in two languages can readily translate or transform the full meaning expressed in one language into another language, which is not the case. It is clear that even when communicators share a common language the same meaning is not necessarily construed through the use of a shared vocabulary, and assumptions about common understandings need to be constantly checked. This not only places a lot of demands on the process of facilitating dialogue across multiple languages but also those involved in the facilitation of the process in order to ensure that concerns associated with 'mimicry', which have been previously discussed, are not inadvertently realised.

Discourse however is another matter, and many issues surrounding discourse appear as having a degree of similarity to the discussion surrounding "cultural imperialism". This therefore suggests that in giving attention to constructing a culture and a set of organisational values there is a need to check that organisational discourse is also in alignment. This also perhaps endorses a
need for organisations and corporatism, if they are to justify their broader instrumental role in serving more humanist objectives, to speak a "language of people" rather than just the "language of business". In this way, organisations, particularly those in such a context as this one, and all their stakeholders, might be reminded of the broader objectives that they are ostensibly contributing to and be more sensitive to stakeholder concerns. In spite of efforts towards the implementation of strategic communications plans, this however appears as an even more underdeveloped and underfocused area than that around organisation culture in such a context.

7.4.3 Conclusion

The above discussion again suggests that colonial/imperial themes are perpetuated. These are also again located in knowledge and ways of knowing; inclusive of the ways of knowing and representing others. They are also reflected in an introduction of technical knowledge without fully checking assumptions behind their applicability and the suitability of the methods of transfer. Furthermore the emphasis on *techne*, without broader consideration of *phronesis* and *episteme* for the development of context specific solutions, and for ensuring that linkages between the macro and micro levels are not lost, also potentially represents a threat that the focus on addressing the issues of unequal development and dependence is not maintained.

This, together with an absence of what Habermas (1984) refers to as emancipatory learning, means that the interests of various stakeholders are not explicitly exposed. It also means new knowledge in relation to the specific context, which could enable the development of theories to counter the importation of universal corporatism, is not constructed. Certainly those who continue to possess the knowledge of corporatism are in a position to benefit from those that don't.

Whilst no apology should be made for the use of a common business language such as English, over an African language, where the emphasis is on genuine communicative understanding and reasoning, discourse remains
another matter. Substantial challenges remain in aligning discourse with broader humanist objectives. This is contrast to the general discourse of business and corporatism and how it points to the inferiority of others who sit outside of corporatism and acts to serve its own interests.

7.5 General Conclusion

As discussed earlier, postcolonialism recognises both historical continuity and change. Consistent with those themes, on the one hand, this reflection acknowledges that many structures and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today. However on the other hand it also acknowledges that as part of the continuous process of change, and through continuous critical reflection of practices, the promise, possibility, and continuing necessity of change asserted by postcolonialism can be sustained. This however requires that those reflections are translated into practices, together with continuous fine-tuning of them. I return to this point and its implications in the next chapter.

However it also needs to be noted that through exploring themes of postcolonialism professional reflection has been elevated to another level, which extends beyond the practical reflection discussed in Chapter 6. Consequently a much greater awareness is derived in relation to the power struggles and political acts represented in organisational activity, and the way they can reflect the perpetuation of colonial structures. As a result there is an awareness generated for the need to consider how notions associated with organisational learning can interrupt some of those perpetuating structures.

Values emerge as a powerful framework for unravelling and explaining behaviour, and getting to the heart of many structures that are perpetuated. These are particularly evident when looking at the imbalances emerging in relation to the instrumental values associated with corporatism and the more terminal values associated with people and humanism. I consider this in
more detail in the next chapter, along with consideration for the principles of organisational learning in general.
CHAPTER EIGHT: Considerations for the continuous development of principled professional practice

8.1 Overview

The intention of the overall study has been to explore some of the meanings and representations emerging from professional experience in the context of a developing economy, and how those experiences are explained and represented. These have been particularly considered on the basis of the critique of the organisational practices within some themes of postcolonialism, including how this relates to tensions between the values associated with humanism and corporatism. On this basis the meanings and representations derived can be considered in terms of what they might imply in terms of the requirements of "principled" professional practice.

What emerges from the reflection is the importance of the learning that occurs at certain borders. Important borders have been noted in relation to those that exist between certain social identity groups or 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1999), which exist in the organisation, and the diversity that is contained within them. Through coming together at borders, divergent mental models can engage with each other. As a result of genuine engagement at those borders, learning is implied. Mental models may be challenged and changed, or in the case where the mental model remains unchanged it accommodates an appreciation or understanding of the views of 'others'.

However, powerful structures also block opportunities for 'learningful discussion' (Senge 1990) at these borders. These included the tendency, in many instances, of expatriates towards advocacy rather than inquiry, and where the instrumentalism and legitimisation of corporatism tended to override a valuing of local cultural knowledge and competence. Furthermore these border interactions are hampered when impermeable boundaries exists between social identity groups. This impermeability was noted in the way the social identity of expatriates was strongly vested in corporatism, and the way in
which local social identity groups, particularly worker groups, tended to be enhanced through industrial action in the face of the shareholder dispute. Where learning is blocked at these borders it therefore emerges as a requirement that those barriers are unravelled and understood.

However, the way in which the instrumentalism of corporatism has a tendency to lose sight of broader values it ostensibly serves, and which are more oriented towards people and humanism, was also noted. Furthermore imbalances between these values sets suggested that interests of those who are served through organisational change can remain unexposed (and perhaps misaligned) and contribute to power struggles and resistance. The border between these values therefore also becomes an important focus for organisational learning.

A number of implications for professional practice emerge from this discussion and are considered under the following headings:-

- Exploring and dealing with values tensions in organisations
- The five disciplines of the learning organisation

8.2 Consideration for exploring and dealing with values tensions in organisations

8.2.1 Introduction

Extending the view of Hofstede (2001) that values provide useful frameworks for predicting and explaining behaviour, exploring values, particularly as they relate to the tensions that often exist between those associated with corporatism and humanism, is seen as offering a powerful focus for organisational learning. Furthermore it is seen as having the potential for overcoming the limitations of only technical or functional approaches to learning, and shifting aspects of organisational learning more into the domain of *phronesis* and Habermasian 'emancipatory' knowledge and learning.
8.2.2 Exploring organisational values

It is considered that the framework, which emerged in Chapter 4, and which was used for reflective purposes in Chapter 6, can therefore also be used as a basis for generating internal organisational discussion amongst a variety of organisational stakeholders, and for extending organisational assessment beyond corporate structures. Broadly speaking, against each point, organisations could be considered in terms of:-

- whether formal and informal structures at work within an organisation lean more heavily towards corporatism or humanism, or whether there is a balance;
- whether there is satisfaction with that relative weighting, along with reasons;
- whether there are any tensions or imbalances needing to be resolved;
- whether changes are required and, if so, the nature of them.

Guiding questions to assist with deliberations are therefore also defined. These are set out in Table 8.2.2-1, and could be used for the purposes of assessment and generating discussion in organisations around the relative balance between the values of corporate instrumentality with those associated with people and humanism, and the degree of satisfaction with that balance. Whilst these questions are more oriented towards the contexts of organisations in emerging economies, and I also have them particularly in mind for guiding my own observations in subsequent work in similar organisations, many of them undoubtedly could also perhaps be considered across most organisations regardless of context.

However in utilising these questions, how corresponding knowledge and understanding is generated needs to be taken into account. Therefore additional consideration is also required in terms of:-

- how the conclusion was reached;
- who was consulted, and how were they engaged in the process;
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- were alternative ways of looking at the organisation tapped into?

