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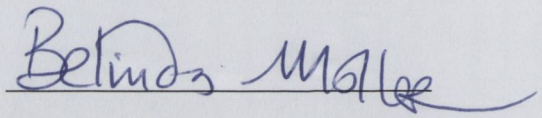
2008

Belinda Moller

A study of values and strategy together in the organisation.

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Belinda Moller, May 2008

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Summary: A study of values and strategy together in the organization by Belinda Moller, Ph.D. 2008

This study answers a number of questions inadequately addressed by the literature. How has the history and development of the strategy concept reflected values and particularly, the contribution of the values of individuals? How has the field of strategy and values been ontologically, epistomologically and methodologically examined in relevent research? What methodology could be used to study values in the context of an organisation's strategy? What is the role of values in the founding and development of an organisation, and what role do values play in strategic incidents and in the response of individuals and groups who have a responsibility to the whole organisation? Finally, what are the consequences of values for the development of the organisation?

An examination of the strategy literature reveals a confused relationship between the concepts of strategy and values. Whilst values are assumed as central to strategic decision-making, it is not clear why, whose values are significant, or how values influence the shaping of the organisation. Research is most commonly conducted on the values of elite groups, CEOs, manager groups without a clear rationale as to the benefit or outcome of this approach. A review of the values research indicates that the dominance of the coherent or congruent perspective - the assumption that organisations 'have' values – has not advanced the field. A less developed perspective – the assumption that values can be incoherent, differentiated, ambiguous and conflicting – offers the possibility of introducing new perspectives, methodologies and analytic frameworks to data.

An ethnographic approach was applied to collection of data carried out over three years. Qualitative Presentational and Operational Data was collected about the strategic development and management of Educate Together – a national sector of multi-denominational primary schools. Presentational Data includes an analysis of the administrative, historical genealogy of the national school system and a detailed account of the founding of Educate Together. Operational Data, collected in 'real time', reflects the interaction of values and strategic decision-making by individual school managements in three Educate Together Schools.

An analysis of the Presentational Data reveals that values embody highly potent assumptions of utilitarian benefit. Values can be used as powerful tools of change in the emergent processes of making strategy, to shape and direct

organising and organisation. A sensitive and appropriate use of values can create an imperative for change that will move beyond the individual and extend to wider circles of influence and support.

However, values can also be objects of conflict in an organization with paradoxical effects. An analysis of the Operational Data found that contradictions or differences between the values that the organization espouses and the currency attached to those values at the broader, social level can cause systemic conflicts in the organization. Systemic conflicts impact directly on management's ability to develop strategies in support of aspirational values. If the broader, social values that influence the individuals who hold management roles, vary or contradict/conflict with the organisation's aspirational values, then individuals will experience considerable inner conflict about their behaviour in the organisation. Inner conflicts about behaviour provoke varying levels of anxiety at both the individual and group level. Individuals and groups employ defensive mechanisms to deflect feelings of conflict, reduce levels anxiety to avoid revealing the true source of conflict. Findings illustrate that defensive mechanisms may prevent management from attending to the essential work involved in developing creative strategies in support of espoused values. Findings indicate that the permeability of boundaries between management/work groups is an essential factor. If boundaries are not managed or structured to provide individuals and groups with essential information about roles, responsibilities or do not provide clear feedback on contribution and performance, groups will use defensive mechanisms to manage anxiety and the effects of individual and group isolation.

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Introduction

Individuals experience the meaning and potency of values socially. However, only individiuals have a conscious self; only individuals can articulate values. In empirical terms only individuals contribute, express, enact, vouch for, deny, desire, abhor and advocate values but this contribution takes place and becomes meaningful in a social context; this is the empirical platform for values on which scholarship must rely. This study examines values when founders establish an organisation and when individuals and collections of individuals – groups - respond to incidents of strategic importance in the organisation.

This study stems from a puzzle that resulted from observing individuals and groups in organisations over fifteen years. A particular form of conversation was generated when important, strategic events concerning the whole organisation required a response; meetings were taken up with individuals expressing values; statements of preference that promoted abstract, ideological concepts like equality, rationality and democracy, or preferences that promoted values in the direction of a solution or a response (e.g. 'we should'…'we ought to'…). In *all* cases, values were presented as if changing the present would make for a better future. But the strategy literatures – those that I was aware of at the time - did not write about or examine this phenomenon, or, if they did, the representation was limited to the aggregated preferences of the CEO/senior decision-making group. In general, it seemed that the literature did not recognise the contribution, the role or function of the values of individuals *or* the individuals who offered values as part of the strategic process.

Yet this was *not* inconsistent with the observations. Frequently, the most common response by other members at a group meeting, was to ignore the effort of the individual to contribute or promote a valued preference. This did not make sense; the individuals were gathered together for the purpose of making a response and the proferred values seemed to be a legitimate way of considering the options. Why did it *appear* that the individual contribution had no influence on the shaping of strategy when we know that the individual is the only empirical creator and maker of strategy? The strategy literature did not shed any light on this puzzle. The literature did not explain how this process affected strategic decision-making or

the shaping of the organisation as a whole. For instance, why was it that some individuals were able to pay attention to, and point out what was important to the group/organisation – i.e. the reason for its existence and, presumably, the strategic basis of its survival in the long term – and other members of the group responded as if this was irrelevant? These observations led to the desire to formulate a research study as a response.

These observations are addressed in this study through a number of questions; How has the history and development of the strategy concept reflected values and particularly, the contribution of the values of individuals? How has the field of strategy and values been ontologically, epistomologically and methodologically examined in relevent research? What methodology could be used to study values in the context of an organisation's strategy? What is the role of values in the founding and development of an organisation, and what role do values play in strategic incidents and in the response of individuals and groups who have a responsibility to the whole organisation? Finally, what are the consequences of values for the development of the organisation?

This study is presented in seven chapters. Before providing a preliminary introduction to each Chapter, it is useful to rehearse some of the assumptions that form the background to this study. How can organisation behaviour be depicted so that values can be empirically observed? Values are most commonly observed or experienced in preference statements that are presented to affect or change behaviour so that the world will be a better place at some point in the future…. "I think we should approach the problem in terms of x because that is what the organisation stands for and represents…"….."We should carefully consider x because if we don't then the consequence will be..." …. "We should do it x way because that is the way it has always been done and represents the organisation's values…" etc. Values are always someone's sense of what ought to be as distinct from what is (Schein 1992). But, as illustrated above, it is not clear how values influence individual and group behaviour in the organisation nor why such statements of preference are contributed in the first place. This study assumes that the individual experiences values socially and that the meaning attached to values is also formed at a social level. It is useful therefore to depict the organistion in an open system frame (Lewin, 1947). This facilitates a view of the organisation as an adaptive social form (Weick, 1995) that bridges different kinds of

meaning. This assumes that healthy functioning is an exchange of information within the organisation's systems and between the organisation and its environment. It also depicts the organisation as having subsystems that exchange information in order to facilitate the roles and functions of individuals and groups.

Treating the organisation as an open system facilitates a view of the whole individual being present in a work task – not just in the sense of a man or woman holding a role and attending to a work task, but his or her whole self – the personal, emotional and intellectual aspects that contribute to the way a task is approached and in how he or she contributes to other roles and tasks in the organisation.

There are many ways of conceiving and drawing the concept of strategy. For the purposes of this study, strategy does not necessarily take the form of an overarching organisation-wide plan that is implemented within a fixed period of time. That assumption would be awkward given the depiction of the organisation as openly exchanging information critical to specific roles, tasks, groups and the management of boundaries. It makes more sense to conceive strategy along a wide-spectrum of possibilities, i.e. at one end of the spectrum, as a rationally conceived and comprehensively supported plan, and at the other, as a series of micro, strategic-incidents that occur incrementally, emergently and/or processually over time. The former relies on comprehensive, rational-analytic assumptions and the latter is explained through multiple paradigms and perspectives (see Chapter One).

The first chapter is an assessment of the development of the values concept, through a number of contemporary disciplines that have responded to and recorded values theoretically and practically. The proposition that our knowledge of values may have been limited because there is a lack of understanding about how individuals contribute values in the organisation suggests that the field is quite undeveloped. As a result, this Chapter introduces an unfamiliar dimension with which to analyse values and broaden the playing field.

Interwoven with this assessment is a narrative of the evolution of strategy and strategic management (a Western and North American perspective only). This offers the reader an understanding of how the concept of strategy and strategic management evolved. Strategy is a fascinating concept because it carries with it the seductive promise that the entire enterprise can, in some way, be shaped and directed into a preplanned future. The review explores, in great depth, the premise for this assumption - an assumption that broadly coincides with the

widespread adoption of Anglo-Saxon and Protestant values embracing the work ethic and the utilitarian benefit nestled in the individual's desire for self-improvement.

First, the concept of strategy is traced back to the period prior to the second industrial revolution when it became necessary for large scale industry to deliver continuous flow into a production system. It was at the very early stages of this period of economic development that the structure of management was changed to include the salaried manager who took on responsibility for multiple organisation functions. Then, the Chapter traces the practice of strategic management through to the point when a split in thinking about the management of strategy occurred – an important split within the classical frame producing 'narrow' and 'broad' perspectives on strategy. This represents a fundamental starting point in a critique of strategy because the narrow view has always maintained that strategic decisions, actions/behaviours and goals were clearly delineated components in a planned exercise. The broad view, on the other hand maintains that it is not possible to isolate these interdependent processes. This debate forces values into the puzzle because it asks the questions, if the CEO/planners are not the architects and designers of strategy, who or what is?

The second chapter is a review of the research concerned with values and strategy *and* the organisation. Many committed researchers have specialised in studying different aspects of values and strategy. Only one body of work, however, can be considered as developed, producing the overall conclusion that the field lacks development and lacks sufficient variety in terms of perspectives and analytical frameworks. In reviewing the values literature it was possible to extract a more precise delineation of values. Whilst this delineation offers a timely account of how values have come to be perceived in the organisation, the overwhelming sense is that the field is in urgent need of a greater number of perspectives and frames in order to deepen understanding and extend knowledge.

The third chapter provides a description of the methodology that was used to gather, analyse and interpret the datas and the conceptual and analytical framework used to analyse the case study data. This study was long in gestation (the collection of data was spread over three years alone) and influenced by a number of personal and professional events in the life of the researcher. It is important for the reader to be aware that the starting point for this puzzle was sometime in the

1980s. This study in many ways represents a journey of some thirty years in the world of work and continuous learning.

Chapter Three attempts to capture the main points of that journey because much of the learning is mirrored in the methodological approaches. The reader needs to be aware that the data presented in support of this thesis is of two main types – Presentational Data and Operational Data. Presentational Data relies on reported accounts of events and Operational Data relies on first hand observation of real life management events in the organisation. The Presentational Data tells the story Educate Together – the empirical focus of this study Chapter Three whilst also making clear that the data presented in this thesis

Educate Together (ET) is the first structure, in modern times (see Chapter Four) to offer a multi-denominational, national system of schools for children aged four to twelve years. The organisation evolved through the 1960s and in its current form, is now almost thirty years old. Over the course of the research, ET doubled in size from twenty schools to forty-two. Educate Together was chosen as the empirical subject for this study because it describes itself, and is governed as, a values-driven organisation. The CEO and the Board of Directors assume that action taken in its name is in support of the values it represents; a multi-denominational, child-centred, co-educational and democratic approach to the delivery of national school education (see Appendix One). The approach to all data collection was immersion in Educate Together over three years, adopting an ethnographic, naturalistic approach to inquiry.

The Fourth chapter presents the first of the Presentational Data categories: the history and administrative genealogy of Ireland's national school system.

The Fifth Chapter presents the second of the Presentational Data categories. Presented by the founders, this Chapter offers a detailed account and description of the establishment of the first ET school, The Dalkey School Project. This includes a detailed analysis of the evolution of the school's structure, the values that influenced the events that occurred and the founders' approach to strategic decision-making. The founders contributed to a values legacy that is widely and deeply associated with the practices and behaviours of the ET sector as a whole.

The Sixth Chapter presents Operational Data collected in three ET schools over three years. This data set is solely concerned with the operation of school

management systems and not with the operation of the pedagogical system and assumptions that deliver education. This Operational Data is presented in the form of three case studies that concern a number of management groups who hold responsibility for day-to-day and values and strategic management of the schools. Each case directly concerns ET's legacy of values and is presented in the context of a strategic incident: an event that draws ET's values into relief offers the opportunity to explore the relationship between espoused values and the actual, responsive behaviours and actions of individuals and groups in school management. Each case is supported by a rich and descriptive context that provides the reader with a clear understanding of the immediate and wider circumstances of each incident.

Each case study is followed by an in-depth analysis utilising a framework that is unknown within strategic management: Social and Technical Systems Analysis (STSA). This frame treats events and behaviours as systemic and takes into account the personal and professional experiences of individuals and groups at the centre of each case. The essence of STSA is to create some distance between the individual who holds a management role and the events that occur. This allows individual and the group behaviour to be understood in a systemic context rather than one that might focus on the individual personality or the power structure of the organisation. Indeed, the analysis invites competing explanations for what occurred. However, STSA is the only analytical frame, known to the researcher, that was capable of analysing and explaining the apparently unconscious individual and group behaviours that provide deep insight into the relationship between values and strategy for the organisation as a whole.

The seventh chapter presents the main conclusions from the findings, the contributions of the study to theoretical knowledge and future methodological approaches and implications for practice and policy alongside a set of precise recommendations for Educate Together Ltd..

Chapter One: Values in the strategy literature

1.1. Introduction

The first purpose of this Chapter is to find out if there is a basis for studying individual values and strategy *together* in the organisation. The second purpose is to examine the orthodox and, a selection of, the less orthodox strategy literatures to find out how individual values have been represented and understood. Not just in the context of micro events but also in the way organisation takes shape and shifts in direction over time.

First, this Chapter provides a broad historical overview of the Western organisation and a commentary on the values that supported the emergence of today's dominant form of organisation. Then, the Chapter examines six disciplinary assumptions about values and evaluates inferred mechanisms by which individual values might influence what happens in the organisation – how individual values influence what happens in the organisation. Third, a brief review of classical strategy is offered. This includes its conceptual basis and its most basic practices as well as a detailed examination of the relationship between classical assumptions and individual values. Fourth, the contributions from a selection of the less–orthodox variants of the classical model are assessed in terms of a. whether values are regarded as important in strategy and b. whether there is evidence of mechanism/s that transcend individual values and influence the organisation as a whole.

1.2. A basis for examining values and strategy *together* in the organisation

1.2.1. Tracing the historical assumptions underlying the western organisation

This study explores the relationship between values and strategy *together* in typical Western organisations. The purpose of this section is to provide a critical historical overview of the social, moral and economic influences that shaped the contemporary Western organisation.

Between 1630 and 1850, the word 'moral' moved for the first time into a sphere of meaning that was not theological, aesthetic or philosophical. It began to be used in a restrictive sense – for example, the term 'immoral' was associated with lax sexual behaviour (MacIntyre, 1981; 38). The Kantian view argued that morality was rooted in human freedom and acting autonomously was the same as acting according to rational moral principles:

> *'To say what someone ought to do is at one and the same time to say what course of action will in these circumstances as a matter of fact lead toward a man's true end and to say what the law, ordained by God and comprehended by reason, enjoins'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 51).

It was as if values acquired a finite imperative that had not existed previously, i.e. as if morality could be governed by a set of universal rules of conduct that were internally consistent. This idea prompted Eighteenth century philosophers to embark on a new tradition of enlightenment; to provide human nature with the means of transition - the correct combination of divine reason, rational ethics and experience that would enable untutored human nature to achieve '*a conception of human-nature-as-it-could-be-if- it-realized-its-telos'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 51). But enlightenment failed because moral culture is wholly dependent upon its own criterion – i.e. the idea is an inherent contradiction because it cannot be rationally defeated;

> *'It appeals to no content derived from experience...'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 43).

Related values were promoted and promulgated at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This was a very influential time in terms of the shaping and structuring of primary/core social institutions that are still in use today (for example, health[1]).

1.2.1.1. Values and the genealogy of the modern organisation form

Ireland's national school system (the empirical focus of Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven) was influenced by the protestant Sunday school[2] system that thrived in pre-industrial England from the 1780s to the 1850s (Laqueur, 1976). At the time,

---

[1] Today's health system is rooted in the religious, voluntary sector of this time. Hospitals in the nineteenth century were places where nurses cared for sick people. Physicians, clergy and well people were the guests of the nursing staff and their patients – i.e. hospitals were 'nurse directed communities' (Menzies Lyth, 1988; 83)

[2] Collection of data on Sunday School attendance in Ireland was ad hoc and cannot be assessed accurately. *'Sunday Schooling lies in a hazy borderland between religion and education' (*Logan, 1989; 27*)*. Whilst it was perceived as a religious activity it was also believed that the ability to read would free a pupil from dependence on a teacher and facilitate access to the scriptures. So, it was viewed as quasi-secular experience and for as many as half of the children attending Sunday school in the 1830s it was the only education they received (Logan, 1989 – data drawn from the reports of The Sunday School Society for Ireland)

England was experimenting[3] with and promoting educational systems to *'serve new industries'* (Laqueur, 1976).

Historians argue that capitalism and the emergence of the market-based firm was delayed because of regulatory and protectionist controls that emphasized the responsibility of the owners of capital to protect their subordinate's rights. The kinds of controls that developed included restrictions on labour mobility, the creation of surplus pools of labour, no free-wage determination and restricted practices in the training of crafts (Abercrombie et al, 1980).

The genealogy of the modern organisation form, whether private, market based, public or 'voluntary', emerged through secular philosophic radicalism that dominated political thought from 1820 to 1870 (Schumpeter, 1955). The three main theories were, 1. Malthusian assumptions about finite resources in a world with poverty and the need to remove poor laws in order that economic action would be in line with 'natural laws' and, thus reduce the birth-rate. 2. Utilitarian philosophy argued that the criterion for action should be the happiness of the greatest numbers of people and that the pursuit of self-interest as a replacement for social responsibility would result in utopia for all. Thus, *'the individual moral agent, freed from hierarchy and teleology, conceives of himself and is conceived of by moral philosophers as sovereign in his moral authority'* (MacIntyre, 1981: 61). The effect of this was that social organisation, law and government became concerned with relative morality and contextual issues. The nineteenth century moral philosophy of Jeremy Bentham was core to the concept of utilitarianism. He argued that:

> *'... mankind has two and only two motives to his moral thesis that out of the alternative actions or policies between which we have to choose at any given moment we ought always to perform that action or implement that policy which will produce as its consequences the greatest happiness – that is, the greatest possible quantity of pleasure with the smallest quantity of pain – of the greatest number'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 61).

---

[3] For example, in the early 1800s a multi-denominational, co-educational college in Glasnevin, Dublin trained teachers to deliver modern agricultural techniques to primary school children (see Chapter Four).

The task of government then, was to reconcile conflicting political interests and values against broad social criteria and values. Government gradually ceased to be concerned with the protection of landed and inherited wealth. This development is connected to the third and final strand of thought, 3. the separation in society of the private economy and the public sphere which allowed economic interests to be identified outside of formal law and government intervention (Abercrombie et al, 1980; 97-99).

One view holds that working class revolutions and uprisings that developed in other parts of the world did not affect industrialised England because of the desire by the working classes to acquire the values of respectability through hard work, thrift and efforts at self-improvement – perceived to be to the benefit of all. At that time, there was a strong association between family life or family values and the experience of stable, social order. Halévy (1961) argues that the religious indoctrination of the working class explains why England did not experience a working class revolution. From the 1860s, Victorian England experienced a revival in Methodist evangelism. The evangelical movement of Wesleyan Methodism became mainstreamed and represented the following values (Abercrombie et al, 1980),

- Self-improvement, respectability, hard work and spiritual reward through changing one's circumstances;4
- An emphasis on the natural equality of all men rooted in the moral inadequacy of all men before God;
- A recognition in the change in status for those with inherited land wealth;
- The Methodist belief system emphasizes the importance of deference to authority and respect for hierarchy, thereby supporting the owners and managers of capital;
- There was a great demand from the working classes for education and a desire to transmit values that emphasized self-improvement, respectability and hard work.

At the time, the Church of England's Sunday school system was seen as instrumental in transmitting these values. Some of these points are borne out by the 1851 census that showed that almost fifty per cent of all five to fifteen year olds

attended Sunday schools (Laqueur, 1976). Whilst a large number of Sunday schools originated from business and philanthropy, working class men and groups also established schools, such was the demand to access these values at the time (Laqueur, 1976). Sunday schools were also influential in the development of Ireland's unique national schooling system that began in 1830 (see Chapters Four and Five).

MacIntyre argues that the attempt at enlightenment influenced the dawning of Western industrial structures. And that embedded deep in our institutional structures is the assumption of unequivocal paths of logic ending in decisions (1981). In the context of organising people around action, this serves as a justification for, '*the basic rational rubric has become an almost universal format for justification and interpretation of action and for the development of a set of procedures (e.g. budgeting, planning, economizing, operations analysis, strategic analysis and management that are accepted as appropriate for organizations pursuing intelligence'* (March, 2006; 202).

And March suggests that the utilitarian assumption lies beneath the surface of the technologies of rationality (March, 2006; 203):

> *'It has been organized around concepts and functions such as strategic management, planning and economic and decision analysis that professionalise the making of policies and decisions. This professionalisation has been buttressed by the development of elaborate tools for guiding organisations toward favourable outcomes. These tools comprise the technologies of rationality that have come to be recognized as a major post-enlightenment contribution to Western civilization supplementing and to a large extent replacing earlier technologies that placed greater reliance on traditional practice or on communication either with the stars or with the gods'* (March, 2006; 202).

And what of individual agency: the capacity of people to make a difference (DiMaggio, 1988; Scott, 2001; Scott, 2005) to their organisation, environment and to the paradigm that influences the dominant cultural logic?

> *'Contemporary moral experience as a consequence has a paradoxical character. For each of us is taught to see himself or*

> *herself as an autonomous moral agent; but each of us also becomes engaged by modes of practice, aesthetic or bureaucratic, which involve us in manipulative relationships with others. Seeking to protect the autonomy that we have learned to prize, we aspire ourselves not to be manipulated by others; seeking to incarnate our own principles and stand-point in the world of practice, we find no way open to us to do so except by directing towards others those very manipulative modes of relationship which each of us aspires to resist in our own case'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 66).

The failure of enlightenment to discover and prove the concept of divine truth view led to four assumptions that underpin the dawning of western industrial structures and primary social institutions, 1.The utilitarian outcome of broad social criteria and the shadow of relative morality in identifying choices, 2.The opportunity to identify economic interests outside of the public sphere, 3.The realization of finite resources and a judgement that regulation of the market economy was an unnatural concept and, 4.The technologies of rationality as a justification for action in the organisation. These assumptions were supported by individual values of hard work, self-improvement, the personal recognition and assumed benefit to society of a change in one's circumstances, equality before God, and deference and respect for hierarchy and authority.

But with the individual's desire for autonomy the individual,

- Experiences a conflict between fundamental moral inadequacy and the 'certainty' of individual sovereignty and moral authority;
- Is only satisfied through interdependent relations with others;
- Is dependent upon persuading others of the efficacy of values and principles that she/he wants to resist.

The next section describes assumptions about individual values from the perspective of six academic disciplines.

1.2.2. Contemporary, disciplinary assumptions about values and the organisation

Anthropologists view society as having thematic values, instrumental and terminal values. *'A value is anything toward which the members of a society bear a definite attitude'* (Linton, 1953, 307-308). The modern anthropologist is fully

convinced of the existence of universal, collective values that can be used as a datum point in developing ethical judgements at the level of society (Linton, 1953; 309; see also Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Allport et al, 1960; Guth and Taguiri, 1965; Rokeach, 1973; Hambrick & Brandon, 1988). This perspective assumes that the organisation, as an element within society, 'has' values that reflect its members, and values are 'used' to direct behaviour towards certain objectives or states.

Sociologists have a different interest but understand values in much the same way. They are concerned with *'transcendental values'* (Greene, 1953; 367-368) – social values that can change fundamentally inequitable social structures. Rockeach identifies a set of common assumptions as the unifying themes that make possible *'the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural study of stability and change in individual and supra-individual values'* (1979:3):

- That the number of human values is small and constant, the same the world over, and capable of different structural arrangements;
- That they are learned and determined by culture, society, society's institutions, and personal experience;
- That they are determinants in terms of attitudes, judgements, choices, attributions, and actions;
- That they are capable of undergoing change as a result of changes in society, situation, self-conceptions, and self-awareness;
- That changes in values represent central rather than peripheral changes, thus having important consequences for other cognitions and social behaviour;
- That the pattern and hierarchy of values differs greatly across the world but within societies, values share consistent and universal meaning.

England (1973) argues that these assumptions:

- Expose a lack of clarity about the 'abstraction and generality' of values;
- Give rise to a series of problems in the way values are measured, and the fact that there are multiple purposes to which measurement is put;
- Suggest that values are known and positively directed towards problems.

Both the anthropological and sociological disciplines implicitly support the assumption that the acts of organising 'have' values attached to them and thus organisations 'have' values or operate in some way that suggests collectively held values.

But, Fallding (1965) argues that '*individuals*' hold values, not societies or organisations, even though it may appear that society has distinctive values. He questions whether values should be studied within psychology rather than sociology or anthropology. He acknowledges that ' *"the individual" is in social organisation as bricks are in the wall, and in all he does he is clothed with culture as he is with garments. The province of psychology is not "the individual" but his experience and personal organisation. As a girder in the social structure and an exponent of culture "the individual" is turned over to sociology'* (Fallding, 1965; 230). Fallding's contribution highlights the core problem of this study; that because the individual is inseparable from the world which shapes him/her and through which he/she is formed, it is difficult to explicate the process in which individual values inhabit and influence the organisation.

A critical review of a selection of the research studies that operationalise the anthropological assumption is offered in Chapter Two.

The psychological view understands that humans have psychological and physiological needs. Psychological views acknowledge the contradictory physiological pressures - work ambitions, a desire for children, to be self-assertive and to be modest, to be like others but to be unique, '*to be beautiful and healthy...to have excitement...and security...Meantime, society's jobs have to be done. Education has to be planned, health systems have to be improved...'* (Snygg, 1953; 342).

Individuals simply have to wrestle with these contradictions in order to pursue a basic goal; a feeling of increased worth and of greater value. The paradox is that the goal is never reached – in the same way that organisations never achieve 'survival'. In relation to the individual, '*...given one degree of self-enhancement, we will always aspire to more satisfaction'* (Snygg, 1953; 355).

The assumption is that organisation strategy can benefit from theories that explain specific organisation problems. For example, the components of motivation

and the practical use made of McGregor's X and Y theory in organisations (1960).

A more recent example is Denise Rousseau's psychological contract theory. She developed a theory to show that contractual behaviour and its supporting contract law is rooted in social process and moral rules (see also Ehrlich, 1936, Barnard, 1938). Psychological contract theory attempts to explain the beliefs an individual holds about an exchange and usually refers to the unwritten reciprocal expectations between the employer and employee. Rousseau argues that the contract is *'the essence of the individual-organisational linkage'* (2005; 195). Contracts are inferred commitments from explicit or absent behaviour (Rousseau, 2005; 196). By their nature they are incomplete (i.e. not all work duties can be comprehensively known). Contracts offer a pattern of reciprocity, mutuality and shared belief that engenders a relationship of trust and cooperation under conditions of uncertainty and incomplete information,

> *'Numerous social mechanisms support promise-keeping (e.g. reputation effects) and constitute broader organizing principles that go beyond the isolated obligations between any two parties to create patterns of reciprocity and shared beliefs characterizing well-functioning work groups and larger social units* (Rousseau, 2005; 194).

The overarching assumption is that the individual's contract is based on a set of beliefs about what people notice and how events unfold about the obligations between the employer and the employee. The theory is widely in use in management education and does not need to relate to employee-employer relations. It is analogous to all kinds of organisational relationships (e.g. volunteers, stakeholders etc.). At its heart is the idea of incompleteness because contracts and relationships are fleshed out over time (Rousseau, 2005; 194),

> *'...psychological contract theory is individual choice whereby the parties freely participate in the exchange and voluntarily agree to bind themselves to a course of action'* (Rousseau, 2005; 194).

This suggests that the individual's values are mediated and influenced by dominant social values to become beliefs about such things as, how someone (an employer, a colleague) is likely to behave. Based on the strength of these beliefs, individuals enter organisation commitments. The prescription that arises from

psychological contract theory is aimed at the strategist and manager of the organisation – i.e. a more sensitive understanding of how social values relate to the organisation will provide a stronger basis for the organisation's relationships.

Socio-technical systems analysis (Schein, 1992; 61) is a reaction to the reliance on the psycho-social element and to the developments of scientific management in which the human experience and element had been subordinated to technical imperatives (Rice, 1958; Miller, 1993; 8). Originating in the Tavistock Institute, Kurt Lewin's field theory offers a way of looking at groups and organisations,

> *'There is no more magic behind the fact that groups have properties of their own, which are different from the properties of their subgroups or individual members, than behind the fact that molecules have properties which are different from the properties of the atoms of ions of which they are composed...In the social as in the physical field the structural properties of a dynamic whole are different from the structural properties of subparts. Both sets of properties have to be investigated' (*Lewin, 1947; 8).
>
> *'This provided a way of examining, and possibly reconciling, the relationship between the psycho-social and the techno-economic elements of purposeful organisations'* (Miller, 1993; 8).

The perspective is rooted in the concept of the organisation as an open system and influenced by Lewin's radical idea of action research – changing things in a real time context. It is a direct response to the problem of cognitive dissonance – an emotional state set up when two simultaneously held attitudes or cognitions are inconsistent or when there is a conflict between belief and overt behaviour. This is consistent with the observation identified in the Introduction that sometimes groups and indeed organisations proceed with actions that appear to contradict what individuals' say and/or contradict what individuals' claim to value. Cognitive Dissonance Theory argues that individuals are motivated to change their beliefs and attitudes in order to alleviate dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Socio-technical systems analysis (STSA) responds to that assumption through its focus on the individual and the primary work group rather than on the organisation as a whole. The individual is regarded as inseparable from the world that he or she has helped to shape and that has shaped him or her. The organisation is seen as an open system. But

in this view, which combines open systems and psychoanalytic theories, the individual's experience and perspective are unique. With respect to the organisation, the individual has two work-oriented roles. One is part of a task system,

> *'...the system of activities...required to complete the process of transforming an intake into an output...plus the human and physical resources required to perform the activities'. In the open systems framework these are 'conversion systems'* (Miller and Rice, 1990; 259).

And the other is part of a sentient system,

> *'...an effective sentient system relates members of an enterprise to each other and to the enterprise in ways that are relevant to the skills and experience required for task performance...it also provides its members with some defense against anxiety'* (Miller & Rice, 1990; 259).

Two of the perspective's original researchers, Trist and Bamforth (1951) worked in a clinical context in a coal mine to address problems of low productivity. They were able to show that productivity increased when work groups were allowed to be self-selecting, self-regulating and autonomous. This was dependent upon the maintenance and regulation of the group's boundaries, the recognition that group's task and sentient needs coincided and worked on the basis that the arrangement was based on agreed terms by all the members of the group. Rice (1958) showed that the introduction of the automatic textile loom caused massive job breakdown and the loss of traditional craft. The response was to *'invent a form of work organisation in which task and sentient group boundaries coincided...the formation of internally led, quasi-autonomous, primary work groups'* (Miller and Rice, 1990; 262).

STSA assumes that social values influence individual perceptions of organisations and exert pressure on individuals to behave in certain ways - nurses should be caring, doctors should be efficient, CEOs and politicians should be truthful and honest etc. Because organisations are adaptive social systems, the assumption is that the individual experiences conflict between what they should value and what they can value in practice and that the organisation manages the difference.

However, clinical action research based on STSA assumptions has found that aspects of organisation are designed to *prevent individuals* from taking on too much anxiety. The level of anxiety depends on whether individuals can rely on their routines or whether something has happened or is going to happen that may undermine that security. In general terms this functioning of organisation means that the nurse does not have to face the difference between what she or he 'ought' to be doing and feeling and what she/he actually can feel and can do, or between what she/he 'ought' to be doing and what she/he can actually do.

For example,

> *'The total workload of a ward or department is broken down into lists of tasks, each of which is allocated to a particular nurse. She {sic} performs her patient centred tasks for a large number of patients – perhaps as many as all the patients in the ward, often thirty or more. As a corollary, she performs only a few tasks for, and has restricted contact with, any one patient. This prevents her from coming effectively into contact with the totality of any one patient and his illness and offers some protection from the anxiety this arouses'* (Menzies Lyth 1988; 51).

This is an example of a socially constructed defense mechanism. In the healthcare context many other devices provide supporting roles, the implicit aim of which is *'depersonalisation or elimination of individual distinctiveness in both nurse and patient*' (Menzies Lyth 1988; 52). Other devices ensure detachment and denial of feelings (e.g. moving nurses around the wards of the hospital on a frequent basis). Menzies Lyth analysed a teaching hospital to help explain, and arrest, a thirty to fifty per cent dropout rate amongst student nurses (circa 1959). She observed that nurses colluded in a system of denial and splitting – manifest for example, in irresponsible behaviour (remote from the patients' care needs), complaints about junior categories of nurses and overly harsh chastisement by senior nurses. Her conclusion was that, whilst this activity was painful and difficult, it effectively deflected the nurses from having to deal with the fundamental conflicts of their role.

Such mechanisms are embedded over time in organisations. As a result, organisations become inflexible. Individuals who desire relative security have no choice but to invest heavily in the work group and its attached task and

sentient system. This investment, in turn *'is likely to be so great as to distort values and judgements, and the possibility of expulsion so threatening as to be destructive'* (Miller and Rice, 1990; 262).

Any significant change in an organisation provokes doubt and anxiety because of the possible reshaping of the social system and a change in the operation of critical defense mechanisms. A quote from Menzies illustrates this,

> *'Jaques (1955) has stressed that resistance to social change can be better understood if it is seen as the resistance of groups of people unconsciously clinging to existing institutions because changes threaten existing social defences against deep and intense anxieties' (*Menzies Lyth, 1988; 62).

The Menzies Lyth study illustrates the possibility that rather than feeling motivated to find ways to reduce the anxiety prompted by internal values-conflict (i.e. Cognitive Dissonance Theory), individuals in organisations may find ways to maintain, manage and preserve the conflict through mechanisms that deflect primary feelings of deep conflict and replace deep conflict with emotional responses that are not so intense or anxious making.

This perspective resonates with the psychological view that individual value conflict is regarded as an important function of a task system. However, whereas the psychological perspective is interested in explaining how social values influence the individual's beliefs, the STSA is interested in explaining how the individual's level of anxiety influences what actually happens. This assumes that levels of anxiety are precise barometers for the extent to which individual values are distorted or conflicted.

STSA argues that whilst there are levels of inner values-conflict that contain and manage anxiety, there are also extreme levels in which the individual experiences overwhelming anxiety. The view specifically identifies that most work tasks have some element of inherent anxiety – i.e. degrees of dissonance are normal. This is because most work tasks operate in a social sphere and because the individual is always vulnerable to the tension between maintaining autonomy and individuality and being accepted within and desiring submission to dominant social forces. It is also because of the complexity of social structures in organising and the need for relative stability in operations. Thus the STSA has a particular interest in

relation to the individual in the context of organisation change and strategy,

> *'Long-term solutions to the problem of maintaining adaptiveness to change cannot therefore depend on manipulative techniques. On the contrary, they must depend on helping the individual to develop greater maturity in controlling the boundary between his or her own inner world and the realities of the external environment'* (Miller and Rice, 1990; 271).

STSA provides a distinctive angle to the discussion and departs from the sociological and anthropological assumptions in providing an insight into the experience of the individual in managing values.

Methodologically, the perspective relies on the assumption that the individual may not be consciously aware of the actual values (e.g. wider, social values that interpret the individual's work role in a particular way – nurses and the perception of caring is a good example) that are causing conflict. But dissonant behaviour, at the level of the individual and/or group, is a tangible indicator of inner conflict. The researchers who practice this approach in clinical settings do so on the basis that individuals are encouraged to become aware of the source and nature of the intense conflict and anxiety they are experiencing. Thus, the focus in the clinical setting is on each individual. The aim is encourage each individual to develop a more mature awareness of and sensitivity to the complex ways in which they communicate, relate, enjoy and engage with the people who share their working lives. The assumption is that as the individual becomes aware of the discrepancies between values and behaviour and, as the reasons for discrepancies become clear, their level of discomfort is reduced. The effect of this is to remove the dissonance and provide the individual with a clearer basis for relating to the work task/group with affects at the inter work group level and at the level of the whole organisation.

The discussion on this perspective has been extended in this section, because, although open systems theory is a concept that is fundamental to most of the ideas of strategy, and although the STSA has been researched for over fifty years, it does not feature in any of the general strategy publications, textbooks or journals that were reviewed for this thesis (See also Chapter Two).

Finally, the social psychology represents the fifth cluster of assumptions used to compare and contrast ontological thinking about individual values in the

organisation.

Karl Weick's rich interpretation of sensemaking in organisations (1976, 1979, 1995) is a response to the presumption of logic in explaining organisation behaviour as neat and rational. Rather he seeks to present organisation life as a much more messy, complex and retrospectively understood experience. Weick argues that a significant portion of the environment of organisation,

> *'consists of nothing more than talk, symbols, promises, lies, interest, attention, threats, agreements, expectations, memories, rumours, indicators, supporters, detractors, faith, suspicion, trust, appearances, loyalties, and commitments...Words induce stable connections, establish stable entities to which people can orient (e.g. "gender gap"), bind people's time to projects ("Al, I'd like you to spend some time on this one"), and signify important information. Agreement on a label that sticks is as constant a connection as is likely to be found in organisations'* (Weick, 1985; 128).

Sensemaking is rooted in Symbolic Interactionism and derives from the work of George Herbert Mead (1934) in which he argued that through interaction individuals shape each other's meanings and make sense (Weick, 1995; 41). Blumer said, the idea that commonly held social values have the function of holding societies together, assumes a conception of society as capable of great modification. He argues that alignments do happen but not necessarily because of commonly shared values,

> *'The participants may fit their acts to one another in orderly joint actions on the basis of compromise, out of duress, because they may use one another in achieving their respective ends, because it is the sensible thing to do, or out of sheer necessity...In very large measure society becomes the formation of workable relations'* (Blumer, 1969; 76 in Weick, 1995; 43)

The focus of the social psychology lens is on the great tapestry of socially derived explanations for individual behaviour in which,

> *'...intentions are a poor guide for action, intentions often follow*

rather than precede action, and that intentions and actions are loosely coupled' (Weick, 1976:4).

And,

> *'Enactment is used to preserve the central point that when people act, they bring events and structures into existence and set them in motion. People who act in organizations often produce structures, constraints, and opportunities that were not there before they took action'* (Weick, 1988; 307).
>
> Resources for sensemaking include *'...sentences, discrete definitions, concepts and interpretations that are imposed on observations, continuous subject matter, experiences, perception, and phenomenal events. Sensemaking edits continuity into discrete categories, observations into pre-existing plans and frameworks. To edit continuity is to render the world less unique, more typical, more repetitive, more stable, more enduring'* (Weick 1995; 108 after Freese 1980).

The organisation as it is depicted in an open systems frame places a premium on sensemaking. This is because individuals and groups have significant amounts of highly diverse, ambiguous information to manage and because it is not clear who or what is doing the sensemaking. Sensemaking deals with the problem of distinguishing between what is 'out there', what is 'outside' the organisation and what is 'in here' – what is 'inside the organisation, and the relationships individuals and groups have, in order that they become the sensemakers (Weick, 1995; 70).

The assumptions attached to this interpretation of social psychology are radical and experimental and rich in their ability to produce deep insights into organisation behaviour and strategy. It is particularly well suited for explaining strategy from a retrospective stance or from an emergent perspective. Because it employs concepts of evolutionary thinking, it is useful for identifying discrete processes of selection (criteria for making decisions), specific developments that encourage variation (the emergence of key skills, for example) and the retention elements (of competencies or innovations, for example) of strategies.

The assumptions are incompatible with the composite idea that a leader or a group of managers can predict the future by planning and implementing

a series of strategic moves across a whole organisation. Such a conception places the whole organisation in the foreground without reference to the specific structural properties of its subsystems.

Socio-technical systems analysis (STSA) and sensemaking concepts share a number of assumptions – the organisation is in an open systems frame, the environment is influential and information is ambiguous and informally structured. The distinction of interest to this study is the STSA view that the individual's experience of anxiety is an indicator of values conflict and the view that the act of organising encourages anxiety-reducing defense mechanisms in order that individual values conflict is minimised.

Both perspectives analyse events in different temporal phases. The STSA deals with real time, i.e. what is happening now, whereas sensemaking is concerned with what has happened, i.e. how do I know what I value until I see what it is I have done (Weick, 1995). This distinction is very important. Both perspectives are concerned with individual reflection and learning – the ability to reflect on what has happened in order to frame a view of the world that may be clearer to the view that was held in the past. But each perspective uses different mechanisms. STSA relies on the inductive power of the individual experiencing discomfort and anxiety at a critical moment in *real time* in order that groups can be more effective and productive. Sensemaking is concerned with drawing on what has happened in order that the individual can improve the feeling of order, clarity and rationality (Weick, 1995; 29) and contribute to the wider system of organising more productively. Neither perspective, therefore, can adopt the idea of a whole organisation changing/shifting/reshaping to be more productive in the future.

1.2.2.1. A synthesis of contemporary assumptions about values and the organisation

This section presented five disciplinary assumptions about individual values and their impact on the organisation. 1. The anthropological view that values are definite attitudes that are socially constructed, universal, hierarchically organised and enacted to propel individuals and therefore organisations towards instrumental and/or terminal ends. 2. The sociological view argues that whilst the individual 'holds' values, social and community values determine actual individual behaviour. The sociologist is focussed on values as transcendental objects active in change at the level of society. Both disciplines, then, share the general view that

individuals reflect social values and organisations move towards goals that are influenced and defined by these values.

It is common to both perspectives that social values are powerful and ordered in some way. This suggests a hierarchy, which, if translated to the organisation, suggests that organisations would be largely undifferentiated in their behaviours. Neither of these perspectives is particularly useful for constructing a framework for analysing strategy theory or for examining individual values in the organisation. The main contribution lies in the idea that social values influence organisation.

3. The psychologist's view is that values are inherently conflicting. This represents a dichotomy for the individual because the individual places *value* on inherently contradictory behaviours (for example, health versus fun). Psychological theories are applied to psycho-social problems in the organisation. One example illustrates that because it is impossible to fully define every aspect of a job, the individual and the employer exchange a psychological contract of implicit *and* inferred commitments that provide a basis for trust and mutuality. Thus it is not necessary to invoke the comprehensive set of legal and economic rules normally associated with employment law (it would not be possible, anyway). Wider social values provide the basis for such trust and reciprocity. This suggests that the individual's dichotomy is mediated by broader social values that influence the organisation's social 'rules' and norms. The main difference between the psychological and the sociological and anthropological view is that the individual is seen as making a voluntary choice in committing to an organisation *based on his or her understanding/interpretation/assessment of social rules and norms.*

4. STSA is focussed on the individual's membership of the work group and task rather than the organisation as a whole. It relies on Lewin's assumption (1947) that the structural properties of the whole organisation are not the same as the structural properties of its sub-systems – its groups and individuals. The main contribution is that organisation structures are designed to defend individuals from experiencing too much anxiety even to the point where individuals collude in preserving specific defense mechanisms or in creating other mechanisms that for instance, offer a more palatable, bearable anxiety. The first three assumptions add weight to the idea that social values influence the need and the design of organisation defense mechanisms – if nurses need to be perceived as caring and vocationally driven individuals, and, if that is not realisable in the

organisation then defense mechanisms are needed to protect nurses from such inherent conflict. If teachers need to be perceived as the educators of young minds, and, if that is not realisable because school systems deliver generic curricula in a structure that does not take account of individual stages of psychological development and the unique individuality of each child's personality, then teachers need to be protected from inherent conflict.

STSA argues that these mechanisms are crucial because they enable the individual to manage conflicting values *and* contain the anxiety that is an inevitable outcome of work. It brings together the internal psychological conflict experienced by the individual and the technical specifics of the task. It assumes that all work tasks have some element of inherent anxiety and it locates that anxiety with the individual. It is assumed that this is because most work tasks operate in a social sphere. Within that sphere the individual is also managing the tension to be an individual *and* to be part of the group and society – to seek autonomy and at the same time to be accepted by dominant social forces. This contradiction – sometimes referred to as the human state - mirrors the individual paradox identified in Section 1.2.1.

5. Finally, the social psychology view that individuals may not know what they value until they see what it is they have done. Sensemaking is rooted in the idea that mind and the self develop within the social process. Sensemaking never actually begins and never actually ends – neither does strategy, for that matter - and this indicates that many of the symbolical, linguistic and physical connections that appear to be the cut and thrust, even the heart of the organisation are actually weak and transient links. The important point is that when people act they bring events, structures and values that they may not be aware of into existence and set them in motion within a social sphere.

These summaries can be synthesised to provide four distinct propositions about values and strategy at the level of the whole organisation,

- 1. The anthropological and sociological view argues that the individual does not make choices based on values but by behaviour that is influenced and determined by social values. Organisation strategy is thus influenced by social values and adaptiveness is dependent on maintaining an accurate fit between

social expectations and the operations of the whole organisation;

- 2. In the psychological view the individual experiences a dichotomy about values that is mediated by social values in order to form beliefs and attitudes about the organisation. Organisation strategy and adaptiveness are dependent upon the organisation's capacity to be sensitive to the social values that matter to the individual;
- 3. Within the STSA view, the individual experiences anxiety because of inherent conflict and tension that is always present between the individual and the social world. In the organisation this takes the form of anxiety that can be located within and around the roles and tasks that individuals perform. The organisation as an open system makes individuals vulnerable to the perceptions of society through social values. The acts of organising include the construction of defense mechanisms to minimise the effect of anxiety. STSA has shown that clinical action at the level of the individual and the group has affects at the inter-group level and can have affects at the level of the organisation as a whole. The STSA does not embrace the assumption that organisation-wide strategy can be predicted and managed in terms of a conception or vision of the future of an organisation.
- 4. Finally, the social psychology perspective argues that the individual makes sense of the organisation by retrospectively ordering and reordering events, categories, people and things into generically subjective scripts and accounts. At times of uncertainty the individually modifies scripts and accounts. Strategy is potent at the level of the individual and the group because of the need to reflect and learn about the resources and methods that are being used to make sense of behaviour in an organisation.
- Neither strategic foresight nor adaptivity at the level of the whole organisation are embraced by this concept. But studies (e.g. Porac et al 1989) that focus on individual attempts at sensemaking through explicit learning and reflection have shown to have affects at the organisation wide level.

The next section will sieve these propositions and their strategic implications

through a critique of the strategy literature. The literature review includes a brief history of strategy, the components of classical strategic management and a selection of its less orthodox variants. The purpose is to 1.Find out to what extent the literature reflects a relationship between strategy and values, and 2.To find out to what extent the four propositions above feature in the literature.

1.3. Values and the concepts & practice of classical strategy

> *'The business enterprise is a significant and rather amazing novelty in that it is the first human institution having the purpose of bringing about change'* (Drucker, 1959; 240).

The idea that the conscious shaping of an organisation is separate to the routine of the day-to-day is a modern one. The reasons for keeping the strategy task separate and the degree to which this is successful, provides a basis for a broad academic field of study. The historical genealogy of the idea is rooted in the assumptions of the organisation form - outlined above – but was developed as a practice at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This section will explore the literatures that have described what strategy is and how it works in practice.

1.3.1. The classical perspective of strategy

The approach in this section is to, first, describe strategy through its orthodox classical perspective and, then, through its variants, to examine the role of individual values and search for possible mechanisms by which individual values inhabit and influence organisation.

There are hundreds of discrete approaches designed to advise organisations, leaders and managers on 'how to do strategy', 'how to make strategy', 'how to be strategic' etc. No single discipline in the business literature has received more attention than the concept of strategy (Moore, 2001; xiii). However, all of these variants share the same basic assumption – to find and promote a method to direct the shaping of a whole organisation.

However, all clarity, consistency and certainty ends at that point.

Schendel observes that there is

> *'...no agreement on a paradigm for the field of strategic management...because strategic management is*

> *fundamentally an interdisciplinary subject, a field of practice and application, whose perspectives will shift and whose research approaches will be incommensurable, rendering it unlikely that a single paradigm will ever govern the field'* (Schendel, 1994:2).

And Leavy argues that,

> *'There is no single integrated framework or theory that provides an explanation of strategy'* (Leavy, 1996:4)

The central assumption of the classical approach (see Whittington, 2001) is that the world can be discovered, understood and then made. Whittington describes the over-arching assumption behind the rational or classical approach,

> *'If the effort is taken to gather the information and apply appropriate techniques, both the outside world and the organisation itself can be made more predictable and plastic, shaped according to the careful plans of top management* '(Whittington, 2001; 3).