Therefore it is also considered that alternatively, or in addition, narrative and story-telling could be drawn on to gain further insight.
Table 8.2.2-1 Guiding questions to be used for the purposes of assessment and generating discussion in organisations around the relative balance between the values of corporate instrumentality with those associated with people and humanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terminal and Instrumental values: exploring the potential for imbalance between corporatist and humanist values</th>
<th>Questions for consideration</th>
<th>Strategies for further exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The balance between universal values and metavalues | • Does the organisation clearly articulate how it fits within and contributes to a socially just society?  
• Are the core values of the organisation clearly articulated?  
• What are the core goals?  
• Are the core values of organisational leaders known?  
• Do organisational values balance the interests of all stakeholders (i.e. balancing the needs of hearts and minds with returning net capital investment, or enhancing productivity)?  
• Do organisational values balance organisational interests with those of individuals and the community at large (i.e. its instrumentality in supporting universal values and broader socio-economic reform)? | • Draw a metaphor of a successful business entity within a socially just society |
| The relative focus on well-being: individuals, social identity groups or organisations? | • as per above  
• Are structures in place, which ensure that linkages between micro and macro reforms and goals are not lost?  
• Does the organisation have a social and cultural impact strategy that seeks to fully understand and mitigate any human costs associated with the pursuit of organisational success? | |
| The value of people | • Does the organisation speak the language of business or the language of people?  
• Does the organisation have a "charter" relating to the rights and responsibilities of all | Describe an incident that shows how your organisation values (or does not |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The value of knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Are distinctions made between the importation of knowledge and the requirements of new (or modified) knowledge to suit the demands and requirements of the context?</td>
<td>To what extent do you think that is reflective of how your organisation works?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who are the beneficiaries of knowledge transactions?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>What emphasis is placed on communicative reasoning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do the linkages between the macro and the micro retain a (genuinely transformative) learning focus?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ways of knowing</strong></td>
<td>To what extent is cultural knowledge valued within the framework of corporate knowledge frameworks?</td>
<td>To what extent does the organisation capture and draw on the emotion and intuition that speaks out through the individual and collective stories of those who inhabit the organisation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent does the organisation capture and draw on the emotion and intuition that speaks out through the individual and collective stories of those who inhabit the organisation?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>People development</strong></td>
<td>To what extent do learning and development policies and practices focus on developing the whole person, or just functional competence?</td>
<td>To what extent does the organisation value and promote the discipline of Personal Mastery (inclusive of notions of leaders of organisations which fit into a socially just society)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To what extent does the organisation value and promote the discipline of Personal Mastery (inclusive of notions of leaders of organisations which fit into a socially just society)?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinist culture</strong></td>
<td>Are corporate structures in the organisation in alignment with structures associated with broader social identity groups? If not, how do you plan to resolve this?</td>
<td>Describe an incident that shows how your organisation cares (or does not care) about its' people. Do you think this in general reflects the way your organisation works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the organisation adequately balance soft (feminist) and hard (masculinist) discourses?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td>Does the organisation factor in human impacts relating to broader cost-benefit analyses associated with the introduction of new technologies?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>Does a sense of organisational vision and purpose speak to the hearts and minds of the people in the organisation? How widely is a vision known amongst the organisation? How did it emerge? How is it translated into something that is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Diversity | **Does the organisation explicitly value and recognise diversity?** Do people consider this reflected in practice?  
| --- | --- |
|  | To what extent is diversity problematised, celebrated, and/or leveraged from?  
|  | Where is diversity considered as residing within the organisation?  
|  | How does diversity interact within the organisation?  
|  | Does the organisation have in place relational values that seek to mediate amongst diversity?  
|  | How strongly does the language of benchmarks and international best-practices speak out in the organisation in relation to developing specific solutions for the requirements of specific contexts?  
|  | What degree of flexibility is evident in the implementation of parent company guidelines and policies? |
| The professions | **Are there points of tension between professional values and other values in the organisation?**  
|  | Is some professional knowledge valued more than others?  
|  | Whose interests do professionals serve, those of  
|  |  
|  | the organisation?  
|  | different social identity groups?  
|  | individuals? |
8.2.2.1 The professions

Questions for consideration include:-

- Are there points of tension between professional values and other values in the organisation?
- Is some professional knowledge valued more than others?
- Whose interests do professionals serve, those of
  - the organisation?
  - different social identity groups?
  - individuals?

8.3 Considerations for the five disciplines of Learning Organisations

8.3.1 Introduction

One of the key realisation's that has come from reflecting on the application of the five disciplines associated with the learning organisation from a personal perspective is the tendency for them to become embedded in the context of western corporatism. They can therefore unwittingly contribute to tensions or imbalances between the values of people and business. However by examining principles and practices from other perspectives it becomes possible to identify limitations and areas for improvement. This is essential if the principles and practices around the notion of a learning organisation are to serve ends beyond a narrow corporate instrumentalism and to have broader applicability in international development contexts. The purpose here therefore is to consider further requirements in terms of the five disciplines.

8.3.2 Systems Thinking

8.3.2.1 New perspectives from reflection

What emerged in the general discussion was that 'Systems Thinking' certainly helped in understanding the organisation. This understanding was also seen as assisting in the management of change programmes either directly in the
case of internal things that are controllable, or more indirectly in the case of developing strategies to operate within framework conditions that are not so controllable. However it became clear that the more elements out of alignment; particularly in the external environment, the more challenging the change becomes. ‘Systems thinking’ also helped in understanding how, despite multiple initiatives and altruistic intentions, some fundamental structures are not changed or addressed, thus allowing for the perpetuation of colonial/imperial themes.

However this understanding of the organisation, or the knowing and the representation of the organisation, appeared as only within the narrow perspective of business managerialism and western corporatism. Embedded within that context, and drawing on associated values, beliefs and language in attempts to explain “others” and “difference”, it appeared there were insufficient means to gain a deeper understanding of the organisation and value its diversity. There was a tendency to use reference points in terms of what is known about successful western organisations, rather than looking at the fabric, traditions and aspirations of social groups associated with the local context, and without full consideration of the possibilities of what a truly successful African organisation might look like.

On the other hand understanding systemic elements from multiple perspectives, inclusive of the fabric of different social groups and their traditions means that the full extent of Western hegemony should not have to displace global diversity, and allows scope for discourses that bring together a range of voices, ideas, and beliefs for better understanding situations, and for building more authentic contextual solutions. Ways of knowing and representing others must therefore be found outside of business and corporatism as the discursive medium.

‘Systems Thinking’ also appeared as very organisation-centric. Organisations seem to have a tendency to be very introspective and self protective; that is, it is difficult for them to look outside of themselves and their own core interests.
Understanding systemic elements from a perspective of an organisation and business performance results in an embeddedness within the corporate values of ‘growth’, ‘maintenance’, ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ (Hodgkinson 1991). Whilst there is little argument that these values and principles are seen as instrumental in the achievement of universal values and goals often however, they appear as becoming a self-serving ends. Whilst ‘systems thinking’ implies a rational and analytical approach to reasoning it is embedded in the instrumental reasoning that is associated with corporatism.

8.3.2.2 Requirements

8.3.2.2.1 Whole system perspectives

In order to ensure that macro and the micro levels do not lose sight of each other and pursue their own interests, systems thinking must therefore be applied from the perspective of whole systems and not just the organisational system. This implies that at the macro level, and in relation to frame agreements laid out between shareholders, investors and the like, there is a need to pay attention to human and social interests. This means going beyond a reliance on economic principles and their dubious neutral instrumentality, and their tendency to lose sight of that broader instrumentality. This furthermore suggests the need for formalising social and cultural impact strategies.