This assumption is not confined to business school textbooks or to corporate practice. Management texts written for the non-profit and public sectors all prescribe models based on the same assumption (see, for example, Fitzgibbon et al 1997; Bryson 1997; Fidler 1996).

More precisely, strategy in the classical sense, can be defined as a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan that is usually designed to ensure the basic objectives of the enterprise are going to be achieved.

In relation to an organisation's plan, the strategy task is:

> *'The determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of resources necessary for carrying out these goals'* (Chandler, 1962).

A strategic plan then becomes:

> *'The objectives, purposes or goals and essential policies and plans for achieving those goals, stated in such a way as to define what business the company is in or is to be in and the kind of company it is or is to be'* (Andrews, 1987: 28).

Like the field of industrial engineering, the disciplinary boundaries of strategic management are flexible (Shrivastava, 1987; 88). Each strategy

approach has produced '*formidable bodies of evidence on their side...leaving the practicing manager with some hard choices'* (Whittington, 2001; 118).

Representing strategy primarily through a single perspective has to be justified because the field is so wide in it's thinking. Standards of scientific validity are rooted in a paradigm and therefore dependent upon the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the phenomenon of the inquiry (Kuhn, 1962; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The different approaches to strategy represent different conceptual paradigms. So there is a problem of incommensurability in attempting to embrace the whole field.

For the purposes of this study, the classical management context is an appropriate backdrop or matrix for the study of values because, in terms of a discipline and practice, it has the most evolved suite of tools and concepts. Its provenance in terms of the literature and research is more developed than other forms and there is less conceptual disagreement.

It is also appropriate in a practice sense because elements of the rational rubric are deeply embedded in western organisations. Planned agendas, assigned roles, the development and use of procedures and hierarchies in structures and processes, budgeting methods and the collection of information. What is unclear is what purpose these elements serve. In an unpublished study, for example, it was found that the production of a strategic plan or the process of strategic planning is not necessarily related to what the organisation does or to what actually happens (Moller, 1998).

In order to understand how these assumptions have become so embedded in Western organisations, it is useful to retrace some key moments in the history of strategy.

1.3.2 .The second industrial revolution – the antecedents of the assumptions of strategy

Alfred Chandler conducted a historical study of the evolution of strategy and structure of large US organizations (1962). He focussed on large industries and large, complex organisations that achieved phenomenal economies of scale and scope through the creation of single management entities. He defined a managerial enterprise (as opposed to an owner managed enterprise) as:

> *'Large industrial concerns in which operating and investment decisions are made by a hierarchy of salaried managers governed by a Board of directors'* (Chandler; 1991; 258).

The emphasis on a single salaried decision maker who was not, necessarily, a member of the entrepreneurial family was a radical shift in thinking and practice.

Chandler identified the central problem for these organisations - the creation of a structure that was able to adapt to the changing environment. Organisations needed structures that could take advantage of opportunities like the integration of production, distribution and mass markets via the new railroad and telegraph system in the US, after 1850. Structures were also needed to make critical decisions about how to invest in plant, marketing, distribution organizations and how to recruit managers to coordinate the flow of products and branded goods (Chandler, 1991; 259). New high volume technologies could not be exploited *'unless the massive flows of materials were guided through the process of both production and distribution by teams of salaried managers* (Chandler, 1984; 474). But these managers were not aloof from operations. They were not, yet, strategists in the classical sense. They were immersed in operational reconstruction at a massive scale.

The second industrial revolution facilitated previously unimaginable expansions in scale and scope. The Sears Roebuck mail order company processed 100,000 orders in a single day in 1905 (Chandler, 1984).

Thus, the vertically integrated, multi-divisional form of organisation was born. Once scale and scope began to determine the growth of an organisation, it required the creation of new departments to support new functional areas and strategies.

Why did organisations pursue massive growth strategies and alter their structural, production and managerial basis? Chandler studied the Standard Oil Trust, amongst others, and argued that it was not for power and control but to rationalize the industry, reducing the cost per unit and providing economies of scale. The cost advantage was conditional on the maintenance of a constant flow of kerosene, a massive increase in the number of transactions and a management structure that could coordinate the complex production and distribution of product (Chandler, 1984; 484). As per capita income began to increase, a basis was created for greater organisation integration delivering the affordable, essential services that

we take for granted today.

But, Richard Rumelt's, 1974 book *Strategy, Structure and Economic Performance,* found that structures also follow fashions. His methodology analysed diversification activities in the Fortune 500 companies from 1959 & 1969, supported by other trade data from the period. Observing that there was virtually no limit to the variety of structures in organisations, he simplified them to five types, of which one was multi-divisional. He found that in explaining differences in performance, the diversification strategy was less important than the way the companies related new businesses to current or old ones (Moore, 2001: 160). He found that those companies that diversified, around a familiar bedrock of skills and capacities and assumptions, outperformed those companies, which diversified for acquisitive reasons, or into unrelated areas of business (Rumelt, 1974). Critically, he found that the reason companies adopted multi-divisional structures was not because of their strategies but because the form had become so popular. This suggests that managers were vulnerable to the emerging industrial norms and values.

However, the trend toward more formalized strategy making was accentuated as technology advanced and the multi-divisional form emerged, becoming dominant amongst large industrial organisations, regardless of performance implications.

The critical difference between the multi-divisional-form (or M-Form) of organisation and previous structures was its capacity to influence the competitive industrial and inter-industrial environment for the first time. In a sense, the 'invisible hand' became visible (Ghemawat, 1997).

But how did this happen? The imagery of the invisible hand is confusing because it suggests that a suprastructure was responsible for the changes, rather than individual managers and groups. Chandler and Rumelt generated two findings; first, that structure follows strategy, i.e. the M-Form structure solved the problem of consistent throughput and organisation at a large and complex scale. Second, structures also imitate other structures and, therefore, strategy also follows structure. M-Form companies did not necessarily outperform other structural types. How then was it possible that such large scale, industrial, social and economic changes could take place if organisations were investing in structures based on what other industries were doing, i.e. norms and trends? Applying transaction cost theory, Williamson argued that the M-Form could take advantage of the 'bounded rationality' and 'opportunism' that would undermine control in large

organisation. The M-Form reduced transaction costs by making the divisional manager accountable for performance at the business level (1975, 1985). But Donaldson found that organisations endured structural lags – failures resulting from a mismatch between strategy and structure - over ten years (1987; 16). Whilst this view does not explain long-terms lags and underperformance (Whittington, 2001; 103), it does suggest that neither structure nor strategic performance were ends in and of themselves.

The mechanism for these large-scale social and industrial changes is still invisible. What is visible is the role of the individual salaried manager and an apparent emphasis on individual values. On the one hand, the intention was to shape not only the large industrial organisation but, in doing so, to alter the mechanisms by which industry functioned in the environment. Whilst on the other hand, the individual manager was made accountable for changes. This invokes the anthropological *and* the psychological assumptions of values in which 1. Social changes represent changes in central values, i.e. fundamental shifts in thinking at the level of society were taking place, and, 2. The (accountable) individual managed his value conflicts by filtering his/her decisions through these changes.

The next section will move away from a large-scale overview of change and examine the micro-components of classical strategy as they were proscribed for practitioners.

1.3.3. The early years of practice and the influence of The Harvard Business School

In 1912, The Harvard Business School, founded in 1908, offered a course in business policy that integrated knowledge from functional areas (accounting etc.). The course was based on the insight that an organisation's business problems crossed functions, disciplines and groups. It exposed the nature of an organisation's *distinctive competence* encouraging students to discover the competitive basis for differentiation and to critique the specific competence of organizations in a competitive situation (Ghemawat, 1997). Philip Selznick introduced the term in 1957,

> *'The distinctive competence to do a <u>kind</u> of thing is in question when we ask whether an agency is well adapted to carrying out an "action" program'* (Selznick, 1984; 51).

This concept has little to do with routine administrative efficiency. Rather, it reflects the general orientation of personnel, the flexibility of organisation forms and the nature of the institutional environment on which the organisation is committed (Selznick, 1984).

Other authors have isolated levels of distinctive competency. Hamel and Prahalad (1996) developed a hierarchy of three absolute core competences that drive and deliver key products – these competencies must contribute in three ways to be regarded as 'core', e.g. '*customer-perceived value, competitive superiority* and *extendibility in producing new products or services'* (Hamel and Prahalad, 1996). Leonard Barton identified that distinctive competence is paradoxical in that the very skills and abilities that offer an initial advantage lead to the parochial mindsets that resist change (1992).

This was at a time when there was growing awareness of the relationship between the opportunities of new technologies and dramatic changes in markets. WWII posed tremendous challenges as industries and large numbers of businesses began to diversify and expand overseas (Rumelt, 1974). This was a period of intensive research and development. Inevitably, there was a strong stimulus and a massive effort to find answers to industrial problems.[5] Subsequently, the challenge for business was to continue to push against the limitations set by the environment within a tangible framework of freedom (Drucker, 1954; 11).

After 1946 the United States (US) had begun to invest vast amounts of capital into product research and development (R&D); between 1946 and 1961 investment rose from $1.2B to $10B. US investment in foreign markets rose from $1.2B in 1949 to $3.3B in 1959 and foreign investment into the US grew from $120m to $710m between 1949 and 1960. All of these figures contrast to the stable, falling investment in US plant and equipment that barely altered during the same period (Ansoff, 1965, 163-167).

Harvard recognized, perhaps before any other business school, the need to help transform the increasingly specialist functional manager into a generalist leader and Chief Executive (Moore, 2001). The case study method was central to the

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[5] The concept of the learning curve was discovered at this time; the fact that the cost per unit fell as the cumulative production level rose, radically altered the production organisation and the nature of planning (Ghemawat, 1997;2).

teaching process that developed in Harvard. C. Roland Christensen, George Smith and Kenneth Andrews developed these methods throughout the 1950s. The purpose was to develop analytical skills to assess whether an organisation's strategy portfolio matched the requirements of the competitive and business environment. Drucker was one of the first writers to address the issue through his seminal 1954 text, *The Practice of Management,* in which he posed the questions to businesses; what kind of business are we in and what kind of business should we be in? (Hofer & Schendel, 1978; 16).

This radical new context was conceived against the now explicit assumption that it was actually possible to 'fit' an organisation to the conditions of the environment for future performance.

This indicates that this was a time of extraordinary opportunity. There was a growing awareness that precise skills and competencies embraced clusters of values that could, if utilised properly, add economic value to products. Harvard was one of the first institutions to recognise this. The Harvard researchers conceived of the case study – a tool that relies on descriptions of actual practice - to train individuals to become aware of the different properties of specialisms and functions that, if combined, could amount to a portfolio of business wealth.

1.3.4. The business policy era[6]

The introduction of business policy in the 1960s formalized and legitimized these assumptions by providing a multi-disciplinary, practice-based framework of tools and concepts to analyse the factors and characteristics of organization. The aim was to provide objective, rational information and to align strategies with real-life changes in the organisation's environment. This was not confined to the private sector. In the early 1960s, the Irish Department of Education's Statistical Department was a central resource to the development of education policy and was instrumental in creating an argument for the provision of free secondary education in 1967 (see Chapter Five). Planning, statistics and other information schematics were popular in large industries and the public sector throughout the 1970s. They

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[6] Corporate and Business strategy are often used interchangeably but they represent two different types of strategy. A corporation is defined as a legally recognized entity with its own powers and liabilities separate from those of the individual people or organizations who make up the corporation. A company holds the same definition. A corporate strategy therefore defines and describes all the different businesses and purposes of the company. A business and a business strategy refers to a specific business activity within the company. See other definitions of Strategy below.

were integrated in much the same way that Human Resource functions were in the 1990s. Mintzberg, writing in the 1990s, points out, *'a more recent rendition of this has been to establish the post of "strategic manager", a kind of hybrid line manager and staff planner, with formal responsibility for strategy itself, nothing more'* (1994; 256).

But at this time the Carnegie School, represented by Richard Cyert, James March and Herbert Simon, were restating the fundamental assumptions of the economic theory of the firm. Located in the arguments that justified the concepts of the perfectly competitive firm, the Carnegie School researchers found that individuals are bounded by their cognitive limits (Cyert and March 1992 recent edition – first published in 1963). This means that individuals are not able to gather, analyse and interpret information on a comprehensive basis. Decisions based on environmental scanning and analysis of strategic options, are therefore, likely to be inaccurate (Whittington, 2001). March and Simon (1958) found that individuals are more likely to accept the first satisfactory options presented. The Carnegie school was the first scholarly challenge to the assumptions of the rational-analytic model and its practices. The next section examines how classical strategy works.

1.3.5. How does strategy work in practice?

There are four distinct elements in understanding the practice of classical strategy,

- The different levels of strategy that impact on different parts of the organisation – Corporate, Business and Functional;
- The analytical schema needed to conduct a full search of opportunities and likely consequences;
- The formulation process – the order through which strategy objectives and or means are formulated;
- Strategy as a narrow concept and, alternatively, as a broad concept and the strategic components that form the decision-making parameters (the distinctions between these two views are discussed in 1.3.7 and 1.3.8 below.).

1.3.5.1. The different levels of strategy

The empirical evidence in this study is concerned with all three levels of strategy (See Chapters Five, Six and Seven). The corporate view is the Strategy of

the organisation and concerns the whole enterprise. Andrew's definition of corporate strategy is:

> *'Corporate strategy is the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organisation it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and non-economic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities'* (Andrews, 1987: 13).

This definition places the whole organisation in the foreground. It assumes that strategic steps have been taken that will retrospectively reveal a deliberate and emergent plan and a pattern of action that is carefully tied to corporate, explicit intentions.

Business strategy operates at the level of the local business outlet. The assumption is that there is a linear relationship between the strategy of the whole organisation and the actions carried out at the local or decentralised business level. Finally, functional strategy concerns different departmental or operational tasks at all levels.

1.3.5.2. The analytical scheme

Kenneth Andrews first laid out the analytical schema that became the standard tool that would assist strategists in identifying and analyzing all the information required for the strategy formulation process. This study will rely principally on Andrew's (1987; 50) original model although there have been multiple modifications and elaborations since. The original analytical schema includes:

- An analysis of environmental conditions and trends and emerging issues – along economic, political, social, cultural, technical, national, community and global dimensions.
- An analysis of distinctive competence along with capabilities (financial, managerial, functional, organisation), resources, values, reputation and historical dimensions
- The SWOT exercise is an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Risks, Opportunities and Threats alongside an understanding of social and ethical responsibilities. Producing a set

of decisions or options that will strengthen, recognise or limit weakness and combat or recognise threats by taking advantage of strengths to pursue opportunities. The intention is to creatively counter constraints with opportunities.

- The development of strategic decisions defining product and market mix and choice in the form of broad strategies, objectives and policies for implementation.

Mintzberg identifies this process as the core *'design school'* model (1994; 36) and argues that the basic tenets can be traced back to Selznick's *Leadership in Administration* (see Chapter Two). Mintzberg uses the term '*design'* to mean that strategy can be viewed as *' a process of conception'* that will determine *congruence* or *fit* between a range of organization and external factors (1994; 36).

The intention is to design a set of circumstances in which the organization will be in the best position to capture success through the matching of skills, qualifications and opportunities (Christensen et al, 1982; 165).

A series of assumptions underlie the macro and micro practices of strategy (see also Mintzberg, 1994; 38-42),

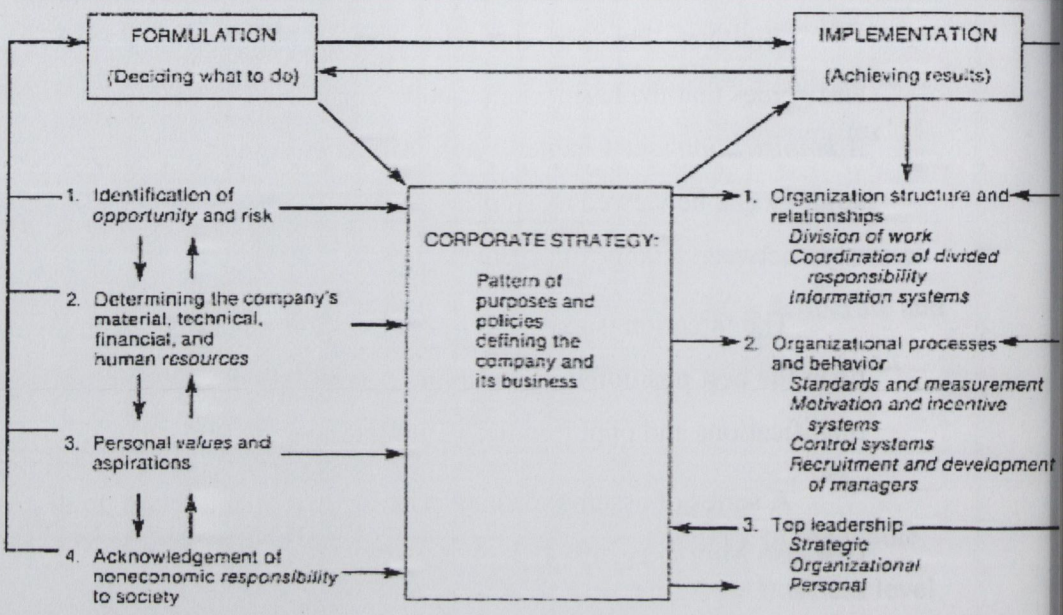
- Forming strategy is a conscious and controlled process of thinking and analytical work that is deliberately separated from the day-to-day routine/demands of work;
- Strategy is the responsibility of the senior managers and/or the CEO to formulate, and it is then delegated to other managers to implement. This has led to metaphors like the strategist and the architect (Christensen et al, 1982; 3 & 19);
- Strategy represents a complete cycle of thought and information gathering and analysing in that the design process produces all the budgets, the timeframes, operating plans and other detail needed for implementation. In this view structure must, therefore, follow strategy, i.e. each time a new strategy is designed the administrative and infrastructural system must also be redesigned.

There is an assumption that this level of modification across the organisation is possible and that individual/group managers are able to modify and ratify practices accordingly.

1.3.5.3. The formulation process

The prescribed formulation and implementation process is a caricature of many thousands of details and activities that are involved in a major change and restructuring exercise. Represented graphically, Andrews' original model of the formulation and implementation of strategy in the organisation (1971 – republished in 1987) is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



Andrews regarded strategy formulation as inseparable from the organisation's structure, behaviour and culture and placed the CEO/Senior management team's 'personal' values at the heart of the process. The significance of this is discussed in the context of Andrew's Broad view of strategy as it is juxtaposed against Ansoff's Narrow view (see below).

Andrew's identified the important skill of formulation as setting ambitions appropriately and,

> *'The determination of strategy also requires consideration of what alternatives are preferred, quite apart from economic considerations by the chief executive and by his or her immediate associates. The acquiescence or, better, the enthusiastic engagement of all whose productivity and creativity are important in achieving superior performance grows out of participation in the process of strategic decision. Personal values, aspirations, and ideals do, and in our judgement quite properly should, influence*

> *the final choice of purposes. Thus, what the people in a company want to do must brought into the strategic decision'* (Andrews, 1987; 19).

Step 4 (see figure 1 above) explicitly acknowledges the ethical aspect of the organisation's activities relative to society and wider impact. Andrews' argues that the sum of the strategy effort is not merely the sum of analysis, action and goals, it is the entire pattern of thinking and effort including the desires of people in the organisation.

Andrews' identified the four components of strategy formulation as the ability to identify 1. Market opportunity, 2. Corporate competence and resources (this is synonymous with Ansoff's resource deployments and Selznick's distinctive competence), 3. Personal values and aspirations and 4. Acknowledge obligations to segments of society other than stakeholders (1987; 19).

Andrews' acknowledged the distinctly social process that is strategy making,

> *'Taken by itself, each consideration might lead in a different direction. If you put the various aspirations of individuals in your own organisation against this statement you will see what I mean. Even in a single mind, contradictory aspirations can survive a long time before the need to calculate trade-offs and integrate divergent inclinations becomes clear'* (Andrews, 1987; 19).

Andrews acknowledges the difficulty of modifying and ratifying routines and values across the organisation, particularly when strategy is understood as happening at an abstract level.

1.3.5.4. The implementation process

Whilst Andrews' is sensitive to individual values and the difficulty of change, he presents the implementation of strategy as an administrative exercise. Whilst personal leadership is important and sometimes *decisive,* it is the pattern of interrelated decisions that is the essence of strategy (Andrews, 1987; 20).

In his review of similar models, Mintzberg found that a step-by-step approach with clear delineations was a prescribed feature of *all* models (1994; 52). Ginter et al's study of the perceptions of planners in the US found, for example, that the basic steps were characterized as mission, objectives, external analysis, internal analysis,

implementation and control of strategy (1985).

It is not clear why Andrews does not enrich the implementation process with his views about the importance of values. It strikes a note of discord with his emphasis on values. What is also absent is a description of the kind of quality interaction that would be required for the full strategy *pattern* to become visible, feasible and recognisable to all those involved. This is developed further below.

1.3.5.5. The Narrow and Broad views of strategy

Moore argues that the key shapers of strategy are Chandler, Andrews and Ansoff because *'they were the first formally to delimit the area of strategy in terms of concepts, definitions and methodologies'* (2001; 1). Hofer and Schendel identified a fundamental shift in thinking between Andrews and Ansoff as a defining point of departure in terms of how values can be understood in relation to strategy.

The *narrow* view of strategy is best defined as *'the fundamental means it will use...to achieve its objectives'* (Hofer & Schendel, 1978; 23-4). Ansoff, who is most associated with this view, argues that if strategy is important then it should be managed and the best way to assist its management is to provide '*...formalised, analytical processes that formulate explicit strategies'* (Hofer & Schendel, 1978; 5). In order to achieve the formality and the necessary explicitness, Ansoff identified that it is necessary to split strategy from objectives and individuals. The precise formulation of objectives, separate to or split from the devising of strategy options creates a basis and a screening device for evaluating options. The aim in having strategy 'rules' is to narrow the organisation's selection process to the most attractive, efficient opportunities (Ansoff, 1965; 104).

The broad view is best illustrated through Andrews' ideas. He argues that objectives and means cannot be separated or isolated,

> *'The essence of the definition of strategy is pattern. The interdependence of purposes, policies and organisation action is crucial to the particularity of an individual strategy and its opportunity to achieve competitive advantage* (Andrews, 1987; 14 - 15).

Andrews argues that the meaning of strategic action, the relationship of means to objectives and values, lends power and provides motive to employees, customers and suppliers:

'The interrelation among objectives is the key to coherence and consistency. The pattern of goals and policies, rather than their separate substance, is the source of the uniqueness that ideally should distinguish every company from its competitors. Especially when values visibly affect economic choices, the special character of a company becomes apparent to its employees and customers. Breaking up the system of corporate goals and the character-determining major policies for attainment leads to narrow and mechanical conceptions of strategic management and to endless logic chopping' (Andrews; 1987; 15).

Whilst each is quite different, both Ansoff and Andrews seek coherence in strategy. Ansoff believes this is feasible by formalising the separation of intentions from choices and behaviours. Andrews believes that coherence is found in recognising that people, policies, programmes and purposes are interdependently connected to the character of a company and, therefore, to its behaviour.

Each view holds distinctive assumptions. In the narrow view,

- Strategic action is defined and identified by clear and consistent rules for decision making;
- Means and ends are assumed to be directly related;
- Strategic action is assumed to be value free;
- The organisation has a distinctive business and strategy which is designed to address specific performance objectives;
- The organisation achieves strategic coherence through splitting off the determining of objectives and designing of strategy.

But there is an apparent contradiction in Ansoff's need for a decision 'rule', given the extensive use of executive judgement that is implied in the use of the 'rules'.

And, in the broad view,

- Strategic action is defined by the pattern of actions;
- Means and ends are indirectly related;
- Strategy and action is assumed to be value-rich;
- The organisation has a distinctive business and strategy is designed to be coherent within a range of organisation and functional objectives at different levels;

- The organisation achieves strategic coherence by designing strategy to reflect the inseparable nature of objectives and behaviours.

Simon argues that,

> *'A means-end chain is a series of anticipations that connect a value with the situations realizing it, and those situations in turn, with the behaviours that produce them. Any element in this chain may be either "means" or "ends" depending on whether its connection with the value end of the chain or its connection with the behaviour end of the chain, is in question'* (Simon, 1945; 83*).*

Simon's view is clear: facts and values cannot be conceptually or practically separated because it is not possible to extract the multiple situations that realise a value from the behaviours that produce them.

Andrews' key prescriptive is to legitimize the power gleaned by self-awareness of one's own and others' values in order to prevent blindness, rigidities and open up opportunities (See empirical data in Chapter Five). This anticipates Upper Echelons theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984 – see Chapter Two) by suggesting that making its values explicit, the manager group can individually narrow and collectively focus their decision-making environment.

Andrews argues that, rather than fight the values component, it is better to admit the values dimension and reconcile the divergent layers. He identifies three layers for reconciliation; the values of the CEO and the choice that might be economically preferable, the conflicting values between the manager group, the economic preference and the CEO, and, finally, the difference in the values of the manager group and the workforce (1987; 55-56).

> *'Large gains are possible simply by raising the strategic issues for discussion by top management, by admitting the legitimacy of different preferences, and by exploring how superficial or fundamental the differences are' (Andrews, 1987; 58).*

However, Andrews does not develop explanations for the process of facilitating value awareness. He strongly argues the case for self-awareness about values but does not provide any insight into the complexity of this task. He argues that awareness of values offers three benefits,

- It will make managers/CEOs more tolerant and less indignant in response to the recommendations of others;
- It will force the manager group to appraise a particular value and position its importance within the context;
- It will give the manager group the insight into their biases exposing them to the triggers that narrow views, facilitating a more objective assessment of all the strategic alternatives available (Andrews, 1987; 61).

Andrews aims this values 'work' at the CEO and other 'key managers',

> *'In examining the alternatives available to a company, we must henceforth consider the preferences of the chief executive. Furthermore, we must also be concerned with the values of other key managers who must either contribute to or assent to the strategy if it is to be effective. Finally at a higher level of sophistication, the strategy should have some appeal to all employees'* (Andrews, 1987; 55).

1.3.6. Summary

The strategy literature is concerned with directing the shaping of a whole organisation. This idea is a modern one. The second industrial revolution facilitated previously unimaginable expansions in scale and scope and, as a result, new forms of organising were required, including the vertically integrated, multi-divisional organisation. This suggested that structure of organisations follows strategy. But a seminal study revealed that it is possible that structures also follow fashions. The role of the individual salaried and generalist manager became distinct as the person with accountability for structural change at a previously unimagined scale. Strategy quickly developed into a framework rooted in evolving managerial practice and continual exploration that attempted to capture, analyse and understand what the individual manager actually did. But as the Carnegie School identified that human beings are boundedly rational and more likely to be satisfied by a speedy, easily made decision than comprehensive analysis. Rational-analytic assumptions were undermined by this scholarship. One strand of thinking identified that in order for organisations to be adaptive and flexible there had to be a synergistic element that seemed to be less to do with routine administrative efficiency and more to do to with the institutionalisation of values, traditions and commitments.

The inclusion of values as a component of strategy is not dealt with satisfactorily in the classical/orthodox texts. It is not clear how or why values influence decisions that are generally supported by rational analysis. Nor is it clear at what levels values influence strategic plans and concepts. Andrews' text reveals a number of fundamental conflicts; the centrality and potential power of the personal, individual values of the leader; the processes of decision making represented as consensual and dialectical; and, the need to represent the decisions of an organisation in a socially ethical and acceptable frame.

The distinctions offered between the narrow and broad views provide insight through the implication that the evaluation of facts is a task that is inseparable from the value placed upon components of fact and their consequences. On the one hand, Ansoff's denial of individual (and presumably social) values seems unhelpful and unrealistic and, on the other, Andrews' prescriptions are beyond the reach of most organisations or, at least, most individuals. In encouraging the CEO/manager group to become aware of personal values, Andrews is probably referring to in-depth, medium to long-term personal development programmes. Such programmes typically combine aspects of psychoanalytic theory with personal development. The aim, in this approach, is to support the senior manager to become aware of his/her own valencies – the tendency to react and or overreact to certain events, situations or people. This, it is argued, helps to build awareness about what is important and to control response so that other individuals can engage openly with strategic ideas. Over time, in theory at least, as the individual becomes aware of his or her own valencies, he or she can develop a deep personal awareness, maturity and understanding of values.

One of the founder's of Educate Together engaged in personal development in North America in the 1960s and applied learning to the events of founding Educate Together's first school (See Chapter Five).

Moore remarks that Ansoff recognised that his prescriptions for strategy making did not become *de rigour*. Ansoff acknowledged the problems of translating strategic precepts into practice. Moore argues that his kind of rigorous strategic discipline has the effect of running into organisation inertia (Moore, 2001; 21). This analysis of the broad and narrow views has identified that the classical model of strategy, whether broadly or narrowly defined, is problematic in terms of locating values. The narrow definition has not been widely embraced and this

may be because of the rigorous discipline that is demanded in designing strategy. The broad definition embraces the concept of individual values and identifies the CEO's values as key but neglects to explain cleary why values are important and how individual values can be incorporated into the formulation and implementation phases.

In summarising this section, there seems to be a tension between the level of accountability of the individual and the need for decision making to be socially experienced as rational-analytic. Despite Andrews' insistence that values at social and individual levels are integral to the shaping of organisations, an examination of the assumptions, history and practice of orthodox strategy, reveals that there is little knowledge about the mechanisms that explain how values influence strategy, strategic behaviour or the individuals that are involved in making and doing strategy.

The next section examines this finding against the variations of classical, orthodox strategy.

1.4. Values and variations on classical assumptions

There are numerous books and textbooks that analyse and interpret the many variants of strategy and outcomes of related research. The purpose of this section is to identify variants of the classical model that will add to the discussion and problems posed above.

1.4.1. Chester Barnard's contribution

> *'Reading a formative book fifty years after it was published is like entering an echoing cave backwards. Modern concepts bounce anachronistically off the pages of Barnard's book'* (Douglas, 1990:99).

It is arguable that Chester Barnard is the most influential organisation and strategy theorist of the twentieth century. Taking his formative book *The Functions of The Executive* (1938)[7] as a starting, or centrifugal, point for an explanation of the

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[7] He began his career in ATT, eventually becoming President of New Jersey Bell Telephone Company and Director of Emergency Relief Organisation in New Jersey. He wrote *The Functions of The Executive* shortly after retiring. He served the Government as a civilian during WWII and served as president of the National Science Foundation (1952-54) and was Chair of The National Science Board (1950-56) (Williamson, 1990; 3). In 1959, he won The McKinsey Award for the first edition

individual's relationship with the organisation is entirely appropriate, if not altogether novel. Barnard's contribution to the discussion about individual values uniquely draws on his understanding of values in the organisation and the individual's relationship to human cooperation. His work is cited on the basis that *a field can lose track of essential work'* (Rousseau, 2005; 195).

Williamson's 1990 book of essays on organization theory celebrates fifty years since the publication of Barnard's book. He positions Barnard as the father of organization theory and the author of concepts close to this study; the development of institutional theory (Selznick, 1957), decision making theory, the concept of bounded rationality ('The Carnegie School'; Simon, 1945, Cyert & March, 1992 – first pub. 1963), systems theory (Scott, 1995: 38), the human relations school (Katz & Kahn, 1966) and transaction cost economics (Coase, 1937, Williamson, 1990).

His work marks, not only the beginning of organization as a discipline (Allison, 1971; 69), but continues to impact upon strategy and management theorists, economists, anthropologists, sociologist and social psychologists sixty-seven years after publication (see Fukuyama, 2005).

Barnard learnt how to manage organizations early on in his career, but he argues,

> *'Always, it seemed to me, the social scientists – from whatever side they approached – just reached the edge of organisation as I experienced it, and retreated. Rarely did they seem to me to sense the processes of coordination and decision that underlie a large part at least of the phenomena that they described'* (Barnard, 1938; ix).

Not only did writers of that time give insufficient weight to the importance of the organization in social life and as a direct cause of social problems, they provided no bridge between social generalizations and human realities when discussing norms, structures, mores, attitudes, motives and instincts (1938; ix).

Critically, Barnard recognizes that the whole individual is always present in the organisation. However, he argues that when someone is cooperating with others he/she can be regarded as functional to a set of behaviours; that is, de-individualized

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of the *California Management Review,* for his article , 'Elementary Conditions of Business Morals' (CMR, 1958, Vol. Fall).

or socialized towards cooperation with others (1938;16-17). STSA assumes that the individual bring two roles to the organisation – a task related and a sentient (emotions, feelings and perceptions) role (See Chapters Three and Six for more details).

Douglas criticizes Barnard's approach because our social experience is *'utterly heterogeneous'*. She argues that it comes from '…fidelity to the economist's conception of the ultimate rational being, which is inherently unanalysable' (Douglas, 1990; 104-105). Douglas may be right but the problem is that, with rare exceptions (e.g. Leonard Barton, 1992; Rousseau, 2005; Ho and Rousseau, 2006 and the authors associated with STSA), the literatures studied for this inquiry do not refer to the individual employee/member, the exact nature of the job or to the specific social dynamics that support functional roles. Conversely, a very high status is placed on the individual contributions of the CEO or senior management team (see Chapter Two for a review of Finkelstein and Hambrick's work, 1996).

Barnard develops a theory of four conditions that acknowledge the cooperation of the individual in the organisation.

First, Barnard argues that authority does not originate from the top of the organization. Authority must be recognised by all the people involved in a decision and that the realm of a decision needs to be understood – something, he said, that was surprisingly difficult to achieve. He argues that it has to be consistent with the values and the purposes of the organization and with the interests of the individual and their assessment of their contribution to the organization in light of what they receive in exchange (see Rousseau, 2005). Finally, it has to be within the intellectual, physical and social ability of the individual or group. Experienced executives know that to give orders that cannot or will not be obeyed destroys morale (Barnard, 1938; 167). This view places values at the heart of decision-making because it implies that authority is validated because valued practices are protected and/or acknowledged. Barnard is making an assumption that, by providing a clear basis for the individual's contribution, it is not hard to create symmetry between what the organisation 'wants' to achieve and what is important to the individual.

In the second of his points, Barnard views the individual's contractual relationship with the organization as one that facilitates adaptability. This works on the basis that the individual gains a net advantage from his/her

relationship and, in exchange, gives cooperation. But what is this based on? Barnard argues that each individual operates within a *zone of indifference* (1938; 167), later and more appropriately renamed later by Simon as the *zone of acceptance* (1951). The indifferent zone reflects all the decisions that are broadly acceptable. All decisions outside of the zone are either less than or bordering on acceptability. To some extent, Barnard contradicts himself in his use of the word *indifference*. He suggests, in his model of authority, that individuals agree to do things because they make sense, not because they are indifferent to them. This invokes the assumptions of psychological contract theory and the socio-technical view, i.e. it suggests that an individual who is required to work outside the zone of acceptance may experience tension, values conflict and sometimes distortion from the interaction between the individual's internally understood world and the external world, and that some mechanism is required for the individual to manage the distortion and its affects.

The third component is Barnard's identification of the myth of superior authority (1938; 170). The myth is important because it facilitates a common sense approach to work.

Barnard developed the original concept of the informal organization. The informal organisation is the aggregate of all the individual's contacts and interactions in an organization. It gives cohesion to values and manifests the organisation's prevailing culture. Barnard identified that the informal organization facilitates, precedes but also depends on the formal organisation. The informal organisation is basic human contact and communication. It works on the assumption that we need social contact in and of its own sake, that most social contact is activity based and, that our mutual demands (of the formal and informal organisation) can be satisfied by people combining and cooperating. Barnard argues that the informal organization facilitates all communication, provides self-respect for the individual and the opportunity to reinforce both the organization's and the individual's values. The informal gives organisation operations a sense of cohesion.

Barnard provides little about the actual functions of the executive. He is almost completely concerned with the nature of cooperation. Importantly, he does not assume that values are the sole realm of the CEO or the manager. Rather he argues that if the reality of the individual's relationship with the organisation is understood, then the conditions for cooperation will emerge. He argues that cooperation stems from recognising what the individual wants and what

individual value is placed on a practice or routine and from understanding that individuals require authority in order to act on the organisation's behalf in a definite way and, finally, that work is a social event. Barnard's book was the *only* study from this review of strategy related literatures concerned directly with the individual in the workplace.

Barnard 's theories reflect the assumptions of the STSA, the main point being that in order for cooperation to work, the managers and leaders must authentically recognise the contribution of the individual. But, oddly, Barnard's critics view his ideas as crafting a management dominance (Douglas, 1990); the sensitivity attached to the individual's position in the workplace is viewed cynically as a tool of management to manipulate hapless, seemingly unaware individuals. This tension is reflected in other critiques of strategic management (e.g. Shrivastava, 1986) and is useful to this study because it pushes into relief, the questions, what is being valued in the organisation, by whom and why?

1.4.2. Philip Selznick's contribution

Selznick argues that, if an organisation's leadership is based on precepts for which there is no valued basis, it will result in the organisation's fate being determined by unanticipated consequences. He bases this theory on his extensive case study on the Tennessee Valley Authority (1966). He suggests that leadership has a critical role, not just in the way values are derived and 'used', but also in shaping the organisation in the long term.

Selznick is regarded as a seminal and pivotal figure in the provenance of values research. Selznick made explicit his theory of leadership in *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*, first published in 1957. Selznick is a sociologist who is interested in society's relationship with its institutions.[8] At the time he wrote, his short book, he was concerned that a vacuum was experienced by organisation as to why something was worth doing. And as with Barnard, Selznick is *'...interested in exploring the natural processes that condition organizational*

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[8] In his preface to the 1984 paperback edition, *Leadership in Administration* he refers to a period of economic uncertainty as the US faced up the success of Japanese industry. He wrote '*Americans cannot become Japanese but they can learn that vigorous competition need not presume a fragmented social order; that capitalism can thrive without unbridled economic freedom; and that a spirit of cooperation within organizations must prevail if high levels of productivity and quality are to be achieved'* (Selznick, 1957 viii). He drew his concept of cooperation from Chester Barnard (1938).

experience' (Selznick, 1957; 119). Selznick was heavily influenced by Freudian interpretations of sociology and by explanations of the individual path toward self-discovery.

Selznick equates values with competence,

> *'We shall stress that the task of building special values and a distinctive competence*[9] *into the organization is a prime function of leadership'* (Selznick, 1957; 27*).*

He carefully aligns his concept of distinctive competence with values but this aspect has not been explored by the research, with the exception of Leonard Barton's study (1992) and a small number of other studies (Pettigrew; 1979; Kimberly 1987; Tucker, Singh & Meinhard, 1990; See also Chapter Two).

Selznick locates the *'the task of building'* squarely with the leadership but does not define the leader in terms of a CEO. He suggests that leadership is a diffuse concept;

> *'Leadership creates and melds an organization embodying-in thought and feeling and habit, the value premises of policy. Leadership reconciles internal strivings and environmental pressures, paying close attention to the way adaptive behaviour brings about changes in organizational character'* (Selznick, 1957; 62).

The concept of the institution is critical to Selznick's theory about values. He uses it to attack the culture of short sightedness, thereby, equating institutions with longevity. A strategy of quick returns, he argues, undermines prosperity and weakens our institutions. What does he mean by institution and how does an organization become one? He argues that when the organisation is *'infused with value'* (Selznick, 1957; 40) it provides sources of gratification and integrity to individuals and groups. It suggests that the ability to derive real understanding from instrumental measures of performance, e.g. profit, is very limited.

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[9] Competencies are considered distinctive or core if they differentiate an organisation strategically (Leonard Barton, 1992). This study will use the following definition: *'A set of differentiated skills, complementary assets, and routines that provide the basis for a firm's competitive capacities and sustainable advantage in a particular business'* (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1990; 28). The concept was given empirical support by studies such as Rumelt, 1974 who found that diversification strategies built on existing capabilities outperformed 'new' or unrelated capabilities. Equally, distinctive competences are also associated with inertia and rigidities (Leonard Barton, 1992).

In institutional terms, the formation of an organisation's *'character'* is a phase of institutionalization and is analysed in that mode:

> *'As in the case of individuals, the emergence of organizational character reflects the irreversible element in experience and choice'* (Selznick, 1957; 40).

Values become embodied through a pattern of decisions about what resources should be allocated and where, and through the routine practices that arise as a consequence of decisions. Values are then enacted through the establishment and refinement of practices,

> *'...when an enterprise begins to be more profoundly aware of dependence on outside forces, its very conception of itself may change, with consequences for recruitment, policy and administrative organisation at many levels. As a business, a college, or a government agency develops a distinctive clientele, the enterprise gains the stability that comes with a secure source of support, an easy channel of communication. At the same time, it loses flexibility. The process of institutionalisation has set in'* (Selznick, 1957; 7).

As the organization becomes institutionalized, some of its commitments are necessarily irreversible in order to preserve the organisation's imperatives. This is the kind of dynamic through which the organization-institution is shaped and through '*...which the character of an organization is set'* (Selznick, 1984; 40).

Such institutionalisation has been widely written about and reflects the basic assumption that consistency or integrity of values is demonstrated by uniform behaviours and assumptions that can be traced externally to wider society (Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 1993).

Selznick's view straddles the sociological and social psychological assumptions that were examined at the beginning of this Chapter. On the one hand, he argues that institutions harbour and evolve values, and, on the other, he suggests that values are derived from context-dependent and institutionalised behaviours. He does not provide an argument between these two positions. Once '*core values'* are set, the need for their physical leadership is redundant. Then, values mature, behaviour is diffused and the (original) value becomes 'lost', forgotten or

taken for granted. This metaphor for behaviour in the organisation is widely used and pervasive in the culture literatures as argued forcefully by Martin (2002). But Selznick does not explain how values come to influence strategic behaviours.

1.4.3. The processual contribution

The processual strand, originating in the Carnegie School (see Section 1.3.5), opened up a perspective of research focussed on revealing the actual processes of making and doing strategy in organisations. The work of the Carnegie school produced four main findings – 1. Organisations are made up of coalitions/groups of individuals *'each of whom bring their own personal objectives and cognitive biases to the organisation'* (Whittington, 2001; 22). Bargaining processes produce agreement based on *'policy side payments'*- an arrangement that will favour strategic conservatism (Cyert and March, 1992 – first pub.1963; 31). 2. Strategic behaviour, as a result, is far more likely to produce an adaptive rationality that focuses on the gradual adjustment of routine operations and set procedures (see also Allison, 1971). 3. This does not matter so much because markets are tolerant of underperformance. Organisations can build sufficient slack because of high market shares and boundedly-rational stockholders who simply do not have the information. 4. Organisations are far more likely to base strategies on routine operations and procedures and to make satisficing choices, choosing the first option that generates the most general satisfaction (Whittington, 2001; 23).

This research identifies a much more realistic view of the organisation. By relegating the cluster of rational-analytic assumptions –Whittington refers to them as *'comforting rituals, managerial security blankets in a hostile world'* (2001; 23) - the work of the Carnegie scholars opened up a range of questions about how to explain organisation behaviour, strategic and otherwise, including the role of individual values.

An examination of Cyert and March's original text *'A Behavioural Theory of the Firm';* reveals that, whilst the authors imply that individual values influence the different interests and bargaining positions of individuals and coalitions, they do not examine the processes or mechanisms by which values actually influence what happens.

1.4.4. Henry Mintzberg's contribution

Henry Mintzberg's research on organisations builds on these ideas. He develops a solid critique of rational assumptions, empirically demonstrates the reality of the executive role, the actual nature of the strategy process and prescribes for radical changes in the way strategy is looked at and conceptualised (Mintzberg, 1972; Mintzberg et al, 1976; Mintzberg 1978; Mintzberg et al 1982; Mintzberg et al 1984; Mintzberg et al 1985; Mintzberg et al 1986; Mintzberg, 1987). He identifies a number of flaws about the kinds of 'hard' information that is worked up to support formalised strategic planning – that a lot of it is unreliable, that it often comes too late, is too aggregated for particular use and is often limited in being able to provide a suitable balance of non-economic and qualitative factors (Mintzberg, 1994; Mintzberg et al, 1998).

Mintzberg argues that strategy-in-practice is a much broader range of activities and behaviours than those implied by the classical school (Mintzberg, 1998). Strategy is a *plan* in the sense that it is created in advance of action; it is a *ploy* as in a tactic to outwit or to manoeuvre around a threat; it is a *pattern* that may emerge without intention. But in reality, he contends that a purely deliberate strategy is as unlikely as a purely emergent strategy - the first would require comprehensive detail in the planning phase and the second would require comprehensive consistency in action (Moore, 2001; 53). Strategy is also a *position* that identifies the mediating force between an organisation and its environment. Strategy, finally is also a *perspective* in the sense that the organisation as a whole has a cultural and value-based 'personality'. It is as if the organisation is a collective mind and it is important *'to understand how intentions...become shared, and how action comes to be exercised on a collective yet consistent basis'* (Mintzberg, 1998). This final aspect is important because, whilst it illustrates that strategy is abstract, it implies that the organisation reifies shared values through commonly understood decisions and in consistent behaviours. Much of the research that is reviewed and critiqued in Chapter Two is rooted in this assumption. When strategy can be understood as emerging from these very different processes, Mintzberg is saying, strategy involves individual and group ingenuity, creativity, expressions of uniqueness, intelligence, energy and passion.

1.4.5. The systemic contribution

Whittington clusters together a group of authors who propose that strategy is a product of social and economic embeddedness (2001). The basic assumption is that individuals are intellectually and emotionally inseparable from the social and economic structures of their families, cultures, religions, and the ethnicities that have shaped them. Whittington calls this a Systemic perspective. These studies found that different traditions put emphasis on different aspects of strategy according to what is culturally and socially important. Pascale (1982) identified that the Japanese do not have a word for Corporate Strategy. The North American and Anglo-Saxon assumption is for individual autonomy and free-enterprise as compared to the European preference to support national interests (Wilks, 1990). The point is that the concept of strategy is a culturally specific activity. A number of research studies will develop this point in Chapter Two. The Systemic view is fundamental to Socio-Technical Systems Analysis described earlier and applied in later Chapters. This is based on the assumption that what happens in the organisation can be understood as systemic to the organisation's structure, to the individuals and to the wider social and cultural environment. This study provides a very detailed basis for STSA that explains how, one particular systemic perspective, can be applied to an analysis of organisation strategy.

1.4.6. The incrementalist contribution

In a seminal and influential essay from the 1950s, Lindblom coined the phrase '*muddling through*'. In Lindblom's view, the reality of a *strategy chain or incremental steps* is a rough, inexact and flawed succession of decisions that will inevitably ignore relevant values and opportunities (Lindblom, 1959; 81). Lindblom argues that decision makers are intimately knowledgeable about possible consequences because of past experience. The incremental nature of decision-making can be compared favourably, he argues, to rational decision-making systems that assume comprehensive analysis of all possible consequences and opportunities because:

> *'An administrator enjoys an intimate knowledge of his past sequences that "outsiders" do not share, and his thinking and that of the "outsider" will consequently be different in ways that may puzzle both. Both may appear to be talking intelligently, yet each*

may find the other unsatisfactory' (Lindblom, 1959; 88).

It is far more likely that those with leadership responsibility have identified and created certain conditions that will sustain the integrity of the organisation. Lindblom acknowledges that he is simply giving a formal framework to existing practice (Quinn, 1980; Mintzberg, 1985).

He differentiates between two views of strategy formulation – rational comprehensive analysis and successive limited comparisons, which became known as incrementalism. The first, the *root* method, derives from economic theory and the application of statistical analysis to a range of areas like operations and decisions. In relation to complex problems, Lindblom argues that the root method is '*impossible'* (1959; 80). His view supports the assumptions of bounded rationality theory developed by Simon (1945) & Cyert and March (1992 – first pub. 1963) in which the application of a comprehensively rational rubric is impossible.

The second, the *branch* method that is closer to the Broad view of strategy, assumes that values and strategic means cannot be separated, conceptually, practically or in evaluative terms. That, in practice, strategic means are chosen *without* a clear understanding of the ends or the values that are being served. Value conflicts are inherent in most strategic decisions, but particularly in complex social and economic problems. This suggests that strategy formulation involves choosing alternatives '*...that offer different marginal combinations of values'* (Lindblom, 1959; 82). Generalised objectives, regardless of analytical basis are of little relevance in this scenario. Thus, Lindblom argues that we cannot know what our marginal values are, nor can we evaluate them *until* we choose a strategic means (1959; 82). Lindblom's *branch* method argues that the test of a good strategy is agreement:

> *'Agreement on policy thus becomes the only practicable test of the policy's correctness. And for one administrator to seek to win the other over to agreement on ends as well would accomplish nothing and create quite unnecessary controversy'* (Lindblom, 1959; 84).