It also suggests that structures need to be built and formalised to retain a learning focus between the macro and micro levels. Firstly this is seen as offering better possibilities for building communicative reasoning (Habermas 1984) for the development of common understandings amongst different stakeholder groups. Secondly, it seen as offering the possibility of facilitating the continuous identification and solution-finding of broader systemic issues which emerge. Thirdly, it is seen as offering better possibilities for facilitating broader inputs into reflection on the appropriateness and fine-tuning of economic models for different social contexts, which can seek to avoid problems associated with approaches that suggest that one model fits all (Chabal 1996).
Whilst 360° Feedback systems have been popularised in relation to individual assessment and performance (Edwards and Ewen 1996; Jones and Bearley 1996; Lepsinger and Lucia 1997; Waldman and Atwater 1998), the same principals however could be extended to the whole organisation. 360 degree feedback is designed to provide a multi-perspective view of individuals and their performance at work. The same principle of multi-perspective views of an organisation, inclusive of its performance, and its activities and impacts in broader social (and ecological) contexts, and drawing on multiple ways of communicating those views, would offer more comprehensive insights into the whole organisation system.

Similarly assessment frameworks like 'The Balanced Scorecard' (Kaplan and Norton 1996), which seek to adopt fairly wholistic perspectives of organisations, could be extended to assess organisational activities and performance in relation to a more inclusive systems perspective, which extends beyond the boundaries of the organisation.

8.3.2.2.2 Ways of understanding organisations

Managing organisational change requires much more focus on the social structures at work, not just frame structures and readily visible (and often problematised) cultural artefacts. Understanding whole systems however requires that they are viewed from wholistic perspectives. This means that ways of viewing organisations and other social situations must not be constrained within narrow corporatist frameworks.

This requires drawing on ways of knowing that extend beyond globalising corporate discourses associated with international best practices and benchmarks, and drawing on strategies associated with narrative and storytelling. Further consideration needs to be given to how different kinds of knowledge and discourse (i.e. the scientific rationalism associated with corporatism and the more qualitative knowledge associated with narrative)
can come together in organisational environments. It also suggests consideration of corresponding competencies that also appear as largely outside of common corporate structures.

What also emerges from the study is the difficulty in “pinning-down” organisational culture. As an instrumental concept it is constantly drawn on to identify aspects of organisational life that need to be manipulated and managed for the improvement of organisational outcomes. In a similar sense of ‘difference’ being rendered problematic (Czarniawaska and HöfI 2002), organisational culture; particularly culture that is seen as outside of corporate constructs, is rendered problematic. However a fundamental analytic problem may reside through the very notion of organisation culture itself; particularly in attempts to understand organisational culture through the attribution of human agency to organisations. Rather, more focus needs to be directed at recognising the different social identity groups and communities of practice (Wenger 1999) represented in organisations, and promoting respectful dialogue and activity amongst them.

8.3.3 Personal Mastery

8.3.3.1 New perspectives from reflection

Personal mastery is seen as taking on additional dimensions in relation to operating in offshore and developing contexts; particularly as it relates to leadership requirements. Personal Mastery however emerges as something that not all people have the discipline to attain or work towards, suggesting not only that it is a personal learning and development process that needs to be supported, but also that appropriate organisational structures need to be built in order to support it.
8.3.3.2 Requirements

8.3.3.2.1 Leadership and Personal Mastery

A lot of discussion suggests there is an essential requirement for organisations to be able to understand themselves from a whole-systems perspective and not just from an organisation-centric perspective. This is seen as a requirement for building organisations, which see themselves as part of a bigger picture and how they fit into a socially just society. This also suggests a number of themes which emerge as being essential for inclusion with the strands for development associated with "leadership competence" and "leadership development. Whilst some of them are not necessarily uncommon, these are listed below for broad consideration as-:

- Having a personal vision that relates to building an organisation that fits within a just society, which is not imported from other contexts and world views, but reflects the requirements of diverse contexts and the aspirations of those involved.
- Sustaining an unrelenting focus on goal setting as it relates to the above; inclusive of the requirements of personal growth.
- Sustaining an unrelenting focus on learning and wholistic outcomes – that is fully understanding, managing and reporting on the full range of organisational outcomes.
- Developing cross-cultural competence – that means developing a new repertoire of skills and abilities to manage and/or work with people whose cultures and value systems can significantly different from those at home, whereby diversity is not only acknowledged and respected (rather than "othered" and rendered problematic), but valued and tapped into for the purposes of building genuine contextual solutions.
- Being a 'Personal Master' – that is being able to demonstrate: (i) one's own personal commitment to learning, (ii) how that learning is managed, and (iii) the way that learning is applied to organisational life; particularly as it relates to satisfying the expectations of all stakeholder
groups and how it relates to building and leading an organisation that fits within a just society.

- Being able to articulate personal values that are linked to the notion of building organisations that fit within a just society and demonstrating how they are aligned with values in action (Argyris 1993). This also implies a focus on bringing the whole self to the organisation. This in turn does not mean not having multiple selves and the ability to have credibility amongst different stakeholders and the way that requires different communications styles, but it means consciously seeking to explore, navigate between and resolve tensions arising between different values sets.

- Building skills that enable multiple ways of knowing and understanding, which in turn suggest a focus on a repertoire of different communications skills that incorporate “inquiry” and “active listening”.

- Understanding “personal identity” and how this relates to other senses of identity in organisations.

- Ability to build relationships of trust amongst all organisational stakeholders.

- Understanding the broader nature of culture, cultural change and hybridity and what this implies in terms of personal change as part of broader change and transformative processes (not just change as something that is required by, or done to, others).

- Having the support of a coach and/or mentor who is able to support deeper learning that comes from maintaining and exploring the sources of creative tension (Senge 1990).

8.3.3.2.2 Organisational Structures for Personal Mastery

In general it appears there is a need to de-emphasise the "expert" model in favour of individuals who are able to balance certain sets of knowledge with inquiry and learning. This means giving attention to organisational structures relating to recruitment, reward and people development.
Particularly in relation to leadership positions there is a strong suggestion that recruitment and reward structures need to support individuals who can balance a personal passion or vision for organisational success with a corresponding passion for building an organisation that fits within a just society. Leaders need to be rewarded for not just functional success but also for good global and multi-cultural citizenry. This also implies that at many levels of society there needs to be formal recognition of new dimensions of organisational leadership excellence.

It also suggests that given the tendency of competency frameworks to define in detail how people in organisations approach their work, together with their knowledge and skill requirements, a very strong need is implied for organisations to look at how they (i) support the process of continuous personal learning, (ii) how they avoid the dangers of not developing new knowledge and (iii) how they balance functional learning (i.e. *techne*) with learning that is based around *phronesis* (i.e. wisdom building).

### 8.3.4 Mental Models

**8.3.4.1 New perspectives from reflection**

What emerges most powerfully from the whole reflexive process is how much we are products of our own life experiences and the structures that surround that. Furthermore when mental models and experiences are compatible with corporate recruitment processes and employment opportunities there can be a tendency for mental models to remain substantially unchallenged; particularly unless one finds oneself in an environment where divergent thinking speaks out loudly within the organisation.

The tendency, which is well noted in ‘The Fifth Discipline’ (Senge 1990), of many western managers and consultants towards advocacy rather than inquiry, also tends to reinforce fairly static mental models. Shifts in mental models however were noted, particularly when complex challenges emerged
and ready made solutions did not seem to be working, and when individuals (including myself) started to unravel and explore different value sets that were at work, and how these were often in conflict or misalignment with each other both from personal and systemic perspectives.

However at a personal level, I found that the most significant challenges to mental models occurred when elevating reflections on practice from a practical level to one that considered the broader postcolonial perspectives. It meant that suddenly I was confronted with personal questions relating to not only “why do I that?” or “why do I believe that”, but looking for a deeper meaning as to what those beliefs and practices actually represent in different contexts and from different perspectives. Suddenly practices and theories that seemed applicable and acceptable in one context took on a totally different meaning when examined through different lenses.