Clark's 1956 study on the failure of US adult education to address strategic needs was developed with Lindbloms' ideas (see Chapter Two).

In the 1970s, James Brian Quinn built on Lindblom's work through a study of the dynamics of strategic change in ten companies. Quinn's rigorous

analysis found that effective strategies tend to emerge from an organisation's *'strategic subsystems'* each of which is concerned with different aspects of an organisation and '*which is blended incrementally and opportunistically into a cohesive pattern that becomes the company's strategy'* (Quinn, 1989; 46). Each subsystem contains its own logic and has its own normative approach. Because of bounded rationality and the limits set by these subsystems, incrementalism has to take place – but it is not muddled, rather it is logical. Strategy emerges through consensus that is facilitated mainly by the organisation's leader. For Quinn, strategy must be a managed process, or at least *'managed incrementalism'* (1989; 58) that is sensitive to the evolutionary and emergent processes of a large organisation. He identified that '*ethos'* was a central function of strategy that changed when the resources and potential of different functions changed and shifted (1989). Thus, one of the features that supported strategy was the relationship between employees and changing values.

Lindblom's contribution is the idea that managers have an intimate and unique perspective on the decisions within their remit – that known values can be satisfied through decisions because of existing, individual, knowledge about the consequences of different decision options. He offers the concept of marginal values – the preferences that are not central – and argues that it is impossible to know how decisions will affect these values until action has been taken. This is close to the social psychology view offered above. It also captures some of the conflict the individual feels as described in the socio-technical view. Quinn's approach stands back from the individual manager and offers a perspective from the lens of the organisation's social tapestry. It is not clear how functions come to be synonymous with an ethos or culture but like Andrews, Quinn implies a tension between the values of the individual leader and the social process.

1.5. Conclusion

After the middle ages, moral concepts began to operate as rationally supported, divine principles promoted as instrumental towards man's *'true end'*. However, because this idea was dependent on its own precepts, philosophers predicted that the search for divine truth would fail.

By the nineteenth century, the idea of rationally supported, divine principles was being promoted through Protestant and Anglican values. This idea provided the precept for the dominant form of modern organisation, which purported a

relationship between a strong individual work ethic, self-improvement, equality and the common good. At the same time the emergence of the professional classes supported the view that rational thinking and methods would provide long lasting benefits to institutions and society. But, philosophers later identified that the individual was left with a paradox. Essential relationships engage the individual in multiple modes of practice (work, lifestyle, aesthetics) that are not of the individual's making; having learnt to prize autonomy, it was actually impossible to achieve. This provides a foundation for exploring the relationship between the organisation, the individual and aspirational values.

An analysis of epistemological assumptions within the contemporary social sciences led to three main points: 1. The social world imparts meaning and provides potency to values, 2. Dynamic social mechanisms such as sensemaking and individual anxiety may explain how values influence behaviours and actions in the organisation at all levels of individual, group and organisation, and, 3. The relationship between values and strategy may be more empirically observable at the level of the individual and the group rather than at the organisation-wide level.

A thorough examination of the strategy literature revealed that the authors most likely to offer insights into empirically observable mechanisms (e.g. Lindblom, Barnard, and to a lesser extent, Andrews) tend to view the making of strategy with the individual in the foreground. Perspectives that position strategy in the context of the whole organisation imply a deep tension for the individual manager/CEO in the need for values to be socially experienced and the desire to justify values with reference to rational-analytic assumptions.

Whilst both lenses imply values *are* a component of strategy and, *are* reflected in behaviours and actions, neither offer a framework for understanding why values are important, how values are reflected in behaviours of individuals and groups, or how those values come to influence strategic outcomes and the shaping of an organisation.

The next Chapter will build on these ideas and continue the search for mechanisms and explanations in the context of specific research studies that examine values in the organisation.

Chapter Two: A review of the research on values in the organisation.

> *'The never ending dilemma of the individual vs. the group, organisation or society, whether leaders create organisations and cultures or whether culture and social forces create leaders, how organisations influence their members and, at the same time, how members change the organisation cannot be understood without seeing the interplay between the system and the individual'* (Schein, 2006; 287).

2.1. Introduction

The Introduction to this study defined values as preference statements by individuals usually offered in the context of what 'ought' to be or what 'should' be,

> *'All group learning ultimately reflects someone's original values, someone's sense of what ought to be as distinct from what is'* (Schein, 1992; 19).

Chapter One identified that the literature of strategy indicates a relationship with values but offers no clear explanation about how individual values shape a whole organisation. Chapter One also indicated that the relationship between values and strategy may be more empirically observable at the level of the individual and the group, rather than at the organisation wide level.

Bearing these two points in mind, this Chapter will offer a review of research studies that focus on values in the organisation. The literature is reviewed in two parts, 1. Studies that assume values are coherent and pervasive to the whole organisation and, 2. Studies that assume values are incoherent - fragmented, differentiated and/or ambiguous.

The main purpose behind this review is to identify and summarise the ontological and epistemological themes and findings that might indicate processes or explanations by which strategy 'absorbs' values.

2.2. Research studies that assume coherent values

Studies that apply this assumption equate with the anthropological and sociological assumptions described in Chapter One. The use of the word *'coherent'*

has been specially chosen because of its implications on behaviour. The word is used in this study in the sense of unity,

> *'...firstly of immaterial, of intangible things, such as the points of an argument, the details of a picture, the incidents, characters and setting of a story; or secondly of material and of objective things that are bound into a unity by a spiritual, intellectual or aesthetic relationship as through their clear sequence or their harmony with one another; it therefore commonly connotes an integrity which makes the whole and the relationship of its parts clear and manifest'* (Pines, 1994;54).

An equal opportunity employer's policy might be described as being coherent with an organisation's 'values', if the organisation, for instance, claims to put a value on diversity in the workplace. This implies that the individuals working in the organisation share a set of meanings that relate the concepts of equality and diversity to one another. Strategically, the implication is that these shared meanings impact on the organisation's practices as an employer and as a workplace.

The seductive (Whittington uses the term comforting – 2001) nature of this idea may stem from the assumptions discussed at the start of Chapter One – the utilitarian benefits that result from individual action, hard work, education, self improvement, access to opportunity and so on. Rescher (1969; 5) described values as '*things of the mind that are to do with the vision people have of "the good life" for themselves and their fellows...*'. In 1938, Chester Barnard used the word *morals* as a synonym for values and in 1947 George Homans used the term '*sentiments'*,

> *'Morals most commonly regarded as important or dominant are those professed publicly. The mere fact that they are publicly professed unquestionably has an effect upon conduct generally, although the conduct affected is not necessarily in harmony with such public codes' (*Barnard, 1938; 265*).*

Values have come to be associated with a moral ideology and with a conduct that indicates *'...what is wrong and the values that define the positive goals in life'* (Wright, 1971; 5). This moral frame seems to be inextricably bound with an individual search for self-esteem and enhancement of identity (Rokeach, 1973). In turn, this is dependent upon social approval and social relations, i.e. individuals may

cohere around a value because they think it is a good thing and because it will reflect well on them. But this does not mean that meaning is shared.

The assumption is that it might be possible to discern a pattern of inter-related activities occurring in the organisation that appear to be independent of the individuals involved (Weick and Roberts 1993). Thus the organisation is reified in relation to action, values and behaviours all of which have gone beyond the individual and, somehow become 'part' of the organisation. Such coherency is regarded as relevant to the process of strategy making because '*...strategic management only makes sense in the context of interdependent choice'* (Freeman et al, 1988: 823). Thus, for all these reasons and more (discussed below) the organisation is viewed as a mini-society (Allaire and Firisotu, 1984).

This section is split between studies that assume the organisation to be a reflection of the values of the CEO and/or manager group and studies that assume the organisation is a reflection of its founders. It will also outline Edgar Schein's suggested relationship between values and strategy in the organisation. One study, in particular (Leonard Barton, 1992), will be discussed in some detail because of the finding that coherent values are paradoxical for the organisation.

First however, since 1984, a group of north-American researchers have been examining individual values in the context of strategy and leaders, CEOs and senior teams of managers. Their combined efforts are the most coherent of all the work discussed in this Chapter (see Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick & Brandon, 1988; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Hambrick, 1997; Geletkanycz & Hambrick, 1997, Gamble &Gibson, 1999; Hambrick, 2005).

2.2.1. Upper Echelons Theory: the organisation as a reflection of manager values

In 1984, Donald C Hambrick and Phyllis Mason developed Upper Echelons theory. It was originally inspired by the Carnegie school (See Chapter One) and a question that formed in Hambrick's mind about what influences the individuals *'who shape what happens to their companies, see the world through the lenses of their personal histories, knowledge, values and other biases'* (Hambrick, 2005; 110).

The theory was developed to help explain the view that individual manager decisions are based on narrow sets of information that are filtered and refiltered through a particular set of lenses and stimuli. Values are one psychological factor that makes up the manager's orientation and individualized interpretation of a situation and are interwoven with experience, age, background, functional training background etc.. Geletkanycz argues that values will yield an effect on strategic choice because they influence decision making in a number of ways. England (1967 and 1975) argues that values directly affect strategic choice through a similar process called behaviour channelling. Behaviour Channelling narrows and refines the intellectual effort involved in perceiving and selecting information in order to make associations and build connections (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Hambrick, 2005; 112-113).

> *'The central idea of upper echelons theory is that executives act on the basis of their highly individualized interpretations of the situations and options they face. That is executives inject a great deal of themselves – their experience, individualities, and values – into their behaviours. To the extent those behaviours are of consequence, say in shaping strategy or influencing the actions of others, organizations then become reflections of their top managers' (Hambrick, 2005; 109).*

Thus, values are seen as an organising tool that can be *'broadly defined as principles for ordering consequences and alternatives according to preference'* (Geletkanycz, 1997; 618).

Upper Echelons Theory relies on the idea of a filtering mechanism for values that transcend the individual to form organisation decisions. Within the filtering process a number of psychological factors and general life experiences come together to form a limited field of vision.

Upper Echelons Theory relies on three stages of filtering and reality forming: the limited field of vision narrows to a field for selectively perceiving a range of decision arenas; psychological factors and life experiences then influence an interpretation; finally, a construed reality forms in which decisions can be made and feedback (e.g. organisational outcomes) can be experienced (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick, 2005; 113). This process relies on the idea that the individual constantly constructs his/her sense of self – *'I am, therefore, I do'... 'I*

am'...and so on. Ultimately, through this process of filtering and screening, the manager's orientation is manifest in choices (Hambrick & Mason, 1984)

Three early influential research studies provide support for upper echelons theory (Hambrick, 2005; 115). 1. Managers will attend to information according to their exposure to the goals, and to goal-reinforcing factors of a function. Simply put, sales people respond to sales-related problems in a complex issue. Other people interested or affected by political dynamics will respond to issues through a political filter (Dearborn and Simon, 1958). In contrast to most of the studies referenced in this text, Dearborn and Simon's study incorporates organisation context into the methodology. They depart from the coherent assumption in their finding that the organisation is made up of loosely coupled subcultures in which the values of professional and operational subsets are differentiated. If an organisation's activities are effectively decoupled (e.g. the teacher's values in the classroom versus values subscribed to parenting) then change will be very difficult and will occur incrementally (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This suggests that whilst values are coherent within subsystems, it does not support the idea that values are shared at the level of the organisation (see research studies on differentiated values in Section 2.2).

2. The second study found a relationship between business unit strategy, managerial characteristics and strategy effectiveness, i.e. growth-oriented businesses sustained a high tolerance for ambiguity during periods of strategic change because of the organisation's long experience with marketing and sales. This was manifest in the managers' characteristics and in their approach to strategy. Alternatively, internal harvesting strategies, maximizing cash flow, for example, were associated with a low tolerance for ambiguity, probably through long experience in accounting and operations (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984). The finding suggests that the type of strategy and its effectiveness reflects the values of the individuals involved.

3. The third study by Miller, Kets de Vries and Toulouse (1982) found that firms with CEOs who have an internally focused locus of control are more likely to innovate and exist in a more dynamic environment than firms with CEOs whose locus of control is externally oriented. In the cases where the CEO has achieved a long tenure, the relationship between locus and innovation is even stronger, prompting the researchers to conclude that executive individuality shapes strategy and not the other way around.

These studies suggest that organisations are shaped and directed by patterns that correspond to individual orientations, professionally derived values and psychological traits. Hambrick's theory is located between the individual and the organisation process in which values are modified in a particular context and towards a particular orientation. It does not examine shared values at the level of the organisation, rather at the level of the senior decision making team who are assumed to be making decisions *for the whole organisation.*

The research supports the idea that the organisation is a reflection of its top managers, but neglects other individuals and, particularly, non-management individuals. The question is, how could the values of one individual or one group (if they exist as a group – see Hambrick's behaviour integration theory, below) of managers dominate complex layers of social structure? For example, Sturdivant et al (1985) examined the view that individual values are integral to corporate strategy. The authors used a psychometric test to measure the level of individual conservatism in over 1400 executives (1985; 32). The hypothesis was that conservative values (resistance to change, preference for tradition, cautious behaviour) would impact negatively on financial performance and on related strategies to develop corporate social responsibility. The results were not conclusive as the authors did not find a relationship between individual conservatism and poor financial performance.

Hambrick and D'Aveni (1992) then found that manager-group qualities actually deteriorated as firms moved towards bankruptcy, suggesting that shared values are only kept buoyant through high performance or other, context-specific measures of success. Geletkanycz (1994) found that the stronger the manager's tie to intra-industry networks the more the firm would pursue strategies that conformed to industry norms (Geletkanycz & Hambrick, 1997). Both these studies suggest that other organisation, contextual and environment factors are important in understanding how the CEO/manager group adjust their values as they respond to change.

In 1997 Donald Hambrick deepened his examination around aspects of upper echelons theory. He wrote that;

> *'...a firm's strategic performance – how a strategy is selected and implemented and, in turn, the way the organisation performs – depends not so much on the characteristics, behaviours and*

> *backgrounds of the CEO alone as it does on the sum of characteristics, behaviours and experiences of the entire senior executive group and how they are able to work together to take full advantage of these strengths' (*Hambrick, 1997; 26*).*

Hambrick found that, in contrast to the accepted view, manager groups *don't* have 'team' properties or characteristics. He found instead that CEOs act as solo operators and one-man shows with a large amount of discretion. Sometimes CEOs did not interact with their group and sometimes did not even meet other members of the group (Hambrick 1994). In 1998, Hambrick wrote about the failings of those organizations that do not integrate their manager group. These failings include unrealized economies of scope, poorly coordinated brands and market positions and failure to exchange learning across business units (Hambrick, 1998). So, Hambrick set about trying to establish a way of operationalising an idea of behaviour integration,

> *'Behavioural integration is the degree to which mutual and collective interaction exists within a group, and it has three main elements or manifestations; information exchange, collaborative behaviour and joint decision-making' (*2005; 121*).*

Hambrick argues that the ability to process and act collectively is what counts in the manager group: this provides an integrated logic and a basis for action. So, when the environment shifts and creates new demands, the group's response has a collective capacity to process information and interlock its activities. Behaviour integration suggests that the degree to which the senior manager group engages in mutual and collective interaction can be observed through three broad characteristics; the quantity and quality of information exchange, collaborative behaviour and joint decision-making.

Hambrick has identified a number of the features of a Behaviour Integration Theory but it has not yet been rigorously examined (Hambrick, 2005; 121):

- The manager group requires a clear relatively permanent identity with clear boundaries about who is in the group and who is not;
- The group needs to do 'real work', not delegate, and it needs to spend time and be willing and want, to spend time together;
- Individuals should be able to work across functions and disciplines in an ad hoc and permanent fashion;

- Turnover should be gradual and staggered;
- Incentives should be of a medium term and long term nature;
- The CEO leadership needs to be open, encourage candour and discourage agendas that are not open, reinforce mutual trust, value disagreement and constructive conflict, de-individualize debate and ensure that the capacity for integration is always present (Hambrick, 1997; 28-29).

Upper Echelons Theory provides a mechanism for understanding how the individual manager forms a value-based orientation. It implies a settling down of valued meanings and a process of interaction that reflects a need for routine assumptions, scripts and accounts of how to do work and how to respond to constraints and surprises. Hambrick identifies that understanding how individual values of managers form a collective reality is not sufficient to explaining effective strategy at the level of the organisation. He identifies that a number of organisational factors need to be very carefully managed in order to effect strategy.

This is consistent with the assumptions of STSA that do not assume coherent values (see Chapters One and Three). However, Hambrick's outline of behaviour integration still does not address the question above; how could the integrated behaviours of one group dominate, and shape, a whole organisation?

Further studies on the theme of the CEO/manager groups are discussed in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.2. The organisation as a reflection of its founders' values

These studies examine variations on the idea that the founders' individual values are mirrored in the structures, practices and values of the organisation.

Selznick, 1957 & 1966; Kimberly, 1987, Leonard Barton, 1992; Schein, 1992; Horton Smith, 1999 examine the idea that founders' values are strongly associated with the organisation's most basic assumptions, decisions and operations that are taken for granted (Selznick, 1957).

The theory is that a new organisation makes many founding and birthing decisions around governance, structure, location, remit, employees, recruitment, hierarchy & accountability, financial control, work practices, operational routines etc. All these founding and birthing decisions are rooted to individual values that have a critical influence on the organisation over the long-term (See Horton Smith,

1999, and see Chapter Five for the founders' story of Educate Together). Founders' direct the attention and action of other individuals by imprinting unspoken, implicit rules on the organisation's apparatus and work practices (Selznick, 1957; Argyris, 1985, Schein, 1992).

Haveman and Khaire (2004) conducted an analysis of the impact of founders' ideological zeal on organization failure in the US magazine industry from 1741 to 1861. The authors equate founders' values with ideological zeal. They found that ideology is a strong moderator of the relationship between founder succession and organization failure. In their review of the literature, Haveman and Khaire found inconsistencies in theoretical and empirical studies of succession and founder succession, in particular. They examined a range of traits and contingencies like professional affiliations. They also found that 'founder' ideology, conditions non-founder managers following failure,

> *'Our analysis highlighted a concept that has hitherto received little attention from organizational theorists, namely the extent to which organizations originate from and reflect founders' strong ideologies'* (Haveman and Khaire, 2004)

However, their study, did not examine the mechanisms of ideological transfer so they were not able to isolate factors that might contribute to failure.

Schein argues that founders' values become embedded 'rules' that govern behaviour, provide education and socialization and act as a surrogate for management in an organization or group (Schein, 1967). Founders determine the philosophical paradigm of the organisation. Subsequently, founders seek managers with a specific set of individual values and preferences in order to influence the shape and direction of the organisation (Schein, 1992 – see below).

But Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1979) argue that these 'rules' do not necessarily relate to what the organization actually does because values are not located across the organisation as is implied. Rather, they are differentiated according to the functions, knowledge and operations that require different assumptions.

The main critique of this strand is the assumption that founders' values continue to influence an organisation over the long-term and the lack of clarity about what has to happen in order for founding values to be modified by non-founder managers.

2.2.3. The organisation 'has' values: studies that support reification

The rather coherent body of research described above is an exception in this field. The themes now become more fragmented and more difficult to tie together in a critical review of research. The provenance in this field in general is very weakly tied together. For instance, Nohria and Ghoshal's 1994 study on shared values does not cite Leonard Barton's (1992) pivotal and seminal study on organisation innovation, the role of core values and distinctive competencies that was published in the same journal. Chattopadhyay et al, 1999 presented a research article about executive beliefs, without reference to the earlier work by Geletkanycz (1997) in the same journal. Gamble and Gibson's 1999 article on executive values and decision making did not cite Narayan Pant & Lachman's 1998 article on value incoherency and strategy, again, published in the same journal.

One of the literature's themes that *is* consistent is the anthropological and sociological assumption that the organisation 'has' values. There are two closely related assumptions within this area. The first has already been introduced through the work of Donald Hambrick & Co. - the organisation is a mirror of the individual values of leaders, CEOs, managers. The second is much more general in that the organisation is assumed to 'have' values. The assumption is that values 'enter' or become part of the organisation in various ways and are then acquired or learnt by the organisation's incumbents, socialisation being the most commonly cited mechanism (see Schein, 1967). Hofstede explains the logic,

> *'Members' values depend primarily on criteria other than membership in the organization, like their gender, nationality, class and occupation. The way these values enter the organization is through the hiring process; an organization recruits people of a certain gender, nationality, class, education and age. Their subsequent socialization in the organization is a matter of learning the practices: symbols, heroes and ritual'* (Hofstede, 2002; 72).

Reification of the organization occurs when we ascribe metaphors to its

culture (Smircich, 1983; Meyerson and Martin 1987; 623). It is an abstraction that is useful to help understand complex and chaotic processes. There is a wide literature across the social disciplines that assumes organizations 'have' central, or core, values that need to be understood in order to adapt to new business strategies and changing contexts (Collins and Porras, 1996; Schwartz, 1992; van Rekom et al, 2006).

Child's study of Cadbury Ltd., identified *Cadburyism* (emphasis added),

> *'... a strong ideology in the consciousness of family members, managers and workers, who all perpetuated it. It appears to have been both a benchmark for change and a force for mediating that change. As a benchmark it provoked key change agents deliberately to set out their case against the fundamentals of the tradition'* (Child & Smith, 1986; 584).

A range of terms is used to suggest reified culture - *'root metaphors'* (Smircich, 1983), *'taken for granted assumptions'* (Selznick, 1957; Schein, 1992), and *'home perspectives'* (Martin, 2002). Rodrigues argues that authors employ these metaphors as a reference to organization culture and its ontology but they can be usefully understood to refer to *'the substance of culture in terms of what an organisation's members perceive to be its central values'* (Rodrigues, 2006; 554).

The Introduction to this study identified that a weakness of this literature review is the reliance on North-American research journals, which, overwhelmingly focus on the coherency of values rather than on incoherence, ambiguities or other explanations (Alvesson, 1993). The propositions that explain this dominance have not been extensively tested (Nohria and Ghoshal, 1994). One explanation might be because incoherent values assume a reliance on excessive structural and administrative control, whereas coherence in values is assumed to rely on cultural control (Nohria and Ghoshal, 1994). In the former, actions are constrained by actual controls, and in the latter actions are constrained by social and cultural affects. The historical assumptions of the western organisation described in Chapter One suggest that individual actions in a social context are understood as having society-wide benefits. Knoppen et al (2006) argue that the theory originates in an Anglo-Saxon context. There is an attempt to redress the dominance in Section 2.3.

An early study by Bendix (1956) found that organisation structure was

influenced directly by manager ideologies. White and Ruh, 1973, used Rokeach's 1968 values instrument and found that it was unable to disaggregate manager's individual values from those of the organisation. White and Ruh were trying to find out if individual values moderated the manager's relationship between participation in decision-making and his/her attitude to the job. They could not find a relationship. Hage and Dewar's 1973 study found that the informal, functional elite was more likely to predict change than the group of decision makers who held the formal mandate for change. This supports the work of Dearborn and Simon (1958) and Gupta & Govindarajan (1984), described above. Zucker (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1992) argue that values are rooted/embedded in the technical systems influenced by knowledge and other resources that can be accessed from the environment. However, the '*enduring truth'*, according to Scott, (2005; 468) is that organization structures are products of *both* technical *and* institutional pressures (Scott and Meyer, 1983).

Qualitative research by Negandhi et al (1971) found that management's value system is strongly related to a range of organisation factors. For example, "progressive" value systems were predictive of high performing organizations. Reimann (1974) uses a values instrument on the basis that each organisation has a unique management philosophy - a 'value system' (Steiner 1971; 121-122). Reimann argued that this value system represents a fundamental driving force in business that may be more important than tangible resources. In a rare example of scholarly cross-referencing, Reiman does not regard Neghandi's extensive interview method as replicable; it is too difficult to isolate factors of organisation context to produce generalized results (1974; 419). Reimann refers to the dearth of research and the emphasis instead on only theoretical and philosophical work. He argues that it is difficult to operationalise the broad concept but easier to operationalise specific aspects or subsets, like the relationship with the environment and other 'publics'. Reiman found evidence that unique value systems may be related to specific aspects of an organisation's structure and ownership. Reiman's study identifies three problems associated with values research, the lack of empirical work, the difficulty of identifying the levels at which values operate and empirically observing them and the paradoxical problem of context. In order to understand values in the organisation, contextual factors need to be taken into account have the effect of limiting the generalisability of the research (see case study approach described in

Chapter Three).

Blau and McKinley's (1979) study found that award winning architectural innovations were positively related to the values of the firm's elite partners and *were not* associated with client needs. Sussman et al (1983) used a qualitative method to analyse corporate speeches over a range of years, themes and industries to discover a source of corporate-industry values. In this study, speeches are regarded as a possible source of values, free from the potential bias of the structured questionnaire (Sussman, 1983; 187). The study was designed to identify values trends and patterns in industries from 1950-1975. The majority of speeches were concerned with world and national economics over a twenty-five year period across twenty-eight industries. The study concluded that, if corporate speeches were indicative of values, future research should establish whether they have predictive power or are merely a temporal account of espoused values. It also argued that speeches could be a source for understanding the individual values of leaders (1983; 196).

Geletkanycz's (1997) study on the effects of cultural values on manager's commitment to the status quo is designed to test the view that managers are permanently poised for change and redirection. The study focused on the influence of national/cultural values in shaping manager values (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996), their view of the environment and appropriate responses to change (Schein, 1987). She found that manager values influence the strategy formulation process (Hambrick & Brandon, 1988; Geletkanycz, 1997). The method incorporated Hofstede's 1980 values typology,[12] to test values across different cultures. Five core dimensions were selected and applied across a number of western countries: individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, power distance (hierarchical preferences), and long term/short term orientation and adaptation preferences. Cultural values are defined as a set of shared assumptions, whilst culture represents the system of socially constructed meaning and preferences that a group develops as it collectively negotiates environmental forces and the complexities of internal integration (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 1987). The study found that cultural values influence the strategic choice process (Geletkanycz, 1997; 629) and shape the orientations of managers. It also found that cultural values

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[12] This typology appears to be the most widely tested in the literature surveyed. The value concepts are rooted in anthropological and sociological literatures (Hickson, 1996). It has been tested on 88,000 individuals and 50 countries.

supporting individual autonomy and achievement foster a sense of ownership in the organisation's profile. Managers with a short-term orientation and reflective stance have a reduced ability to see the need for strategic change (Geletkanycz, 1997; 629). Some of the findings were counterintuitive, prompting the author to question the *'black box of executive mindsets'* (1997; 629-630). For instance, managers whose national culture is averse to uncertainty were not committed to the strategic status quo. This was explained by the argument that commitment to strategy poses a future threat, not a current threat.

Also, Schein identified that basic assumptions about time vary widely across cultures (1992). These two studies highlight the importance of incorporating context into research methodologies.

Chattopadhyay et al (1999) found that manager beliefs, rather than values are more likely to be influenced by the beliefs of other managers within the elite rather than by functional experience. Wade-Benzoni et al (2002) studied both the effects of individual and institutional values to uncover value constructs that would impact on negotiations. They found that a value-based framework was a better way of explaining failed negotiations than traditional decision theory.[13]

An influential study by Collins and Porras (2000; 73) identified core values as the *'...central and enduring tenets of the organisations'* – a 'glue' that holds the organization together *and* creates rigidities when business practices are changing (see also Leonard Barton, 1992; Collins and Porras, 1996;).

Adkins and Naumann (2001) studied the relationship between individual work values and job performance as it might be moderated by 'values of achievement'. They established from the literature that there is little empirical evidence that there is a relationship between actual performance and the desire to work hard and accomplish something difficult (2001; 453). They defined values as deeply held beliefs that influence perception and guide choices (2001; 453). They found a relationship between individual values and the motivation process leading to

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[13] This conclusion is not very surprising. Simon (1945; 93-94) defines traditional rational decision making as the assumption that rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow and a choice among all possible alternative behaviours. In reality, knowledge of consequence is always fragmentary, values can only be imperfectly anticipated and in real life only a very few alternatives come to mind.

performance. Their recommendation is that research should focus on the mechanism through which this happens.

van Rekom et al (2006) offer a methodology to empirically assess core values in the single organization. They argue that core values are central because they are instantiated (actualized) in daily life;

> *'People use their expectations of what the actions of others will be in order to determine the consequences of their own actions' (*van Rekom et al, 2006; 179, after Simon, 1945).

They argue that it does not matter whether the value is espoused or taken for granted; its relevance in organisation life is what counts. They argue that it is possible to differentiate between values that may be desirable and the values that actually drive behaviour.

They developed a method of asking individuals across the single organisation what was important to them, what they had done recently, and why behaviours had been applied in a certain way. They cross-referenced behaviours across the organisation and developed a hierarchical list of core values. This method is a significant contribution to the field because it recognises that values are embedded into behaviours and does not assume that values have to be understood first in order to understand what drives behaviour. It does not assume that espoused values are indicators of 'instantiated' values. It allows for a broad interpretation of the individual's behaviour, and it is context-rich. Its weakness is that it does not reveal anything about the mechanism through which individual values become instantiated.

Edgar Schein does offer a theory about the relationship between values and organisation culture that may develop the strands of research offered above.

2.2.4. Edgar Schein's model of shared values

Schein is primarily interested in organisation culture. He argues that culture is visible in artifacts of behaviour and he identifies espoused values as justifications for what individuals say they value. He assumes that espousals are inherent to strategies, values statements and other corporate communications,

> *'Often such lists of values are not patterned, sometimes they are even mutually contradictory, and often they are inconsistent with observed behaviour. Large areas of behaviour are often left*

> *unexplained, leaving us with a feeling that we understand a piece of the culture but still do not have the culture as such in hand' (*Schein, 1992; 21*).*

Schein's explains that founders first determine the organisation's most basic assumptions by testing their own espoused values in practice (1987; 19). Values that reliably solve the group's problems are more likely to become *basic assumptions* (Selznick used the term *taken-for-granted values* in 1957 and Argyris used the term *theories-in-use* (see Argyris and Schon, 1996).

Scein argues that every organisation has a contextualised basis for its values and, thus, for making its decisions. These are deeply rooted assumptions about time, reality and human relationships that adapt to environmental change through a trial and error process (Schein1992, 16-27). Founders and, later, CEOs/manager groups emulate and model these basic assumptions. The earlier the stage, the more influence the founders will have. Initially, the founding or manager group explore problem solving and test out various methods to achieve its objectives. The methods that fail will be discarded and others will be tried, and so on, until some methods succeed. Over time, the values that have provided a basis for choosing the successful methods, the ones that delivered the group's objectives, are forgotten. They become taken for granted and learnt. This is typically manifested in practices that are simply unquestioned to the point where the original rationale is forgotten. Schein argues that the process of socialisation is critical for the organisation in terms of acquiring basic assumptions, maintaining them and in terms of continuity of leadership.

He suggests that espoused values are tested through the solving of a problem and/or by providing a sense of comfort and reduction in anxiety and uncertainty. This allows the founding or manager group a complete sense of its own integrity;

> *'A set of values that becomes embodied in an ideology or organizational philosophy thus can serve as a guide and as a way of dealing with the uncertainty of intrinsically uncontrollable or difficult events' (*Schein, 1987; 20).

For Schein, the dynamic that supports the process that turns espoused values into basic assumptions is the psychological desire that the events around us would be consistent with our own assumptions (See also Snygg, 1953, re: Chapter One,).

This does not mean that we will not distort, project or create illusions in order to falsify *'what we see'* (Schein, 1987; 22,) but it does mean that, at some point, whether *'real'* or *'illusory'*:

> *'...we will be maximally comfortable with others who share the same set of assumptions and very uncomfortable and vulnerable in situations where different assumptions operate either because we will not understand what is going on, or, worse, misperceive and misinterpret the actions of others'* (Schein, 1987; 23; see also Douglas, 1986).

Schein's work addresses most of the weaknesses identified in the literature above. He does not discriminate between elite or manager groups and individual non-managers, in that any work group with responsibility can use the same basic process and achieve the same result. But he does assume that leaders have the responsibility for embedding and transmitting culture and values across the organisation. However, he does not assume that values are 'known' in advance of behaviour and therefore, allows for the fact that values can be conflicting and ambiguous. He argues that context and the organisation's most basic assumptions is a core component of values (see Chapter Three for more details). Finally, he assumes that the founder and the work group's ability to have integrity around its own task is related to levels of comfort, reductions in anxiety, to problem solving and to the testing of espoused values.

2.2.5. Values and distinctive competencies – a double-edged sword

Leonard-Barton (1992) offers a different explanation for the emergence of shared values. She equates actual values with distinctive competencies such as knowledge skills and abilities. This is different from Selznick's view of competencies as unique characteristics (See Chapter One) but is consistent with Schein to the extent that valued practices are an aggregate of decisions that are made over time (1992:115). However, she argues that these assumptions themselves are founded on values about the *content* and structure of knowledge and the means of *collecting* and *controlling* knowledge. Eventually this becomes an interrelated and interdependent knowledge system. She argues that the values that determine the organisation's knowledge hierarchy are most likely to be rooted in founding decisions (see also Horton Smith, 1980, 1999).

Leonard Barton (1992) examines the organisation paradox that the values that enable a distinctive competence are the same values that cause rigid unchanging practices. Her study focuses on strategic product development across a number of organisations. Her given definition of a distinctive competence is a knowledge set that distinguishes and provides a competitive advantage (1992; 113). She views distinctive competencies as institutionalised; '*that is, they are part of the organisation's taken-for-granted reality, which is an accretion of decisions made over time and events in corporate history'* (Leonard Barton, 1992; 115; see also Selznick 1957; Schein 1987). Distinctive competencies have four dimensions. The fourth, from Leonard Barton's point of view, the less examined dimension is '*the values and norms associated with the various types of embodied and embedded knowledge and with the processes of knowledge, creation and control. In managerial literature, this fourth dimension is usually separated from the others or ignored'* (Leonard Barton, 1992; 113). The other three dimensions (skills and knowledge base, technical systems, managerial systems) are infused with the values and norms assigned within the organisation '*to the content and structure of knowledge*' (Leonard Barton, 1993; 113).

Leonard Barton assigns the following components to the values embedded and institutionalized in an organisation's distinctive competences and views them as one manifestation of culture,

- The content and structure of knowledge;
- The means of collecting knowledge;
- Controlling knowledge;

The origins of values are rooted in the technical systems that date back to the organization's first decisions (Zucker, 1977). Managerial systems evolve over time as employees respond to the interpretation of their role and seek status and, in particular, the rewarding of actions (Giddens, 1984). Leonard Barton argues that a distinctive competence is *'an interrelated interdependent knowledge system'* (1992, 115). However, distinctive competencies are not the sum of the organisation parts. They draw upon only some of the organisation's skills, knowledge and values. The

organisation has skills, knowledge and values that do not contribute to distinctive competencies.

Leonard Barton found that the values that support a distinctive competence and enable its development, also constrain it. For example, individuals have a psychological contract with the organisation and their employers (Barnard, 1938; Rousseau, 2005). Individuals may perceive that 'heroism' will be rewarded and empowerment is an entitlement (see Leonard Barton, 1992; 120). But in situations of project development, she argues, the 'contract' is vulnerable because of the need to step outside boundaries of freedom. The need to succeed, to be emotionally involved, to be rewarded by recognition, and the parallel fear of being constrained creates a significant blurring of roles, formally and informally. She also found that the emphasis on traditional disciplines creates a self-fulfilling prophecy in the same way that biases cause a '*Pygmalion effect*' (Leonard Barton, 1992; 121).

She argues that the values dimension is the least susceptible to change because of its pervasive nature (Leonard Barton, 1992; 124). She found that executives responded to the paradox in four ways – abandonment, recidivism (return to traditional competence), reorientation (e.g. moved to a function where values were more compatible) and isolation (moving the project away from the source of incompatible values).

This suggests that as soon as a core competence is working, it needs to be changed in order to ensure continued variety in thinking and in innovating (Van de Ven, 1986; 600). Weick (1979) argues that values and systems that support rigidities must be constructively discredited to facilitate a renewal and redefinition of distinctive competencies or to develop new ones. This prescription is consistent with social psychology assumptions and the emphasis on sensemaking discussed earlier.

2.2.6. Critique and summary

The majority of the studies in the first part of this review assume that values are coherent in organisations. Whilst most of the studies found elements of coherence between the values of individuals and the organisation as a whole, such studies rely on a number of assumptions,

- That values are coherent;
- That the application of methods will search for coherent factors, characteristics and behaviours rather than incoherent factors;
- That values are known and directed towards behaviours;
- That pre-determined lists of defined or undefined values is an accurate way to gather evidence and interpret relationships between values and the organisation;
- That individual values of importance or influence are those of the elite - manager heads of functional groups or original founders.

It is not clear why there is such an emphasis or preference for the view that values are coherent. For instance, it is not clear why the values of elite groups, managers and founders are preferred as the major source of influence in the organisation. Nor is it clear why values are generally studied as abstract to the organisation context or why values are assumed to direct behaviours and solve problems rather, than for instance, the other way around (Weick, 1979). The van Rekom et al (2006) study found 'instantiated' values are not necessarily related to reported or espoused values, i.e. what happens in the organisation does not necessarily relate to what individuals say they value or to the espoused values that the organisation claims.

The Leonard Barton study outlines a key paradox of values and strategy. Values that offer competitive advantage are the same values that inherently cause rigidities because of their pervasive nature and the resistance individuals and groups will have to change. This finding undermines the assumption of coherent values.

Schein addresses most of the weaknesses inherent to the coherent assumption and provides a clear mechanism that explains how the values of managers, leaders and founders are important to the culture of the organisation and, therefore, to its strategy. This is taken into account in devising a methodology (see Chapter Three). However, Schein also assumes that leadership is limited to the senior managers and elites in the organisation. Further, Schein's description of the process of trial and error does not tally with Leonard Barton's finding that individuals tend

to resort to work avoidance techniques rather than trial and error. She found that individuals abandon practices involving 'new' values or simply 'move' the project away from the source of incompatible values. She found, also, that individuals returned to traditional competencies or functions where values were more compatible (1992).

This assessment of the literature is consistent with Hemmingway's (2005) recent review of the values literature in which she found *'there are inherent, epistemological, ontological and therefore methodological problems associated with the study of values'* (243).

Meyerson and Martin identify that the term 'shared' is dangerous in a research and practitioner context because it becomes,

> *'…a code breaker for identifying relevant manifestations of a culture, seeking for example, a common language, shared values or an agreed upon set of appropriate behaviours'* (Meyerson and Martin, 1987; 624).

Weick identifies the core research problem,

> *'Having separated the two entities and given them independent existence, investigators have to make elaborate speculations concerning the way in which one entity becomes disclosed to and known by the other'* (Weick, 1979; 166).

It assumes that a group's values exist independently of an individual interpretation (Goffman, 1974; 1-2) and it assumes that reality is selectively perceived, rearranged and negotiated (Weick, 1979; 164).

The next section examines the opposite view.

2.3. Research studies that assume incoherent values

The section above offered two variations of the assumption of coherent values 'in' the organisation – the first variation assumes the organisation is a mirror of its founding and managing individuals, and the second, assumes organisations are a container for values. Both imply that the behaviour of the individuals in the whole organisation is or, should be, coherent in supporting effective performance at the organisation level. This is the kernel of the assumption and it gives great power to

the essence of strategy – the ability of human beings as individuals or in groups to consciously shape and structure a whole organisation.

This section is concerned with two strands of the generally opposing view – that values are incoherent. First, values are differentiated (structurally different) when examined by function or specialism; and, second, values are fragmented (e.g. ambiguous and conflicting) when examined in an organisation context.

The fundamental assumption that supports these strands is Lewin's (1947) theory that there is no reason that single organisations cannot be understood as different structures with different properties, cultures, characteristics and behaviours that interact dynamically (see Chapters One &Three). Subsequent research based on Lewin's theory of dynamic wholes reveals that sensitivity to the needs of subgroups in task systems improves group effectiveness (Trist and Bamforth, 1951- see also Chapter Three).

Meyerson and Martin (1987) and then Martin (2002), identify that integral or consistent values is a particularly dominant feature of the organisational culture literature (1987). They argued that it led directly to a self-fulfilling prophecy; *'mini-societies will be found if mini-societies are being looked for in the first place'*. Martin and Meyerson point out that this disregards other perspectives and explanations for behaviour (1987; Martin, 2002).

2.3.1. Values as incoherent and differentiated

> *'Values are undefined when they are not embodied in existing goals and standards of committed groups. They lack specific normative reference and no one knows what various symbols mean....Values may be precarious, then, when there is a strong need for definition of behavioural cues, for identification of what is proper in the name of given symbols. This may be referred to as content weakness, or weakness in the normative system'* (Clark, 1956; 328).

In his study of adult education programmes in Los Angeles in the 1950s, Clark found that executives had abandoned the normative aspects of their role, allowing the public to define the educational content of programmes (1956; 145). The executives were simply servicing local demand and providing flower arranging courses and such like. Clark's groundbreaking, but subsequently

undeveloped, study of what he calls 'precarious values' was based on Barnard's (1938) view that rational structures designed to respond to emerging problems may have the effect of transforming initial/precarious values into new behaviours. Clark goes further to suggest that significant value transformation at the level of sectors may shape values at the level of society (1956; 327 - see Chapter Five, the story of the founding of Educate Together). He proposes that values can be understood best when they are weak – that is by studying organizations that have weak or unestablished values. In this view, social values can be regarded as precarious, marginal or on the edges of society. This is because a lack of specified appropriate behaviour renders the value vulnerable. There is no subsequent provenance for Clark's ideas, but it is an early example (of an idea initiatied by Lindblom) of a study that challenged the idea of congruence.

Guth and Taguiri's influential Harvard Business Review article (1965) found that executives do not necessarily know what their values are and tend to misjudge other executives' values. These authors argue that a better understanding of executive values would create more workable policies. Fallding argues that there is a world of divergence between individual values (1965) and how they are enacted.

Selznick's study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (1966) found that the TVA's ideological façade appeared to be consistent with its intention to democratize decision-making. But the reality was that traditional values in the regional farming and power sectors were conflicting, competitive and operationally embedded. The ideological façade of the TVA was, in fact, imposed upon a perceptual and values vacuum. In contrast to the embedded values of those in the farming and power sectors, the ideology was not rooted in practice.

Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argue that an organisation's mix of integrating and differentiating forces is contingent on its environment and that aspects of both dominant and differentiated values facilitate the organization.

The assumptions of differentiation are rooted in Meyer and Rowan's (1977) work on the US school system. They identified values as consistent and intact within professional and sectoral subcultures but decoupled and loosely coupled across the whole school system. For instance, the authors identified that school curriculum reforms and training investments are exclusively aimed at teachers and have minimal, if any involvement of parents (See Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven). However, the State advocates parental involvement and

emphasizes that parents are partners in education. In practice, parents are detached from the curriculum reform and development cycles (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Loose coupling is also vulnerable to external shocks and incremental change over time (Weick, 1979).

Martin's seminal 2002 study found that in depth examination of the meaning of values revealed differentiated views in an organisation that was represented as having distinct and consistent values. References to an organization as a *'family'* presupposes a range of behaviours that simulate family 'values'. Digging below the surface, however, reveals that the concept of 'family' in the organization can have many different meanings (Martin, 2002),

> *'OZCO is like a midwestern family; good, kind, fair, community folks' Sally, HR Consultant (*Martin 2002; 34*).*

But, from the same employee, later,

> *'Along with this very nice, humanitarian theme goes the mid-western mommy and daddy; daddy makes the decisions and takes care of the family and mommy does the supplementary stuff' (*Martin, 2002; 76*).*

Martin and Meyerson urge the use of different assumptions and methods to advance our understanding of organisation culture.

Cha and Edmondson (2006) examine the conditions under which charismatic leadership and values lead to employee disenchantment, despite best intentions. This qualitative study of a single organization over a long period assumes that shared values play a role in employee effort and organisation performance. The authors found, however, that expansion of values, organization tenure and perceived benefit or harm were moderators for what they call the *'hypocrisy attribution dynamic'*. That a leader's behaviour is perceived as hypocritical, leading to disenchantment. The authors suggest strongly held values are a double-edged sword with the potential for expanding the meaningfulness of work but also increase the prospect of disenchantment and disappointment (see also Haveman and Khaire, 2004 above). This study is useful because it implies that values can result in equivocal, ambiguous contradictions and dispels the myth that having 'values' is somehow a good thing for an organisation.

Haugh et al (2000) use a long-term ethnographic approach to the study of shared values. They investigate four organisations operating in the same industry and located in a common area that was deeply embedded within the industry. The authors are keen to find out if shared sectoral values underpin the culture of each firm and to analyse them in relation to the management processes in each organisation. They find a complex array of values in the four organisations and reject the assumption of cultural homogeneity across organisations.

Murphy (2002) argues that ambiguities and indifference reign in organizations. He found that official values statements meant nothing to workers. He also found that sub-cultural norms override the official ones. But, at the same time, the levels of incongruence and ambiguity do not prevent all the participants in the empirical study saying '*that they would recommend the company to a young person considering the pursuit of career in them'*. The STSA argues that values may operate as defense mechanisms to defend individuals from having to experience anxiety that is too intense (see Chapter Six).

Urbany studied a similar theme in 2005. Value statements - symbolic statements of espoused values - are problematic in the literature and Urbany identified that the emerging issue in the literature is whether such statements marginalize decision-making. Participants in the research reported that value statements provide guidelines for making decisions and that they clarify lines of accountability and general expectations. However, the research showed that there were strong negative effects about the perceived decision-making impact of such statements. Externally related symbolic effects were accorded a greater substance in decision-making and there was significant cynicism about the level of substance in values statements and their relationship to implementation.

Knoppen et al (2006) critiqued the concept of value coherency, arguing that the assumption has had increased attention by scholars and practitioners over the last two decades. The authors claim the theory originates in an Anglo-Saxon context and empirical results have been uneven and contradictory (539). They focus on a triangulated approach using non-management employees, human resource directors and a combination of senior management figures. Authors drew their data from a range of Spanish organizations to counteract the Anglo-Saxon domination in this area. Results show that value congruency is rather rare for the organizations of the sample studied and discussion revolves around issues of culture, possible

clashes between values and the respective impact on the hypothesized sequence: values-satisfaction-performance. The authors proposed that it may be more relevant to focus on incongruencies or ambiguities in future research.

Kabanoff et al (1995) used computer-aided text analysis to assess the strength of values (see Clark, 1956; also Fallding, 1965, England, 1967). The intention was to find out if organizations with different *value structures* differed in the way individuals working in the organisation describe change. They argue that the problem of managing the dual objectives of cohesion and performance creates a justice dilemma, impacted by structures, values and social processes, that affects the individual. They argue that this inherent conflict shapes value systems. They used an instrument of four fundamental value types: egalitarian, meritocratic, elite and leadership by analyzing a range of documents from eighty-eight large, well-known Australian organizations. The text analysis produced value profiles consistent with the researcher's predictions. However, the authors (1995) argue,

> *'That the absence of theory has resulted in an inability to deal with higher-level value concepts, such as value structures, that researchers (e.g., Schwartz, 1992) believe are the key to understanding differences in social groups' and systems' values'.*

The value of this study along with Cha & Edmondson (2006) and Urbany (2005) is the assumption that values are not coherent (Martin, 2002) - that organisations function without such assumed coherency. This is consistent with the STSA view that organisations have functions (e.g. defense mechanisms) that contain and manage value conflict and ambiguity, that such functions are fundamental to the organisation's primary tasks (see Chapters Three, Six and Seven).

Nohria and Ghoshal's (1994) study assumes the presence of incoherent or differentiated *and* shared values. They suggest that this is a better assumption on which to manage centralized and decentralised relationships. The study was done in the context of performance effects of multinational corporations (MNCS). Nohria et al do offer process suggestions; by encouragement of the adoption of a set of shared values alongside on-going socialization (Schein, 1967, 1987), communication and trust-building, the resolution of conflicts and negotiation of tasks can be facilitated (Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994; 494).

The emerging theme in this section of the literature is the lack of rationale for

the dominance of the coherent view of values. The review continues with an examination of the fourth strand of values as ambiguous and conflicting.

2.3.2. Values are incoherent and fragmented (ambiguous, conflicting, dichotomous)

The fragmentation perspective assumes that values are ambiguous.

> *'Acceptance of ambiguity allows individuals greater freedom to act, to play and to experiment' (*Meyerson and Martin, 1987; 640*).*

This perspective examines events in organizations by placing ambiguity in the foreground (Martin, 2002; 130). It is particularly suited to an analysis of individual values in the single organisation because it examines the idea that organizations are,

> *'A web of individuals, sporadically and loosely connected by their changing positions on a variety of issues. Their involvement, their sub-cultural identities, and their individual self-definitions fluctuate, depending on which issues are activated at a given moment'* (Martin, 2002; 153).