8.3.4.2 Requirements

8.3.4.2.1 Personal reflection

The notion of challenging mental models implies that there is a need to explore personal beliefs and value systems and understand their origins, as well as exploring the inherent tensions between them. It also requires exploring other beliefs and value systems and consciously considering where they diverge, whether they challenge existing mental models and whether personal mental models need to be modified according to new inputs.

There is also a need to be aware of one’s own tendency towards advocacy and inquiry, and whether this is vested within power relations. There is also a corresponding requirement for communicative skills, where there is also an emphasis on “listening” and being prepared to be open to being challenged. In a developing context this means being open to ideas and knowledge that may seem as being completely outside of familiar corporate knowledge frameworks, and therefore requiring genuine engagement with diversity.
However the notion of inquiry in an unfamiliar context also implies some kind of cross-cultural competence that enables the individual to really engage in the beliefs and value systems of the social context in which s/he finds her/himself.

8.3.4.2.2 Learning structures

Most importantly organisational structures, which promote the challenging of mental models, need to be built. In relation to western corporations operating in foreign locations this suggests the need to formally recognise inquiry skills, and the kinds of cross-cultural competence implied for inquiry into different social contexts. This however emerges as an undeveloped area alongside common competency frameworks.

Organisational structures also need to be open to knowledge and ways of doing things in relation to one context, which may appear as outside of the way things are done in another context. However it also becomes important to assess how that knowledge is actually generated, and whether it emerges from genuine communicative reasoning. Furthermore it also suggests a need for organisations to not only acknowledge the value of diversity, but to also have a clear and active strategy for how tapping into organisational diversity generates functional organisational knowledge (*techne*) and is reflective of a "wise" (*phronesis*) learning organisation.

8.3.5 Team Vision

8.3.5.1 New perspectives from reflection

The faddishness of the ‘vision thing’ (Shapiro 1995) is well acknowledged, but still ways for tapping into the hearts and minds of various social identity groups who inhabit an organisation must be found. This must acknowledge cultural diversity, and avoid temptations to think that common understandings
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and aspirations will be readily established. It must be undertaken in an environment that is able to build a foundation of trust.

8.3.5.2 Requirements

Key considerations, particularly for those in leadership positions in organisations, emerge. Having an organisational vision is undoubtedly important, but other ways of tapping into the hearts and minds of those who have stakes in the organisation need to be explored, particularly as it relates to the translation of the global into the local. This implies paying much more attention to the aspirations and values of those with stakes in the organisation, and not just embarking on a visioning process which examines organisational life through western corporate eyes. This also must recognise a stage of development where personal identity is not as strongly linked to work experiences as it is often perceived in the western world.

It also must be acknowledged that a vision, like terminal and high level values, is a guide for experience, but not necessarily ever attainable. Efforts must therefore be made to ensure that the terminal focus is not displaced by more immediate and instrumental concerns. Building shared vision therefore also means building shared understandings of how to get there. Again this not only implies acknowledging, respecting and tapping into the diversity of organisations, but it also means an emphasis on how to work within the framework of that diversity.

It has been well acknowledged throughout there is a high unlikelihood, and even an undesirability, to focus on building shared values and belief systems other than at the very highest levels. What however becomes more important is building relational values (Frazer and Lacey 1993; Hernández 1997; Hill Collins 1993) that enable a process for navigating amongst differences within organisations and the borders of different values sets amongst different organisational communities. Sustaining a commitment to some kind of
organisational or team vision also implies that knowable reference points be defined that enable all stakeholders to monitor movement towards a vision.

Most importantly any kind of organisational vision and how it is acknowledged and understood as being aligned with the aspirations of various collectives and individuals requires a foundation of trust amongst those key stakeholders. This implies a need to have a stakeholder management strategy in place from the outset, and at the macro level of shareholder agreements. It also suggests the need to acknowledge that diversity does exist and that whilst high level principals may be subject to broad consensus, divergence will be a continuous norm. The establishment of relational values and processes therefore needs to be a focus of communicative reasoning at the outset, for navigating through that diversity.

In addition however it also suggests that the interests of different stakeholders need to be exposed. This can again build principles of commonality, but also can form a basis for communicative reasoning around the respective rights and responsibilities that are associated with organisational life, and which are also often very much the source of misunderstandings, tensions and power struggles. This also suggests that charters of mutual rights and responsibilities need to be jointly articulated and negotiated amongst various stakeholder groups, which also reflect the relational values and processes mentioned earlier, and which are also subject to continuous monitoring and reflection that has a communicative reasoning orientation.

Consideration also needs to be given to the style of leadership most suitable for different cultural environments. Cultures, for example, that are high on power distance tend to look strongly towards their leaders to provide strict guidance and lay down ground rules which must be abided by, in return for the “care” that the organisation will provide. Finding the right balance between opportunities for building forums for communicative reasoning, and ensuring that people in the organisation do not feel lost in the absence of
structures of control and hierarchy to which they may have been accustomed, is an inevitable challenge but one that must be addressed.

8.3.6 Team Learning

8.3.6.1 New perspectives from reflection

One of the biggest challenges in organisational change and organisational learning emerges around the facilitation of genuinely communicative dialogue amongst the respective stakeholders about the requirements and nature of change. People from different cultural backgrounds, with different organisational roles and with different expectations and power interests however do not readily come together, share common goals and value sets, reach common understandings, and find common solutions for going forward. The many social structures and organisational frame structures which result in different behaviours relating to learning have also been well noted.

8.3.6.2 Requirements

The importance of valuing diversity and different perspectives has already been highlighted, particularly as it relates to important borders that exist between different social identity groups and communities of practice and the learning that can exist at those borders. In addition however this also implies a requirement amongst expatriates to be alert to “mimicry” and how to deal with it. It requires a continuous focus on genuine communicative reasoning that balances advocacy with inquiry.

Even where technical learning is warranted assumptions need to be checked. The most obvious skills, knowledge and attitudes implied may be totally at odds with existing mental models. Most discussion highlighted how organisational learning needs to be elevated beyond technical and practical learning to that which is inclusive of emancipatory knowledge constitutive interests (Habermas 1984). This issue is one that needs to be confronted by organisational leaders and HR professionals in terms of what this means for
organisational structures. It also needs to be factored into macro structures to ensure that macro and micro levels do not lose sight of each other. This however also implies exploring at all levels different values and beliefs associated with learning and seeking to build a genuine learning culture based on communicative reasoning.

Communicative reasoning also requires attention to the use of language and discourse and whether it is built upon the principles of using language for wider (as opposed to narrow) communication. It needs to ensure that assumptions around common meaning are validated.

It also implies the need and freedom to value and create knowledge that is outside of common corporate frameworks. That means also building new theories of organisational change that better match socio-economic contexts like those found in Tanzania. It is about building knowledge of what could and does constitute a successful East African organisation and how it fits (or does not fit) within broader macro strategies of self determination and economic development. With the well noted tendency of western corporatism to have a narrow focus and to dominate, issues again however emerge in relation to who should assume responsibility for ensuring that broader macro structures for facilitating this kind of learning are actually supported.

8.4 Summary

The implications for further principled professional practices are set out as broad principles only. Issues have emerged in relation to organisation practices and these need to be addressed by professional theories and practices. However it is only within the framework of further professional experience that these will be able to be tested, further reflected upon and perhaps ultimately developed into an organisational learning theory that is applicable to such a context.
9 CHAPTER NINE: Final Conclusion

9.1 Recapitulation

This research project has primarily been a vehicle of personal learning as it relates to exploring the professional requirements of an organisational learning practitioner operating within the context of developing economies. The core focus of the research has been based around the extent to which common corporate practices, as they particularly relate to organisational change processes and learning and development practices, and as they are transferred from the "west" to developing economies, can be considered as reflecting a kind of corporate imperialism. The nature of this imperialism, alongside its origins and consequences, has also been considered.

Consistent with postcolonial themes, the study acknowledges that in organisational activity many structures and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today. This appears as being integrally linked to a focus on corporate instrumentality, which loses sight of its broader and ostensibly humanistic goals. Substantial barriers to authentic organisational learning have also been identified.

However on the other hand the study also acknowledges that as part of the continuous process of change, and through continuous critical reflection of practices, the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change asserted by postcolonialism can be sustained. In this respect the need for continuous fine-tuning and reflection of organisational learning and development practices is highlighted.

The concepts and principles of the learning organisation, as encapsulated in Senge's (1990) 'The Fifth Discipline', have been used as a reflective framework. As such it is reinforced as providing a useful framework for exploring many aspects of organisational life. However limitations and shortcomings have also been noted; particularly as it fails to acknowledge the specific requirements of contexts outside of western corporatism. Like all
theories and related practices however, the requirement for constant reflexivity in order to ensure that theories and practices are aligned, and that those theories and practices are serving the broader purposes for which they were intended, is noted. This research therefore represents a continuous process of trying to improve knowledge and understandings about professional practices surrounding organisational learning; particularly in terms of contexts that are outside of western corporatism.

Additional understandings of Senge's learning disciplines have therefore emerged; particularly in terms of developing a focus for expanding their application in organisational life in order to match the requirements of different contexts. Furthermore the importance of "learning borders" is noted. This takes into account the borders that exist between different organisational social identity groups or 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1999), and the diversity that exists within them. However it also takes into account the borders that exist between the values of corporatism and humanism, and how learning at these points can not only assist in not losing sight of the broader objectives that the instrumentalism of corporatism ostensibly serves, but also unravel and expose whose interests are being served through a change process.

It is therefore also not the end of the story; that is, the research is not a Hollywood plot with a happily ever after ending (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), nor I hope, does it reflect a 'confessional tale' (Pillow 2003) which is reflective of a need for personal catharsis or absolution. It represents perhaps another beginning of taking new learnings and insights back into the work place and other forums.

Whilst there are direct implications for my own continuing professional practices, the scope of the challenges that emerge out of this reflection in relation to the sustainable and just socio-economic development appear as inevitably daunting. Efforts will therefore be made to contribute some of these findings at other forums and amongst the
countless people who work amidst the complex challenges of the international development environment.

9.2 Reflections on Reflections

Certainly the entire research project emerged as messy (Visweswaran 1994), with a multitude of false starts attributable to being swamped by the complexity of field experience (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). This however appears as inevitable when conducting research into one's own professional practices; particularly when trying to retain a whole systems focus on what aspects of professional practice actually mean, and when seeking to disrupt technical or practical (Habermas 1984) ways of viewing and evaluating practices.

Certainly what emerges is a broader understanding of self (Ricoeur 1988). This relates to the shaping of a career-self through a background of general education and how this has subsequently been influenced by many years in a corporate environment. The final personal outcome of this reflexive process, and in line with Lansbury (2003), is the recognition that finding my own balance between corporate and humanist values requires a personal rebalancing of the processes of social science with those associated with management science.

9.3 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are very much associated with those noted by Steele (1986) in relation to narrative texts. These include the selective presentation of information that supports the themes and findings that the author unconsciously seeks to reinforce; the systematic omission of facts, accounts and interpretations that may confound the themes and findings that the author consciously or unconsciously seeks to reinforce; and a systematic emphasis within the dialogues of the narrative intended to lead the reader...
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towards the themes and findings that the author consciously or unconsciously seeks to reinforce.

Whilst from the outset I have been aware of the potential for distortion that emerges, and I have tried to be as open to the possibilities represented in aspects of organisational life, I must acknowledge that the research focus and process have been very much guided by my own ‘cultural intuition’ (Delgado Bernal 1998). Furthermore whilst I have sought to recognise this by clearly acknowledging myself in the research text, all resultant understandings and reflections occur, and must be “read” and understood within that framework. Understandings have emerged on the basis of looking at the same situation retrospectively again and again, and through different frameworks. The meanings that have emerged are therefore dependent on the frameworks drawn on.

Whilst I have tried to interrupt what Pillow (2003) refers to as the ‘truthfulness of the tale that is captured within the reflection of the organisational change programme, through introducing and exploring the themes of poscolonialism, that reflection is still bound within personal frames of experience and understanding. The resultant reflection is therefore limited by its lack of input from involved others in relation to these specific themes.

As a result of the broader learning that has emerged from this learning exercise, I believe I am much more ‘rigorously self-aware’ (Pillow 2003) of myself as a product of my own life experiences. As such, and on reflection in relation to this research project, I acknowledge how poorly equipped I was to really try and understand others (and that furthermore I was not previously really aware of this limitation). My own reflection is therefore bounded within my own interpretation of experiences and interactions in the context of organisational change and against the literature associated with postcolonialism.
This presents another limitation in the sense that this reflection does not explicitly draw on the perceptions and reflections of others who have shared the same experiences. The research could therefore perhaps have been enhanced by paying more attention to the development of research instruments to tap into this. However as also noted the power relations, associated with my personal role in the project, raised additional issues associated with gaining reliable information from formal interview, etc, which further suggests that research supported through impartial facilitators may also be a requirement in such a situation.

9.4 Future Research Possibilities

As to be expected and because this research project exists within a continuous and dynamic context of learning and change, a multitude of future research possibilities emerge. Key ones of interest are:

- Investigation of the impacts and perceptions of change with a stronger focus on different social identity groups
- Development of a cross-cultural competency framework that takes into account the requirements of leading organisational learning and diversity management in postcolonial contexts
- Development of an organisational assessment tool that extends beyond corporate structures and seeks to check how healthy an organisation is in terms of balancing broader people and interests with the interests built around corporate instrumentality
- Investigation of the application of the various additional requirements considered in Chapter 8.

9.4.1 Investigation of the impacts and perceptions of change with stronger focus on different social identity groups

This research is primarily based around personal perspectives and insights that have been gathered in the context of an organisational work place in Tanzania. It has sought to explore understandings of professional practice as they relate to organisational theories, as well seeking to explore deeper meanings of what those theories and practices represent in a different socio-
economic and cultural environment. Whilst various incidental perspectives have been integrated into the study, further research could focus on gaining much more detailed insights into the perceptions and understandings of a variety of other social identity groups who are most directly involved and/or impacted by the process of macro and micro reform. Such a study would focus on the use of narrative to capture more detailed stories and perceptions in order to derive additional meaning about what those changes represent, and therefore to provide further input for reflecting on the requirements of professional practices.

9.4.2 Development of a cross-cultural competency framework

What emerged from the study was that there was very little explicit awareness of the competence and knowledge amongst expatriates to deal with the diversity that existed in such an environment. Whilst there were cases where cultural knowledge, which existed amongst indigenous employees was acknowledged, there was a lack of skill to develop a greater understanding of this knowledge, and substantially draw on it in the change process.

Given also the tendency of common corporate structures to rely heavily on competency frameworks, there is a very strong suggestion that these need to be extended. This implies exploring competency requirements associated with working effectively to promote organisational learning for building genuine contextual solutions in different cultural environments. Further research could therefore focus on seeking to better understand and define such cross-cultural competency frameworks, and what they might mean in terms of organisational structures relating to recruitment, reward systems, leadership development and diversity management.
9.4.3 Development of an organisational assessment tool

It has become quite popular within organisations to implement organisational surveys that seek to objectively gain insight into how aspects of organisational life and culture are viewed. Extending the principles of organisational assessment, as discussed in Chapter 8, future research could focus on the development of an instrument that seeks to capture how well an organisation balances the values of corporate instrumentality with those associated with people and humanism. Such an instrument could provide organisational leaders with a view of their organisation in order to promote discussion around strategies for better alignment. Broader application of such an instrument, in terms of representation of a variety of organisations, could also introduce further dimensions to notions surrounding organisational excellence and benchmarking.