> *'Ambiguity is perceived when a lack of clarity, high complexity, or a paradox makes multiple (rather than single or dichotomous) explanations plausible'* (Martin, 2002; 134*).*

It is a context-sensitive approach because it examines values as they occur within a context and is specific to the assumption of organisation as an open system. Ambiguity has a particular salience for some organizations because they are ideologically or cognitively open. They may use unclear technologies (e.g. teaching, advocacy, social work, text book or fiction publishing, performing arts, public sector organizations) and place a high status on creativity. The organisation used for the empirical work in this study is ideologically and cognitively open and applies unclear technologies at its technical, management and grass roots levels (See Chapters Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven).

Authors, whose work, is consistent with this theme have already been represented in Chapter One; Karl Weick's theory of sensemaking, the STSA view that individuals experience anxiety for reasons that include ambiguity, the assumptions of Simon (1945), the Carnegie School, Kurt Lewin, 1947), Katz and Kahn (1966) and other scholars of the social psychology and socio-psychology perspective. No other research studies that focussed on ambiguity, and were

specific to the general strategy literatures, were found for this review.

2.3.3. Critique and summary

Incoherent and differentiated values are associated with subcultures and subsystems in organisations. The assumption is that structural properties of subsystems do not have to be the same just because they are all associated with the same organisation. Thus, it is feasible for structural characteristics and values to be different in the same organisation. The concept of loose coupling is helpful in this regard because it makes the boundaries between subsystems and groups more vivid.

Incoherent and ambiguous values are not discretely represented in the literature but offer a promising strand for research. Research studies have found that values are ambiguous – undefined, unclear, conflicting and paradoxical in nature. The theme emerging in the literature is that incoherent values in one form or another may be functional in an organisation. This balances the dominant and pervasive view that values should be coherent and consistent.

This section forces a number of questions to the surface; it is not clear why the assumption of coherence is so dominant, it is not clear what the strategic advantages are and it is not clear how the concept of organisation-wide strategy can be accommodated to the concepts of either coherent *or* incoherent values.

2.4. Conclusions

At the outset, it was identified that the desire for individual autonomy is paradoxical because it is dependent upon social affirmation and social interaction. Empirically, values are concepts that can only be understood and practiced by individuals. This suggests a tension between the individual's internal world and the realities of the external environment, i.e. a difference between what the individual thinks, says and what actually happens in a social/organisation context.

This Chapter presented two broad strands of research. First, in reflecting coherent values, the organisation is treated as a mirror of its founders and manager group. A subsidiary of this strand treats the organisation as a container for shared meaning amongst individuals with the assumption of coincident interests and purposes. The majority of the research studies in the first strand operate methodologies that do not take into account the history and the context of the organisation. Most studies use questionnaires and values instruments that collect data about espoused and aspirational values. The assumption is that

individuals 'have' values that are used to solve problems and that there is a relationship between what individuals say they value and what they do. The studies attempt to trace a causal relationship between what individuals say they value and the consequences on the organisation as a whole. But the analysis of the literatures and the mixed results of the research studies suggest that the concept of espoused values is meaningless unless it is related to the organisation's basic cultural assumption/s and the precise context in which the value has meaning for the reporter. The conclusion is that instrument based methodologies cannot gather this data unless the study is drawing on an overarching conceptual, philosophically based framework for values (e.g. Wiley, 1988). This feature of the research is consistent with Agle and Caldwell (1999) who found that there is a reluctance to specify whether valued behaviours operate at individual, organization, group or societal levels.

Methodologies that are not context-specific ignore the possibility that unintended consequence is a feature of organization life (Selznick, 1984), that an organisation's *official* goals may not be what the organisation actually seeks in practice (Selznick, 1948,1966; Perrow 1961; Miller and Rice, 1990), that its routine *operational* goals may reflect its true commitments (Allison, 1971) and that there probably <u>are</u> differences between what individuals say, what they intend and what actually happens in organisations;

> *'Choices are often made without respect to tastes. Human decision makers routinely ignore their own, fully conscious, preferences in making decisions. They follow rules, traditions, hunches, and the advice or actions of others. Tastes change over time in such a way that predicting future tastes is often difficult'* (March, 1978; 596).

The second strand examined studies that used contextualised and qualitative approaches in collecting data about values. These studies (e.g. Leonard Barton, 1992; Kabanoff et al, 1995; Urbany, 2005; van Rekom et al 2006; Knoppen et al, 2006; Haugh et al, 2006) provide equivocal results suggesting values have paradoxical, perverse and unintended effects in the organisation. The overall conclusion is that assumptions in this field need to be elaborated to incorporate the idea that values are capable of incoherency as well as coherency.

A weakness of the coherent perspective is a reliance on reported values. The Leonard Barton and Urbany studies (referenced above) relied, instead, on

inferring values from actual rather than reported behaviour and by focussing on the behaviour of individuals rather than the organisation as a whole. The Leonard Barton study found that the coherent values act paradoxically to reverse an organisation's fortunes (1992). Urbany found that official values conceal cynicism about what is really going on and how individuals really feel (2005).

The second strand represents the view that values are differentiated and ambiguous and can be described as incoherent. The aim in doing so is not to establish whether the coherent approach is right and incoherent is wrong, rather, it is to balance the dominant assumption that values are coherent. Unfortunately, or perhaps inevitably, the incoherent strand is undeveloped. Martin (2002) argues that the central problem with the dominance of the coherent assumption is the danger of blindness in research. She claims that a large amount of organisation-culture research has found evidence of integration because it was looking for it. It is clear that other perspectives need to be embraced in order to develop these findings.

The next, Chapter will synthesise these findings to develop a set of epistemological assumptions for collecting the data used to support this study. It will provide a conceptual framework for analysing the empirical data that is presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Finally, it will provide a detailed account of the methodologies used to collect, record, present and analyse the data.

Chapter Three: The Methodology.

'Social science research cannot be value-free' (Martin, 2002; 17).

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to address the following questions; How has the history and development of the strategy concept reflected values? How has the field of strategy and values been ontologically, epistomologically and methodologically examined in relevent research? What methodology could be used to study values in the context of an organisation's strategy? What is the role of values in the founding and strategic development of an organisation, and what role do values play in strategic events and in the response of individuals and groups who have a responsibility to the whole organisation? Finally, what are the consequences of values for the strategic development of the organisation?

The methodology applied to this study has been influenced by a number of personal and professional features directly connected to the researcher –

- As outlined in the Introduction, I have been observing a particular puzzle in organisation life for over 20 years. This doctoral exercise is seamlessly connected to ongoing practice-based observation; the irrational response of work groups when confronted with values that may or may not be relevant to the strategic shaping of the organisation or organisation task;
- During the research period I benefited from a variety of organisation consulting tasks, two significant board roles, a senior management role in a complex organisation, short-term instances of professional training and the onset of professional training as a Group Analyst. I understand this training to be absolutely consistent with the ongoing puzzle outlined in the Introduction and, to the extent, that it is mirrored in this study.

The empirical data for this thesis comes from the Educate Together sector. It was chosen as a focus for this study because it describes itself and is governed as a values-driven organisation, i.e. the CEO and the Board of Directors assume that action taken in the organisation's name is in support of, or connected to, its four

espoused values; a multi-denominational, child-centred[15], co-educational and democratic approach to the delivery of national school education;

The pattern of this research, collection interpretation and analysis of data has been a continuous cycle of moving between the theory and the data. The central problem throughout the period of research was the doctrine of realism (Hammersly, 2002; 66) - that there is an ET 'reality' that is independent of the research, and my role as a researcher. The idea that my role as a researcher would be to 'find' the reality and produce an account of it and the values that either, did or did not, fit with strategy did not make sense to me. My expectation was that I was going to find many different realities and many conflicting and ambiguous interpretations of what reality was and what it could mean for the organisation as a whole. For this reason I chose an ethnographic approach.

Within the ethnographic tradition, I immersed myself in Educate Together, over almost four years. Essentially, this was a naturalistic inquiry based on deep familiarisation with the context of the education (national school system) environment. It involved practical immersion in the Educate Together sector in the informal grass roots, and, formal decision-making structures, the sector's governing structures and working with the staff of the central office who administer the sector's affairs, coordinate school opening and advocate on behalf of all schools. Finally, it involved immersion in the management systems at school level. The school level work was by far the most time intensive and the most developed element of the data that was collected and analysed. The school level data, analysis and findings represent the most significant contribution of this thesis (see Chapter Six).

The collection of data ran along three iterative phases – the origins of the national school system, the history of ET and the actual operation of management

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[15] The data does not include an analysis of the quality of education being delivered to the children. The quality of child-centred education as it might apply in the context of ET's values is not the subject of any of the cases in this study. It was specifically excluded at the outset because that analysis was dependent upon 1. the existence of an ET specific, values-curriculum, 2. a set of concepts and tools capable of defining, analysing and comparing values across schools, 3. an instrument that could audit education pedagogies and practices across the sector and, 4. specific knowledge about the delivery of the primary curriculum. It is intended that this study will provide some insight to ET's understanding about values in ET schools which may assist the development of an instrument to audit education pedagogies in a holistic manner. Since the research was completed, ET *has* published its values-curriculum, *Learn Together: An Ethical Education Curriculum for Educate Together Schools* (2005). In addition, a PhD, on this subject, was being conducted during the research period (See Mulcahy, 2006).

structures in three schools. At the beginning, the data collection process was driven by the theory. Then, as time went on, by the consequences of immersion in the organisation and the affect of continuous reading of theory. Whilst the immersion was iterative, holistic and comprehensive, the data collection and accompanying analysis can be understood at two specific or dual levels,

3.1.1. The collection and analysis of two different types of Presentational Data

- System-related Presentational Data - an academic, historical account of the administrative genealogy of the national school system from which ET evolved. This analysis relied solely on published academic accounts and was supported by a conversation with a leading educational historian (Professor John Coolahan - see Chapter Four);
- Organisation-related Presentational Data – assembled mainly from the perspective of ET's founders and staff. This is a historical, retrospective account of the origins of ET and a descriptive presentation of its eventful history from the beginning up to and including 2000. The data is *Presentational* in the sense that it relied on a number of individuals to provide their perspective and experience of events that took place in the past. This data is presented as 'this is what happened'.... 'these are the actions that 'we' took'... 'these are the events that 'we'/'I' regarded as important'...'these are the facts that provide the reasons for an event/series of events that took place'... 'the reasons for what happened are/were...' etc. The data is supported by numerous archival documents about ET's development. For example, notices of meetings, accounts, minutes of meetings, strategy statements, research reports, letters from The Department of Education and press cuttings. Other documents provided insight into the personal motivations of founders and one founder in particular.

3.1.2. The collection and analysis of two different types of Operational Data,

- Organisation/sector-related Operational Data. This data was collected during real-time, 'live' events of ET across a number of different settings - training events, conferences, parent events, AGMs, meetings of the Directorate etc. It continued iteratively over a period of two and a half years, approximately. The data is implicit rather than explicit to the text and is described in more

detail below.

- School-level Operational Data. This data was collected on a regular and consistent basis over three years. It captures and concerns real-time, 'live' management events and meetings in three ET schools. This data is explicit and represented through three case studies in Chapter Six. Thereafter, it is dealt with through second-order theory building in Chapter Seven. The methods are described in detail below.

The case studies, extracted from the school-level Operational Data, represent the most substantial work in terms of data collection and analysis. The intention is to illustrate the role of values in the democratic involvement of parents as members of voluntary management groups in ET schools. The cases concern management groups structured so that parents and teachers work together. The data examines a founding value of the sector (see Chapter Five); the democratic involvement of parents in the management of ET schools.

This chapter will continue by reflecting upon the implications of Chapters One and Two. It will also describe the process of forming epistemological assumptions that supported the gathering, collecting, recording and analysing of both the Presentational and Operational data. Then, this Chapter will describe, in detail, the methods used to gather and present the Presentational and the Operational Data. Finally, it will present the conceptual framework that was used to analyse and interpret Operational Data collected at the school-level.

3.2. Research implications of the literature review

Chapter One presents a case based on the literature that there is no clear explanation about how values influence the behaviours of individuals and of groups and of the organisation as a whole. One pattern in the literature reveals that empirical data about values may be more revealing if the strategy lens is focussed on the individual and the group rather than on the organisation as a whole. Chapter Two reveals the assumption that the presence of coherent values in the organisation is the dominent assumption of research but there is neither evidence nor rationale for this.

The literature review identifies that the key problems associated with this strand of research are,

- The assumtion of value coherence in the organsation is not clearly supported by explicated mechanisms or explanations as to how values influence the organisation;
- The assumption that the organisation is a mirror of the values of its CEO/manager group and founders and that strategy, therefore, is determined by those values is not supported by a clear rationale;
- A focus on the whole organisation as being embued with certain characteristics or cultures, rather than the individual and the work/task group, has implications for understanding the contribution of individuals and groups and thus limits the expansion of knoweldge in this field of organisation study;
- Methodologies treat the organisation as hermetically sealed and do not take account of the context in which values are significant at micro and macro levels. This limits the expansion of knowledge in this field;
- The assumption that values are known and directed towards explicit objectives and problems ignores the possibility of reflective or constructive learning. It ignores the possibility that dynamic, rather than linear factors may reveal the meaning of values and their potency in terms of strategies.

These findings suggest that values research may be more revealing and insightful if the methodology and framework of analysis,

- Recognises that values can be understood as coherent (consistent) and incoherent (differentiated & ambiguous) and that values are expressed in a broadly social context (e.g. by a group or groups within the organisation and by the individual who is part of the organisation);
- Recognises that the expression, and indeed, the acting out of values – whether espoused or undesirable - is inevitable in a social context. In the organisation, therefore, it is probable that the expression of values - the desirable, undesirable, coherent, incoherent, differentiated, ambiguous, dilemma bound etc. - has a role in shaping strategy and directing the whole organisation – the question is, how?;
- Recognises that the expression of values is socially and technically embedded to the organisation's macro and micro contexts;

- Recognises that the influence of values within/on the organisation may be explained by dynamic (as in driving or energising forces) rather than rational, causal factors alone.

These assumptions rely on the depiction of the organisation in an open systems frame as suggested in the Introduction. As a consequence a fifth assumption can be added to the list,

- Recognises that the organisation operates in an open system in which values and behaviours are systemically related.

This set of epistemological assumptions provides a conceptual framework for the collection and the analysis of the empirical work that was conducted to support this study.

3.3. A methodological and philosophical basis for collecting data - the ethnographic choice.

> *'The ethnographer's method of collecting data is to live among those who are the data...to learn the subjects' rules for organizational life, to interact with them for a frequency and duration of time 'sufficient' to understand how and why they construct their social world as it is and to explain it to others'* (Rosen, 1991; 5).

This method is derived from a social constructionist perspective about the nature of social process. The most important assumption in choosing an ethnographic approach was that the empirical focus of this study - Educate Together's historical and day-to-day reality - could not be understood as something separate to the meaning generated through the subjective interaction of the organisation's participants and individuals (Berger and Luckman, 1967).

Authors identify that the majority of studies in the culture (Martin and Meyerson, 1987) and values (van Rekom et al, 2006) field focus on integrated aspects of culture as a constructed document, as public rhetoric (Rosen, 1991), as shared, core or central values. This is because of the assumption that individuals enact their reality and, then *share* a set of accumulated experiences *'...giving rise to such system-specific idealisational elements as assumptions, ideas, values and norms'* (Rosen, 1991; 5). Hence, the view that organisations are, in fact,

hermetically sealed worlds becomes a tool with which to interpret and explain behaviour.

The basis of social constructionist research, on the other hand, lies in interpretation. Geertz (1973) identifies this form of interpretation as *'thick description'*, an interpretation blending behaviour and meaning. For example, consider the case of two boys rapidly contracting their eyelid muscles. One boy has an involuntary muscle twitch. The other is engaging in a conspiratorial signal to a friend. To an observer acting in *'I am the camera mode of recording and analysis'* (Rosen, 1991; 7), both acts are exactly the same – a thin description. A thick description places the two events in a number of contexts; each individual boy, including the boy being winked at, their relationship to each other and the context in which winking conspiratorially has meaning (and consequence) for at least two of the boys. At the heart of this description is context and the construction placed upon it, '*in meaning making processes'* (Hansen, 2006; 1063). Meaning is inseparable from the social and historical context in which it is both situated and constructed (Phillips and Brown, 1993). Finally, ethnographic research approaches have been used to study organisation (Ram 1994; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Van Maanen, 1987; Stockport and Kakabadse, 1982).

A review of the literature shows that most methods used in strategic management research do not provide sufficient detail to capture the practices of actual strategising (Johnson and Bowman, 1999; see also Chapter One). This study is in line with one of the newer focuses in strategy research – the individual and their interactions within groups around a concern about strategic activities and routine processes (Johnson and Bowman, 1999). It has already been established in previous chapters that strategising is inherently interdependent. It engages individuals at many levels, including non-managerial staff (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994) and, for the purposes of this study, non-employee members with an interest or active stake in the organisation (e.g. parents of children attending ET schools). Ethnographic methods are a valid way to research strategy because '*strategising is about studying practitioners and their practice within the context of their work. Sharing practice is about sharing know-how, but know-how is potentially hard to share in any way other than through practice itself* (Balogun, et al, 2003; 200).

Whilst interpretation resulting from ethnographic work is a powerful way to reveal insights, it may not, however, be as strong as action research.

Action research places practitioner interest at the heart of a reflective and constructive process in which all members of the process are active 'researchers'. The great advantage of action research is that the agenda of the researcher and the practitioner become one. The difficulty for this study was my inexperience in action research fieldwork, the fragmented knowledge about values (see Bate, 1997) and the domination of anthropological assumptions and methodologies in the literature (see Chapter Two). As it turned out, over the period of research, I gained access to a range of fieldwork opportunities and had the opportunity to develop skills whilst conducting ethnographic work with Educate Together.

Procedurally, the approach to data collection involved,

> *'A long period of intimate study and residence in a well-defined community employing a wide range of observational techniques including prolonged face-to-face contact with members of local groups, direct participation in some of the group's activities and a greater emphasis on intensive work with informants than on the use of documentary or survey data'* (Conklin, 1968; 172).

Over the course of three years, I immersed myself in many aspects of Educate Together. This was not a planned approach. At the outset I did not know or plan which aspects of the organisation I would participate in. It was an organic progression of immersion (Haugh et al, 2000; 5) which retrospectively followed a clear pattern; the more understanding I developed of the organisation and its workings, the more involved I got at other and new levels.

Retrospectively, the pattern was an exchange between the organisation and me. This was an implicit exchange (Stockport and Kakabadse, 1992). As time went on, I developed more knowledge about the organisation and, in exchange for sharing some of this knowledge with the directors, staff, teachers and principals, I gained access to more events. Eventually, I joined the Board of Directors for two years. This experience greatly informed my understanding of the organisation and is intimately connected to the presentation of *all the data* but, particularly, to the school level Operational Data. For instance, the work of the CEO, staff and the ET Board of Directors provided a general context for interpreting what happened at the school level, and for all connecting the work of the individual school back to the organisation as a whole (see Case Two, Chapter Six in particular).

The following section summarises what was involved in choosing ET as a subject. That is followed by a detailed account of the methods of collection and analysis of both the Presentational Data and the Operational Data.

3.4. Choosing ET as the focus of the research

Educate Together was not my first choice for the research. I made contact with three non-profit organizations that rejected my proposals. In two cases, the reasons given were the organisations were involved in delicate structural changes. In the third case, there was a change of CEO that would have made the research very difficult. In this latter case, it was my choice not to proceed.

After conducting pilot interviews with CEOs from two organisations about their conception of values and having developed a research proposal for a large Roman Catholic religious order that was rejected, I approached the CEO of Educate Together. At the time I was a parent in one of the schools and was supporting some of the parent events. The intention was to negotiate access to the organisation at all levels and to conduct research for a PhD on the organisation's values and their relationship to strategy. After a lengthy conversation with the CEO and the national co-ordinator the proposal was accepted and put to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors accepted the proposal promptly.

I met with the CEO and national co-ordinator of Educate Together (ET) three times to begin to learn about the founding values of the organisation. At the time, ET's national co-ordinating structure was on the cusp of strategic change. ET Ltd. functions as a head office and has a critical role in representing the whole sector. It advocates, nationally on behalf of the sector and offers a range of centralised and standardised management and education services. It had recently negotiated substantial philanthropic funding from Atlantic Philanthropies[16] to establish a professional support structure for groups of parents around the country who wished to open multi-denominational national schools in their area. This was the first major private funding the organisation had received. Prior to this resource, it was almost totally reliant on volunteer efforts and school membership fees. At the point when

16. The US billionaire Chuck Feeney has been distributing his entire fortune to charitable and educational organisations around the world for over two decades. Ireland has received substantial sums towards education infrastructure and experimental equality and educational opportunities.

the research started, ET's central strategy was growth. Over the course of the research and write up, ET grew from twenty to forty-three schools.

The role of the researcher in this study was complex, multi-faceted and multi-layered. It involved collecting and assembling a complex history of ET that included the historical perspective of the national school system and the earliest beginnings of the organisation itself. It also involved immersion in the day-to-day governance and management in numerous ways. This reflects the researcher's reality that the conception of ET's values gathered and developed for this study was derived from multiple sources and multiple participants.

In order to clearly understand the research role and the data collection and analytical methods employed, the next sections will provide clarity by describing the methods used with the two levels of data; Presentational and Operational (as outlined in sections 3.1.1. and 3.1.2.).

3.5. Collecting and analysing the Presentational Data

3.5.1. An analysis of the national school system from which and through which ET emerged (see Chapter Four)

A historical, political and cultural account of Ireland's entire national school system is presented in Chapter Four. This was drawn from documentary sources and gathered by reading and comparing the main historical accounts of Ireland's national School System. It is important to note that, one of the founders of ET, Professor Aine Hyland, is also one of the leading documenters of the Irish education system. The two volumes of Irish Educational Documents (1987 & 1992 and Hyland, 1989 & 1993) that she edited with Kenneth Milne provided this study with key insights into the shaping of the education system and the values that have been expressed for well over a hundred years.

The most revealing aspect of the Irish national school system was that, in 1831, at the point of its conception, the system was intended to be multi-denominational and structured more or less like an ET school is today; children of both faiths (Roman Catholic and Church of England) were to be admitted to the schools on an equal basis and, families seeking specific religious education, were to be facilitated outside school hours.

The purpose in providing this Chapter is to give the reader the historical context of the values from which ET emerged. It is also to provide an

understanding of the administrative genealogy from which, ET, the organisation and structure, was founded. This is predicated on a critical fact, that the founders made a decision to create a multi-denominational structure within the national school system, not outside it. This decision had remarkable and far-reaching consequences before and after The Dalkey School Project (DSP) opened in 1978 (see Chapter Five).

The academic analysis was supplemented by a conversation with one of Ireland's leading educational historians, Professor John Coolahan. Professor Coolahan kindly offered to read a first draft of this Chapter and provided some vital feedback and clarifications.

3.5.2. A Presentational account and an analysis of ET's founding years (see Chapter Five)

This account was gathered principally from the perspective of the organisation's founders. The account relies on presentational accounts by the founders and on personal, sectoral, organisational and historical document that were provided to me by the founders.

The starting point was the founders' account of their values and how those values influenced what actually happened. This account has been carefully knitted into a historical, political, economic and religious context in order to explore the assumption that values in the single organisation have no meaning unless they are tied to a context in which they make sense, to the individuals involved, and, to practice. Further, this context provided a deep explanation for the founders' actions and subsequent behaviours. Although this approach provided for thick description, there was also a danger that it could be viewed or treated as a dominant (coherent) discourse blinding me to other conflicting and ambiguous values. The account is retrospective and Presentational. Inevitably, it suggests integration at some level. So, I assumed the Presentational account of the founding period was an integrational *façade* and concentrated on getting more concrete information about the actual work that was involved in setting up ET. This was difficult because, as described earlier, the founders understand their experience very much in terms of a huge struggle and effort (See Chapter Five).

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the founders. The interviews were done on a one-to-one basis, except in the case of one married couple

(Micheal and Pat Johnston). The interviews were taped, transcribed and returned to the interviewees for correction and feedback. Not a lot of feedback was received from the interviewees. A number of fact checking exchanges continued during and after the period of interviews. These interviews were supported by documentary and in some cases personal (written) accounts of the events described in Chapter Five. Aine Hyland provided me with many personal documents (memos, letters, written thoughts and strategies connected to planning the architecture of ET) belonging to her husband. Bill Hyland died in 1996.