9.4.4 Investigation of the application of the various additional requirements

Chapter 8 laid out some suggested requirements for improving organisational learning practices in such an environment; particularly given its postcoloniality. These requirements were defined within the frameworks of the 'five disciplines' of the learning organisation (Senge 1993) and the border between the values of humanism and corporatism. However it is only within the framework of further professional experience that these will be able to be tested, further reflected upon and perhaps ultimately developed into an organisational learning theory that is applicable to such a context. Further investigation could therefore focus on efforts to actually implement these recommendations with views to further understanding their applicability and the requirements for their uptake or integration within corporate environments.
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DEAKIN UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM: SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

Hereby consent to (name of organisation or 'myself') being a focus of a human research study to be undertaken by Nicola Watts, International Organisation and Human Resource Development Consultant

and I understand that the purpose of the research is to investigate the potential for compatibility and discord between educational values and corporate values, and whether they can be better aligned.

The researcher is interested in collecting perceptions on the types of values that prevail within my organisation's culture. These inputs, in conjunction with other case-studies and their links to various themes from other research and literature, will be drawn on to explore the practices and beliefs associated with learning and development in organisations and their subsequent implications for human resource development professionals.

I acknowledge that

1. The information collection process will form part of the professional consulting activities for which the researcher has been engaged.
2. Any information that is gathered will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity, the identity of any other individual or organisation to an outside party; i.e. that all parties will remain anonymous.
3. Results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature: Date:

If you wish to make further inquiries or wish to withdraw please contact myself or my supervisor, Associate Professor Jill Blackmore at Deakin University. Your involvement is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Ms Nicola Watts
wattsnj@deakin.edu.au
PO Box 16
Ballarat, 3350
Australia
Tel: 0408 351 475

Associate Professor Jill Blackmore
jillb@deakin.edu.au
Faculty of Education
Deakin University, Geelong 3217
Australia
Tel: 03 5227 1489

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Ethics Committee, Research Services, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, BURWOOD VIC 3125. Tel (03) 9251 7123 (International +61 3 9251 7123).
The Corporate Curriculum Path: Exploring Values and Value-addedness

You and/or your organisation is/are invited to participate in a project that seeks to investigate the potential for compatibility and discord between educational values and corporate values, and whether they can be better aligned. The researcher is interested in collecting perceptions about the learning that occurs in your organisation and the values associated with it. Various inputs, in conjunction with other case-studies and their links to various themes from other research and literature, will be drawn on to explore the practices and beliefs associated with learning and development in organisations and their subsequent implications for human resource development professionals. Of particular interest is how learning is managed, and to whose interests and values the learning that occurs within organisations is serving. Of corresponding interest will be the implications for the Human Resource Development specialist. Are they ultimately corporate players or educators? Can they be both? And if so, what are their professional requirements?

Information will be collected through interviews. Examples of key questions that may be asked during the interview are provided below.

- What do you consider to be the core values of your organisation?
- Is there a difference between espoused values and values in action?
- How are values developed in your organisation?
- Are you satisfied with the core values of your organisation?
- What kinds of learning occur in your organisation?
- What are the values associated with learning?
- To what ends, is learning in your organisation directed?
- Are you satisfied with the learning that occurs in your organisation?

Interviews will at most last for an hour, but are generally about forty minutes in length. The time will be negotiated to suit the work situation. These unstructured conversations will be taped with the consent of the individual. Any use of data from these tapes will be anonymised. The responses will be completely confidential to the researcher and supervisor. Secure data storage, for no less than 6 years following any research outcomes, will be in accordance with Deakin University requirements. No responses will be used to identify any respondents and all reasonable means will be taken to ensure CONFIDENTIALITY.

It is expected that the findings will form the basis of articles to be published in professional journals and/or presented at professional conferences, which will be freely available.

If you wish to make further inquiries or wish to withdraw please contact myself or my supervisor, Associate Professor Jill Blackmore at Deakin University. Your involvement is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Ms Nicola Watts
wattsnj@deakin.edu.au
PO Box 16
Bairnsdale, 3875
Australia
Tel: 0408 351 475

Associate Professor Jill Blackmore
jillb@deakin.edu.au
Faculty of Education
Deakin University, Geelong 3217
Australia
Tel: 03 5227 1489

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Taylorism, focused on science and mathematical models (Lebrow & Simon, 1997), and according to the 'masculinist, machismo' values associated with hierarchies, discipline, rules and control (Clegg et al, 1996).

There is a lot of World Bank literature that provides information on global and regional economic performance and proposes remedies for economic problems. Fieldhouse notes in particular three key documents which outlined the free-trade prescription for economic recovery through structural adjustment programmes: *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action* (Washington 1981); *Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington 1984); *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results and the Road Ahead* (Oxford, 1994).

* see transition in the context of World Bank's 'From Plan to Market'. The ultimate goal of transition in countries shedding central planning is to build a thriving market economy capable of delivering long-term growth in living standards. What distinguishes transition from economic reforms in other countries is the systemic change involved: reforms must penetrate to the fundamental rules of the game, to the institutions that shape behaviour and guide organizations.

For transition to succeed, it must restructure the institutional basis of the social system—an enormous and enormously time-consuming agenda' (From Plan to Market: World Bank Development Report 1996, p. 2)


Prevention of Corruption Bureau.

What is commonly referred to as 'The Arusha Declaration' was the then President, Julius Nyerere's 1967 'Declaration Outlining Tanzania's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance'; (Nyerere, 1968) a major policy statement that called for egalitarianism, socialism, and self-reliance. It outlined a decentralized government and a program of rural development called *ujamaa* ("pulling together") that involved the creation of co-operative farm villages, as well as the nationalisation of factories and plantations.

The Swahili are urbanised African Muslims, who have integrated many Asian cultural and architectural features into their own traditions, and are found in the coastal communities of East Africa (UNESCO, 1999).

through the organisational capacity building activities undertaken prior to privatisation and supported by the World Bank and Swedish International Development Agency as discussed in Section 6.2.2.


Representation of this group included approximately 75% local managers and 25% expatriates.

This was particularly evident amongst the telecommunications networks groups.

The United Republic of Tanzania, Bidding Documentation for the Consultancy Services to carry out a Performance Assessment and Privatisation Impact Study in Tanzania, President's Office Planning and Privatisation.

The explicit strategies of past colonisers are evident in the well cited Lord Macauley, president of the Council of Education in India, and his infamous 'Minute on Indian Education' of 1835 (Ashcroft et al., 1985).
A foot in the world’s door

A voice of experience in international HR defines the areas to focus on and mistakes to avoid in developing countries.

BY NICOLA WATTS

Privatisations, acquisitions and joint ventures in the emerging economies of developing countries are a temptation of the times for successful western companies. Even in the West, such activities involve risk, but they are especially challenging in distant lands with different cultures and languages. Along with the success stories, there have been many failures, and it seems the key is not so much a matter of markets or technology but the subtleties of people management and organisational development in complex cross-cultural environments.

International human resources management has had to expand far beyond the basic managing of expatriate employees and helping them adapt. It involves managing the interfaces between people with diverse work experience, knowledge and career expectations, as well as ways of life and perspectives on the world. It recognises that one solution does not necessarily suit all locations or organisations; nor does it suit the varying roles of offshore expatriates and relationships between stakeholders.

I have worked offshore in international HR and organisational development for more than a decade, most recently in developing economies with privatising telcos partnered with western investors. Key themes have emerged.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The relationship between an organisation’s culture and its performance is well acknowledged. In mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures and the like, different cultures come together, and where the ‘west’ meets ‘the rest of the world’, the effects are intensified.

A small industry has sprung up around the delivery of cultural awareness programs in the wake of cultural theorists such as Geert Hofstede (Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind, 1991) and B. Stening and E. Ngan (The cultural context of HRM in east Asia, 1997), raising the understanding of and sensitivity to the differences likely to be encountered.

It is essential that colleagues in host countries be included in such programs. They are just as likely to be confused by the apparent arrival of different values and ways of doing things, if not more so. They may even resent it.

Firstly, there are myths to deal with. “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” is certainly of value to the visitor wanting to avoid causing offence. But it’s an approach that may not necessarily help an organisation to operate in global markets.

Such cultural relativism can also be interpreted as “When playing a new corporate game, do as other successful corporations do.” Sometimes this is supposedly justified in terms of an absolutist framework that suggests a global corporate culture transcending those associated with the local geography. It implies that culture is not only ‘knowable’, but can be readily imported or transferred from organisation to organisation.

Even were this so, neither view is enough for organisational development. Such approaches can translate as cultural imperialism and meet resistance. A hidden or underground organisational culture can develop. Unwittingly, exciting, essential elements that come with diversity can be undermined, and result in lost opportunities to build local solutions and success stories for the specificities of local contexts.
It is important to avoid portraying cultures and the differences between them as static and to avoid reinforcing a sense of ‘otherness’—of ‘them and us’. When people come together, they are an active part of the culture and any change that occurs. Having a vision for an organisation and building a culture around it is not only about understanding ‘how we are’ but about ‘how we want to be’, and that usually requires crossing cultural borders and breaking mindsets for local and expatriate personnel alike.

All involved need to focus on exploring and defining the core values and behaviours that should be evident and how they are to be lived out. The leadership must be fully committed, with particular consideration given to the skill sets of people sent overseas to work in such roles.

**SUBTLETIES OF DIVERSITY**

The management of diversity is a big subject often complicated by language barriers, and it has other commonly underestimated challenges.

One is an understandable tendency for expatriate managers to seek out and heavily depend upon local personnel in organisations that appear to be most like themselves or that they feel they can most strongly relate to. Such personnel are often relied on to interpret the organisation and act as go-between, linking expatriate managers with everyone else.

There are several pitfalls. The organisation may not be interpreted for the expatriate beyond existing ‘mental models’, giving a false understanding of how it and its people really work. Encountering people who seem to speak and act similarly to oneself can create a superficial sense of shared understanding and actually act as a barrier to deeper development.

There is a tendency to adopt cultural artefacts linked to concepts such as privatisation, corporatisation, modernisation, or being part of a new power or social identity group. This is evident, for example, in the use of certain vocabulary and the adoption of certain behaviours, modes of dress and so on. They can represent simplistic reassurances about groups of people being on the same wavelength and sharing strategies for going forward.

In some cultures individuals are also prone to wanting to be the bearers of only good news, of telling a person in a position of power what they think they want to hear. Important differences in understanding and expectations can be masked, seriously affecting the general level of trust and confidence, and the appropriateness of strategies that surface later rather than sooner.

Another trap in relying on people because of perceived similarity or a ready ‘relatability’, particularly if they are not within the formal hierarchy of the organisation, is that it sends negative messages that diversity is not valued. It can create perceptions about who is part of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ organisation. Divisiveness, resentment and the existence of strong ‘shadow organisations’ can result.

While clear messages are always necessary about the expectations in a changing company culture, this is a developmental process requiring time and continuing discussion. It is a fragile process that can be damaged by simple, unconscious tendencies to look for similarity rather than also embrace difference.

Another challenge involves the way most expatriate managers have been trained to be advocates (Peter Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organisation*, 1990). There is a strong tendency to offer solutions, debate forcefully and seek to influence others rather than focus on skills of inquiry and listening. This can be reinforced by local cultural attitudes: that it is knowledge being passed down a
power hierarchy; or that a subordinate must not dare to question the ideas of a ‘superior’. As a result, a lot of concerns and good ideas never surface. A company must be able to empower and trust its company managers to do things differently in different locations. Strictly imposing methods is often incompatible with local contexts and can limit participation at that level when it is the key to the success of broader aims. Rather than trying to conform to global company rules, offshore managers need parent company policies, principles and goals with a high degree of flexibility as to how they will be realised.

ETHICS OF THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Much has been written about ethical dilemmas faced overseas, ranging from different perceptions of bribery to the exploitation of cheap labour. An issue less commonly raised is corporate HRM in the context of macro-economic reform in emerging economies. It is sometimes quickly forgotten that privatising or opening up markets to international investors has strong strategic linkages to broader socio-economic reforms and goals in host countries. Paradoxically, while broad benefits are being sort for the nation’s people, individuals are likely to be disadvantaged in the process of change and restructuring. Broader implications of HR policies also need to be considered. For example, many organisations pay ‘allowances’ that contribute more to remuneration than the base salary. Companies finance personal loans, take care of employees’ dependents, provide housing and maintenance, pay clothing allowances, transport the family back home every year, and so on. All this has developed in accordance with socio-economic and political frameworks. Through corporate eyes, though, it is readily seen as unnecessarily cumbersome in terms of administration, as driving undesirable behaviour (such as wanting business travel and training as a means of supplementing income) and as subject to abuse (falsely claiming benefits for family dependents).

However, when changing such HRM policies, the values and messages involved must be understood. Abolishing allowances for streamlined, performance-based remuneration may discourage behaviour associated with “What can the company do for me?” in favour of the preferred “What can I do for the company?” But this can send other messages. Western corporatism is well known for its individualism and what is sometimes viewed as individual selfishness, in contrast to the collectivist orientation of eastern cultures. In poor countries, workers are often supporting very extended families. However as people become more corporatised, they tend to distance themselves from their extended family. This continues to widen gaps between the haves and have-nots, with clear consequences for the many people unable to participate in the new economy and who do not have access to social security.

The question is, is this inevitable or can (and should) corporations be mindful of respecting and protecting familial and community values?

COMMUNICATIONS

The anticipation that privatisation and international joint ventures and investment can create should not be underestimated. Expectations range from improved working conditions and benefits, to fears about restructuring’s impact and scepticism about the international company’s intentions (memories of colonialism are strong in many nations). There are also the opportunities and threats posed to people who may derive indirect benefits from the company. Implementing strong and positive programs for change requires building common understanding and commitment around national, organisational and individual
interests and stakes. Unnecessary speculation, unrealistic expectations, rumours and underground politics can be very damaging. It is therefore essential that communications is managed strategically right from the start. This means forming a multi-skilled communications team and identifying all the stakeholders, including personnel, customers, suppliers, government and unions. Then a clear plan can be drawn up setting out what messages need to be delivered to what groups, and the best mediums to use.

**LOCAL AND GLOBAL REMUNERATION**

Although many companies ensure expatriate employees are not paid through local payroll systems, differential pay rates are usually widely known. They can usually be justified, but they can still be the source of suspicion, resentment and divisiveness. To manage this, local HR remuneration policies must be seen to be fair and competitive, and must provide opportunities and career tracks for local employees to become part of parent companies and global networks.

**A WHOLE SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

All of the above points to the need for a whole organisational systems perspective and strategy rather than fragmented approaches.

Senge wrote that ‘systems thinking’ implied that whenever one element of a system was changed, it would have a corresponding impact on other elements of the organisational system, like a ripple effect. The impact could be reinforcing or slowing. Systems thinking is also about interrelationships. Managers often react to behaviours and their results without being fully aware of the structures that generate them. At the broadest level, many initiatives fail because they do not go to the core of matters but tackle fragments of the whole, or symptoms rather than causes. If the fundamental structures that drive behaviours are not addressed, the behaviours continue to act as barriers to change. This might mean building ‘frame structures’ such as management systems linked to performance and incentive-based remuneration schemes, flatter organisational structures with more autonomy and accountability, streamlined business processes, recruitment that puts the most promising candidates in key roles, exit strategies for excess and underperforming personnel, and so on.

It is also essential to consider the social structures, or specific cultural factors, shaping behaviour and perceptions. Corporate frame structures are commonly based around initiative and risk-taking, accountability and empowerment, individual performance, youth and other values, which can be in direct contrast to the values and beliefs that dominate within the system, such as rule-following, age and seniority, and group harmony.

All these issues need to be thought through in planning any development program, with continued learning and discussion among multi-cultural teams.

**NICOLA WATTS** is an international HR and organisation development consultant, and principal consultant with Team Learning Solutions. She has worked in 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and central Asia.

wattsnj@deakin.edu.au

**Pull quotes**

Unwittingly, exciting, essential elements that come with diversity can be undermined. Strictly imposing methods is often incompatible with local contexts and can limit participation at that level.
Many initiatives fail because they do not go to the core of matters but tackle
fragments…

Published as:

Watts, N.J. 2004, ‘A foot in the world’s door: A voice of experience in international
HR defines the areas to focus on and mistakes to avoid in developing countries’, *HR
Maintaining a whole systems perspective of organisational instrumentality in macro economic reform

Further consideration of the requirements
Introduction
Systems Thinking

- The Fifth Discipline of the Learning Organisation (Senge, 1990)
  - Looking at situations from a ‘whole’ perspective, rather than a fragmented one
    - seeing processes of change rather than snapshots
  - Whenever one element of the whole system is changed it will have a corresponding impact on other elements of the system
    - seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains
  - Explains why many change programmes fail (tackling the problem, rather than the cause)
Organisational Structures

• At the heart of organisational behaviour lay 'structures'

• Some 'structures' we build, in order to consciously shape behaviour

• Other 'structures', which are based on our life experiences, shape behaviour without us even being aware of it
Cultural factors which shape behaviour and view of social reality

Structures

Social

Frame

Enable or promote certain kinds of behaviour
Eg. Economic conditions, market, policies, agreements, contracts, decision-making processes, etc.
Understanding and managing organisations

• In organisations it is usually easier to focus on ‘frame structures’ than ‘social structures’

• However often ‘frame structures’ are at odds with ‘social structures’

• In addition there can be tensions when different ‘social structures’ come together

• These tensions can have serious consequences for organisational success (All key stakeholders lose in the case of an unsuccessful organisational story)
What are social structures?

• ...they are cultural factors which shape behaviour and views of social reality

• ....these include the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit a community together

• In reality, organisations are made up of many different communities, and it is possible to belong to more than one community
Organisational Communities

- Management/workers
- Expatriate/local
- ‘tribal background’
- Professional/unskilled
- New/old
- Upwardly mobile/9 to 5 er
- Shareholders/employees

Diversity
- World views
- Life experiences
- Values and belief systems
- Expectations
- Behaviours
- Understandings and knowledge
- Identity
The context
Maintaining a universal perspective

• Privatisation of parastatal organisations in emerging economies fit within a general framework of basic ‘human rights and human development objectives’ supported by the international community

• Organisations are viewed as instrumental in serving broader human interests and universal values that are associated with macro structural reform
The broader context of socio-economic reform

• *universal* principles and values, such as personal freedom, physical security, human dignity, human development, etc., which can unite all perspectives outside the domains of the various fundamentalisms (Donaldson and Dunfee, 1999)

• universal values which imply ethics of individual and collective responsibility, which are able to override divisions of interest (Giddens 1994)
The broader context of socio-economic reform

- ‘fight poverty’, ‘help people to help themselves’ (extracts from World Bank mission statement)

- ‘combating poverty and improving the lives of people’ (extract from mission statement of the African Development Bank)
The challenge to change
The Challenges of Change

1

• Balancing the instrumental interests of business (corporatism) with the interests of people

  - whilst human welfare is ostensibly the key driver of programmes and interventions, people are also part of the means in the sense of their roles in the global transformation process (Anand and Sen, 2000)

  - whenever we set up a criterion of humanism, the question may arise whether the aim is the wellbeing of an individual or the broader wellbeing of all humankind (Golebiowski (1982))
Risk 1.1: Resistance

- Power struggles
  - the values of corporatism meeting head on with the values of people and those associated with the status quo and local social identity groups

- through subversion, resistance through opposition, or resistance through mimicry (Lye; 1997, 1998)

- can exist below the surface, guiding behaviours without us even sometimes being conscious of them
Structural impact of resistance

Unsatisfactory situation
A systemic perspective of the impacts of resistance

- Unsuccessful change initiatives
- Environment
  - Vestiges of socialism and colonialism
  - No broad-based commitment to change on the part of all stakeholders
- International assistance
A systemic perspective of the potential perpetuation of themes of unequal development

- Poor management of diversity
- Unequal development
- Macro structural reform and international assistance
- International investment and business opportunities
Examples of Common Tensions

- Identity
- Perceptions of whose interests are being served
- Corporate structures
  - i.e. Open competitive recruitment versus
    - Respect for age and seniority
    - Focus on ‘role’ (status) not responsibility
    - Don’t stand out from the collective
Risk 1.2

- The arrival of corporate values
  - Tendency of organisations to promote individualism and a kind of ‘selfishness’ (Deetz, 1992)
  - Tendency of organisations to override the family (Lasch, 1977)
  - Not sufficient to assume that benefits will flow, as the removal of poverty and deprivations cannot be seen to be an automatic result of economic development (Sen, 2001).
The Challenges of Change

2

- Not losing sight of the relationship between the macro and micro levels and the systemic interdependencies

- In an environment of change who takes responsibility for global capitalism in all its dimensions? (Greider, 1997)
Risk 2.1: Poor learning capacity

• Different understandings and expectations develop amongst different stakeholder groups

• Poor capacity for identification and solution-finding of broader systemic issues that emerge

• Poor capacity to reflect on the appropriateness and fine-tuning of economic models for different social contexts (Nankivell, 1995)
  - Questionability of a long line of economic blue-prints for Africa (Chabal, 1996)
Requirements: Macro

- Attention to social impacts and mitigation strategies at the level of policy and shareholder/investor agreements
- Stakeholder communications strategies based on communicative reasoning
- Learning forums that maintain the relationships between the macro and micro levels
Requirements: Micro

• An explicit focus on the role of the organisation in contributing to a just society

• Proactive attention to diversity management

• Focus on establishing agreed core values, particularly ‘relational’ values that enable the mediation between divergent values systems

• Attention to selection, development and monitoring of expatriate organisational leaders (cross-cultural competence, strong inquiry skills)
Requirements: Micro

• Communications strategy with an emphasis on communicative reasoning

• Offshore parent companies to provide operational guidelines with a high degree of flexibility to cater for local context and diversity

• Balancing the requirements of the transfer of technical know-how with genuine learning that is able to build local solutions to match local contexts
Learning Borders 1

Learningful discussion

Social identity groups and communities of practice

Social identity groups and communities of practice
Learning Borders 1

- Permeable Borders
  - Mental models may be challenged and changed
  - in the case the where the mental model remains unchanged it accommodates an appreciation or understanding of the views of ‘others’
Learning Borders 1

• Impermeable borders

  - unravelling and eliminating the structures that stop different groups coming together for communicative reasoning

  - Establishment of agreed relational values for navigating through difference
Learningful discussion

Values of humanism and people

Values of instrumentalism and corporatism
Learning Borders 2

- Unravelling perceptions of whose interests are being served through a change process

- Actively seeking to find the right balance between the interests of people and the organisation
The most socially useful thing in the modern world is the process of learning, continuing openness to experience and incorporation into oneself of the process of change.

Carl Rogers