Other documents included handwritten notes, memos of all types, minutes of meetings, letters from The Department of Education and from Ministers of Education, newspapers clippings, Dáil extracts in response to Dáil questions, personal written accounts of events, school newsletters and children's school projects and one interview with a student who attended a first attempt at a multi-denominational school. The purpose was to provide a retrospective story of the founding years, to capture the values that were expressed by individuals involved and to set this against the operational day-to-day reality the sector today.

The intention was to balance what actually happened against the extraordinary struggle implied in the founders' achievement. The opening of a multi-denominational national school within a system that, literally, could not conceive of such a thing, was a historic event of considerable significance. The analytical struggle from a research perspective was to balance the founders' presentation of events with the strategic, administrative and operational realities of the work involved (see Chapter Five).

The method of analysis used was the implicit narrative in the chronological sequence of events. This began with a rehearsal in multi-denominational education in 1966 (St Patrick's Church of Ireland NS) and ended with the opening of The Dalkey School Project (DSP) in 1978. Explicit to this narrative is the reality that one event led to the next. There was no break in the action. Each time the founders were faced with another impossible obstacle or difficult struggle they simply identified the next action and, acted promptly. And, although there was fear and doubt and huge anxiety (see Chapter Five), there was never resistance to the tasks nor to the difficult thinking-work that simply had to happen – it was as if the imperative for change was a self-propelling force. In a sense Chapter Five is a chronological account of the founders' imperative for change.

3.6. Collecting, analysing and presenting Operational Data at the sectoral level

There are two types of Operational Data. The first is the data that resulted from general immersion in the sector of ET. This data reflects the actual operation of a sector comprising over twenty established schools, approximately thirty start-up parent groups in various stages of developments and activities of the Board of Directors and staff group of ET Ltd. The data collection activities involved continued over two and a half years approximately.

The second type of Operational Data is much more extensive and more significant in terms of the reader of this study. It was conducted at the school level and reflects the actual operation of management structures in three ET schools. The structures, which approximate to most national schools, included a board of management, a patron (See Chapter Four) or patron body and a parent-teacher association.[17] Subsequent sections provide detail about the methods used to collect this information, and, the conceptual framework used to analyse the data.

Inevitably, the timeframe of the school level work overlapped with my involvement and immersion in the ET sector, as a whole. The sectoral aspect is now described below and that is followed by a detailed explanation of the school level work.

3.6.1. Operational Data from ET's sector

The sector of ET is large and complex with well over 6000[18] teachers, parents, students, start-up parent members and associates actively involved.

The key areas of my involvement in the sector were as,

- A member of a group of volunteer trainees who wished to provide patron support to new schools operating under the centralised patronage of ET Ltd;
- A nominee and then elected Director of the Board of ET Ltd for two years;
- General Attendance at ET annual conferences, AGMs and national meetings/fora;

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[17] All ET schools run Parent-Teacher Associations in which at least one teacher is always present at meetings but most national schools would operate Parent Associations.

[18] At the time of writing – 2007. However, this number would have doubled since the research began in 1999-2000. The entire sector doubled in size over the course of the research.

- Attendance at AGMs as a a nominee of a school Board of Management.

My immersion in the organisation provided me with a level of legitimacy and trust in gaining access to different operations of ET and, in making sense of what was happening. In general the sectoral information that I collected provides a background to Chapters Five and Six and is not explicit. However, some aspects of the relationships and information exchanges that I observed or understood are explicit to the case studies (see Case Two, in particular).

Gaining an understanding of the current ET context was very helpful in tracing and presenting the founder's history of ET (Chapter Five). The practical experience and knowledge provided me with a set of visual aides, direct experiences, access to language/terminology and, most importantly, to the dominant assumptions at play.

The information was gathered in three ways – I was always physically present at an event/occurence that is presented in this study. I did not rely on second hand information although I used a lot of second-hand information to work through puzzling behaviours. For example, I occasionally got insight to behaviours, that I witnessed first-hand, from someone else's interpretation, and first-hand experience, of similar behaviours in another location/context.

The second method was that I was generally "in role" – one of the startling features of ET is the constant work that goes into keeping individuals "in role" or as one staff member put it, "making sure that you know which hat you are wearing before you agree to something or say something". This was a feature I had no prior experience of at such a large scale. It is very significant in terms of the case work presented in Chapter Six. At all times I was a researcher and the vast majority of people who worked with me knew I was doing research towards a doctorate. However, at different times I was also a trainee volunteer, a director, a board of management member, a delegate, a conference member, an observer and, occasionally a parent.

The third method was to take notes and then write-up notes from these many and varied events for reading and cataloguing.

There was a relational and networking aspect to this work that is not fully reflected in the three features above. As time went on and, as I became a more 'familiar face', I had access to many sources of information. I pursued

my needs on a relational, usually one to one, basis. The roles, that I required and accessed as information sources, included parents, principals, teachers, directors of ET Ltd., and, ET Ltd's staff members. For instance, if I had a query about a about a Board of Management (BOM) procedure, for example, whether the patron or BOM had responsibility for writing policy on a particular school matter, I could phone the CEO or his national coordinator to discuss this. It is difficult or perhaps it is the lack of fieldwork experience that makes it difficult for me to confidently define how these aspects of sectoral work have contributed to the overall study. I am clear, however, that the blurred boundaries offered me a great advantage in learning about ET and, in immersing myself in the sector.

The next sections provide methodological and conceptual detail about the collection, presentation and analysis of Operational Data at the school level.

3.7. Collecting, analysing and presenting Operational Data at the school-level

Over three years, I attended management meetings in three ET schools (see Chapter Six for a detailed description of structures and profiling information). The purpose was to capture the values and strategies of management groups in real time, actual events and in the context of each school's operational, routine and strategic activities. My role in each school varied.

My role in one school was as an observer, in which it was implicit that I remain silent unless I was asked a question or offered the opportunity to engage. This period of observation was short – 3 months – but intensive and offered experiential learning. In another school, meetings extended over one year and my role was as participant-observer in which it was implicit that I was an equal, albeit informal, member of the group and free to participate as I wished. In the third school, I became a member of the board of management and attended meetings for over two years. My role was as a full and equal participant. The patron of this recently established school requested that I become a BOM because of the knowledge and skills I had acquired about BOM work and the sector. The patron thought this would be useful to the school's development.

The data that I collected was strategic and operational in its nature and in its content. It mostly involved writing down what people said and placing the 'talk' and 'conversation' in a context that itself was derived from additional documentary and presentational data:

> *'...the ethnographer focuses on both behavior {sic} and the symbolic worlds within which such behavior is located, the meaning and significance of the events of interest to ones informants cannot be known merely by analyzing the number of times such events are observed to take place'* (Van Maanen, 2002; 107).

I did not tape any school meetings. I took note of the setting, context and transcribed, as carefully as I could, the behaviours, actions and 'talk'. I particularly concentrated on 'talk' about confusions, disagreements, difficult decisions, tensions in values and methods for resolving tensions. In all cases I took hand-written notes and hand wrote-up detailed notes as soon as possible after the event. In some cases I typed up these notes within a few days. When I started to systematically analyse the research, I found that studying the original notes and write-ups was a far more effective tool than the typed version. It was more effective because when I re-read the hand written notes, it took me back to the setting, the atmosphere, the faces, the mood and allowed me to place layers of explanation over the events.

In a few instances, however, the conversations were so difficult and upsetting that it was not appropriate to write anything down. A disagreement between a principal and a BOM about a policy or a procedure could get very heated and upsetting for everyone. Had I taken notes throughout an event of this type, it would have been injurious to those who felt strongly enough to take a view on an issue. The incidents were written up quickly after the meeting but the quotes are not included in the text as they are not exact quotes. As a result some of the events, that took place and are reported in the cases, do not have supporting quotes. I have endeavoured to include what happened and what was said without quoting the individual directly.

The Operational Data from the three schools is represented in Chapter Six in the form of three case studies. The case studies are drawn from two of the three schools. In order to maintain the anonymity of the schools and the individual members of patron bodies, boards of management and parent groups, I made a guarantee to ET Ltd and to the individuals and groups in the schools that any information that would reveal the identity of the schools and the individuals would be altered. The dates when this work took place have also been omitted to protect schools from association with particular times and events that might

make them recognisable. The profiling information of each school has been altered to protect the individuals and the school – these alterations do not disturb the analysis of the data nor do they detract from the reader's experience in making sense of the narrative/s and case aspects.

3.7.1. Choosing to represent the school level Operational Data by case study

The case study is well represented in the literature that was represented in Chapters One and Two, e.g. Selznick's analysis of the TVA (1949), Leonard Barton's study of the paradox of values (1992) and Pettigrew's study of decision making (1973). Allison's triangulated analysis of the Cuban Missile Disaster is also referenced throughout this study (1971).

Soon after beginning the school-level work, a pattern that had previously been a hazy shadow became much more distinctive; behaviours and actions indicated that there were tensions and difficulties in establishing clarity between the group's function and ET's aspirational values. Yet, in general, the schools were continuing to function operationally and strategically. The questions arising from this pattern were, why was this happening and how was it occurring? How did it relate to ET's values and the shaping of the organisation as a whole? And, what mechanism could be deployed to explain it in the context of the organisation as a whole?

The literature provided no relevant support as to the why, how and what questions, suggesting that the case study would be an appropriate tool to analyse the data (i.e. case analysis) and gain familiarity for preliminary theory generation (Yin, 1981, 1984).

The literature's primary weakness was in explaining the role and the process by which individuals contributed values and were able to influence the organisation as a whole. Yet, in the three schools, it was quite obvious that the individual principal, teacher and parent were at the core of what was actually happening.

3.7.2. A method for choosing which school level narratives to present as cases

A method and a rule was used for choosing which school-level incidents should be explored through case study analysis (Allison, 1971). Not all strategic events can be explored and not all events are strategic. Three criteria were applied,

- First, that the incident took place during the period of the ethnographic research;

- Second, that the incident must cast or draw the presentational account of values as given by ET's founders (as described and interpreted in Chapter Six) into relief as a distortion, a development, an ambiguity, a contrast, an evolution, a challenge, a dilution, an undermining, a significant aspect etc. This was simply to provide a backdrop or matrix against which events and behaviours could be explored, particularly when there was dissonance between what a group said they believed and their actual behaviour. The assumption is that if an incident is capable of being located in this frame it is inherently strategic and can be abstracted to the organisation as a whole, i.e. the incident has implications or consequences for strategy at a school and an organisation (ET) level;
- And third, that the incident was of central concern to the management groups in the schools. By definition these groups are assumed to be strategic not only because of their implied relationship to ET's values, but because the groups are structured to react and respond to incidents that happen both inside and outside the school.

Applying these criteria offers a number of advantages to the study,

- The number of incidents to choose from is limited and becomes more practicable from a research perspective;
- It provides a basis for exploring the relationship between the founders' values and strategy at all the levels that concern this study – the sector, the organisation, the local school, the work groups and the individuals;
- The definition of a strategic incident is not limited to the orthodox or classical view – if that view was applied to the choice of incidents, it would limit the ability of the study to examine values-in-practice (see Chapter Two).

3.7.3. Analysing the Operational school-level Data using Open Systems Theory and Socio-technical Systems Analysis (STSA)

The most intractable and ongoing problem was how to present and analyse the apparently ambiguous, frequently incoherent, sometimes dichotomous relationship between normative values and actual behaviour at the school level. Competing explanations were abundant and whilst they supported the notion that

values operated at different levels (see Chapter Two), these explanations did not offer insight into the most revealing finding – the apparently unconscious behaviours of the group-as-a-whole. Apparently unconscious behaviours between what the group should have represented in terms of values *and what they actually represented in terms of behaviours* occurred in all three schools many, many times. Typically, the unconscious aspect was the group making a values related decision and then undermining that decision by acting in opposition to it or acting in ways that diminished the decision and the values. The 'apparently unconscious' label has been applied according to a number of empirical observations,

- When individual members expressed values that the group as a whole subsequently ignored, acted against or responded to in a manner that suggested that the individual's values were contrary to the group's;
- When an action was taken that was against the group's stated wishes/values, even though the group had not met to alter the previously agreed decision;
- When the group was unaware of the implication of its behaviour having ignored, acted in opposition to or acted in other ways that were antithetical to what they had previously agreed;
- When there was no appetite to find out why a previous decision *had been undone/diminished/denied* and which had implications or consequences;
- When the group, as a whole, did not discuss the reasons why one, two or more members took it upon themselves to undo a previously agreed decision or why they chose they to act in ways contrary to the group's stated or aspirational wishes/values;
- When there was almost no time lag between the group making a decision and then promptly undoing what they had, literally, just agreed (see case two);
- When the group went ahead and acted in a manner that explicitly denied ET values even though one or more individual members informed the group that the decision was in denial of ET values.

Given the lack of satisfactory analytical frameworks to apply to this puzzle, it became necessary to find a way to present and analyse the data that was consistent with the assumptions of the research and would provide a basis for grounded theory building.

3.7.4. The process of writing up the case studies

I spent over one year concentrating solely on how best to present the three cases. The narratives and choices for case study became apparent early on. The problem was how to write them up in such a way that would represent the implicit and explicit data.

In the end the process involved writing up multiple iterations of cases and testing them out with my supervisor. One case was rewritten almost twenty times and various matrixes/philosophies were applied to see if the result would produce more clarity around the issues. For instance, one of the most compelling matrices used was to write up the incident in its most bald form and then compare the events, first to a rational analysis and then a non-rational analysis. The rational analysis appeared to be so weak in producing an explanation it became a 'straw dog'.

In the search for a more precise explanatory and analytic tool, the lens gradually shifted to capture a systemic perspective – one that would treat the particular aspects of each case as systemically related to the organisation as a whole and its historical and wider cultural context. The logic was that the content of each event (the perceived problem or issue) and the circumstance of the people/group involved did not produce adequate explanations for the pattern of behaviour. For instance, one event that is not reflected in the cases provides an adequate example. A BOM group consistently, over some months, denied/ignored/appeared unable to respond to the repeated requests of a principal to sort out the employment conditions of one non-teaching employee. It was as if, each time the request was made, the group forgot it or was simply unable to absorb it. The group had no explanation as to why this task was not attended to. And each time the principal asked why the task had not been attended -referring to the repeated requests of the past - the group appeared unable to answer or respond. None of the obvious rational explanations satisfied this strange behaviour - the technical skill-set of the management group was, in this instance, up to the task. There were no underlying problems with the employee in question. The relationship between the principal and the management group was good and generally functional and the management group usually attended to its tasks etc..

Having become thoroughly engaged with this particular type of behaviour pattern and witnessing it over and over again in separate schools at different organisation features/stages of development, I decided to focus the

explanatory lens on the common structural features of the group – treating these features as systemically aligned or connected to the structures of other groups in the same school and with groups in other schools. In this treatment, I began to regard the content that manifested these patterns of behaviour, as systemic to the organisation as a whole, rather than specific to the individuals, the group or the school.

The literatures most clearly associated with diagnosing organising from a systemic perspective were first represented by Lewin in 1947 and then developed by Trist and Bamforth, 1951; Rice, 1958, Emery and Trist, 1962, Miller and Rice, 1990; Miller 1993. These literatures are not reflected in the strategic management literatures that were surveyed for this thesis. Open Systems Theory dates back to the 1960s when Von Bertalanffy defined a system as '*an order of parts and processes standing in dynamic interaction'* (1968). Its application to the organisation produced the finding that systems are isomorphic in that they share certain structural features with their basic functions. This led to the idea that boundaries serve to maintain the identity of systems. Systemic approaches to organisation are dependent upon revealing and pursuing the authentic task of the organisation. This is consistent with the idea that a system must do its work in order to survive – it must exchange materials with the environment, transform human energies and skills into valuable services - like health or education - or products into saleable items with added value. Systemic thinking relies on the idea that this exchange and transformation process must continue in order for the organisation to survive. In diagnosing and understanding patterns of behaviour, particularly patterns that do not clearly contribute to the exchange and transformation process, a systemic view pays attention to how each part/section/department or group in the organisation contributes or does not contribute to the task and whether the individuals, as members of the organisation's systemic parts, understand the task and how/whether they contribute to it. In terms of improving an organisation's ability to attend to its actual task, systemic thinking advocates regulating the permeability of a group's boundaries so that patterns of intragroup and intergroup interaction are changed. This is consistent with a focus on the common structural features of the group rather than the manifest content.

Finally, Von Bertalanffy pointed out that the principle of equifinality is a characteristic of an open system; that a given final state may be reached

from different initial conditions and by different routes (Miller, 1993; 11). This supports the idea that values can be coherent and/or incoherent, that strategies can have characteristics that depart from the rational-analytic assumption, and still the organisation as a whole can be changed.

3.7.5. Using systemic thinking and Socio-Technical Systems Analysis (STSA) to analyse school-level Operational Data

Socio-Technical Systems Analysis (STSA) relies on five factors that greatly enhance, not only the legibility and readability of the case work but provide a systemic basis for analysis and grounded theorising (Yin 1981, 1984). The main factors were briefly touched on in the section above. The following section takes five factors, in turn, and clarifies the utility of each in analysing the school level case data.

3.7.5.1. The organisation's primary task

The concept of Primary Task implies that organisations may undertake tasks other than the one for which the organisation is intended. This analysis can generate hypotheses to explain divergences between what 'ought' to happen and what is actually happening (see case studies). Thus, the concept directly invokes values and may reveal defense mechanisms that operate to prevent individuals and groups from attending to an organisation's primary task. The difficulty is in analysing the Primary Task,

> *'The primary task is essentially a heuristic concept, which allows us to explore the ordering of multiple activities (and of constitutent systems of activity where these exists). It makes it possible to construct and compare different organisational models of an enterprise based on different definitions of its primary task...The definition of the primary task determines the dominant import-conversion-export system...;* (Miller and Rice, 1967; 25)

The original concept was criticised because it did not distinguish between what was objectively necessary for the organisation to survive and what its members believed was necessary. Thus, the concept can be understood at three levels; the normative primary task – the task the individuals and groups 'ought' to be carrying out. Normative, in this context, implies that some kind of internal/external authority is determining what 'ought' is. Normative in the context of health care

is caring and healing, for instance. The Existential primary task is what individuals/group 'think' they are achieving and the Phenomenal primary tasks is what they are *actually achieving.*

An employee who provides a human/customer service operates the role solely through information that is received through a computer. The role is deemed to be a customer service because that is the normative task the organisation has normatively conceived to achieve its objectives. The existential primary task is the task the groups' believe they are carrying out. In this classification, the customer services person experiences his/her role as providing a human service through information received from the computer. However, examination reveals that the humans who are clients of the service are not having their needs met because the computer cannot take into account the variables or circumstances that affect the clients' ability to avail of the service. For example, the amount of time, clients are available to attend appointments, or the distance prospective clients live from the service. The phenomenal primary task of the customer service role is to operate a computer and provide information, not to provide a human service.

3.7.5.2. Boundaries of subsystems

The boundary region of each work group in the organisation (a subsystem in its own right) can be thought of as the location for the work group's roles and activities as they relate to the external environment (the rest of the organisation and the external organisations/groups with whom the group is interdependent). Leadership functions are located on the boundary of the work group. Leadership is critical to the quality of information and relationship that passes between a work group and its environment.

The authors and researchers associated with STSA have researched these concepts consistently since the 1950s. They have found when work groups are managed effectively the level of autonomy increases. Higher autonomy was found to have a direct effect on the levels of productivity and efficiency, higher quality of work, reduced costs and more satisfied workers (Lewin, 1947; Trist and Bamforth, 1951; Rice, 1958, Miller and Rice, 1990; Miller 1993).

Autonomous work groups reflect the following characteristics and are judged to be in a better position to respond to specific strategies and changes than groups that are not autonomous:

- The whole task can be experienced by the work group;
- The boundary of the work group is well defined with a measurable intake/output of information which serves as a measure of how well the work group are doing;
- The work group needs to be of a size that can offer satisfying personal relationships, perform its task and receive appropriate feedback and information to regulate its activities;
- The work group should facilitate internal mobility across its range of skills and conferred statuses (e.g. Chair);
- The membership of a work group should not be unique within the organisation. Individuals need to be able to move around the organisation otherwise they are likely to invest too heavily in one work group. For example, when work groups keep talking about doing something but never actually do it. This may be because the group lacks the skills or access to a sentient system that would help them advance the task. But, revealing a lack of skills and connections might threaten the group's reason for existence. Another illustration is the manager of a family business whose investment in work is coincident to his/her commitment to family. To offset or allay the anxiety of expulsion, the manager is likely to over-invest in work, even to the extent that he or she experiences conflict and distortion of values in the face of change.

3.7.5.3. Task and sentient systems

STSA assumes that each individual must occupy two work roles, one that relates to the task system and one that relates to the emotional needs of the individual, the sentient (which means being capable of feeling) system. The purpose is to assess whether the group's boundary is appropriately permeable so that individual members are clear what their tasks are and that they receive appropriate feedback about performance. Differences between what individual members of a group say they want to do and what they actually can do in terms of boundary permeability and task and sentient support are assumed to be deep indicators of distorted and conflicting values - indicators that the task and sentient systems are not clear, inappropriate or misaligned with the purpose or strategy of the organisation.

Recalling the definition from Chapter One, a task system is,

> *'...the system of activities...required to compete the process of transforming an intake into an output...plus the human and*

> *physical resources required to perform the activities'. In the open systems framework these are 'conversion systems'* (Miller and Rice, 1990; 259).

And,

> *'...an effective sentient system relates members of an enterprise to each other and to the enterprise in ways that are relevant to the skills and experience required for task performance...it also provides its members with some defense against anxiety'* (Miller & Rice, 1990; 259).

The latter assumes that all individuals experience anxieties that may or may not lead to an emotional response. The channelling, discharging, dispersing and/or affirming of individual, work-related anxiety is a central spoke of the socio-psychological view (Rice, 1958, Miller and Rice, 1967). Ultimately, the socio-psychological view is concerned with '*helping the individual to develop greater maturity in understanding and managing the boundary between his own inner world and the realities of the external environment'* (Miller, 1993; 23).

Miller (1993; 48) argues, the more directly accountable individuals are for their work-task, the more outlets they will have, to express inherent anxiety and preserve their most basic assumptions (see below). Individuals whose jobs are vague or ambiguous in terms of their responsibilities and functions, have few or inadequate activities for channelling, discharging and managing work-related anxieties. Miller identifies why this feature can be so important in organisations. For example, airline pilots belong to a tightly conceived, high status group of professionals with whom they can channel their general and specific anxieties. This is critical because airline pilots hold almost complete responsibility for the safety of passengers. Miller conjectures that membership of this sentient group allows airline pilots to perform well in stressful and even dangerous situations (see Miller, 1993). Air safety and flying authorities determine the nature of the professional conditions of aircraft captains across the globe. In a stressful situation, a human being's ability to comprehend quickly diminishes. This means that when an airline pilot is confronted with danger the fundamental assumptions of their training and profession must be activated rapidly. As a result, the experience of travelling by air is almost wholly dominated by the values of safety. Consequently, ground staff and non-flying crews are heavily dependent upon airline pilots. Passengers are

distracted by activities that generate profit for airport authorities. Ground and cabin crews construct defense mechanisms so that they appear to be more in control of their tasks then they actually are. For instance, when the transfer of passengers is interrupted or delayed because of changes of route, fuel-loading, air traffic control etc., the ground and cabin crew, who have the job of delivering information and managing passengers, behave as if they were bargaining between equals (Miller and Rice, 1967; 65). Whereas, in fact, safety factors dominate all decisions in airports. The same value of safety determines the passenger's experience from check-in at one airport to baggage collection at their destination airport.

That the individual has some kind of secure and enduring affiliation with his/her task is the central assumption in ensuring that task and work-group boundaries are regulated and maintained as appropriately permeable.

In order to understand the impact of strategic change on the organisation, it is essential to analyse the individual's relationship with task, to embrace the whole individual and not rely on the assumption that his/her task is purely professional. This is done by analysing the boundaries of the relevant work groups and by identifying whether sufficient levels of information (feedback and clear measures of success, for example) are being exchanged between interdependent groups. By identifying the nature of work related anxiety, it is possible to find out whether individuals have sentient channels to discharge and manage emotional intensity.

The roles of professional associations and networks are highly significant in this regard. Many such sentient systems are legitimised by society and some operate with an inherent authority (religious orders, high status professions, for example). The experience of flying was examined above and is comparable to the experience of being hospitalised (where the consultant's team determines the scheduling of treatment and, thus, hospital admissions and discharges). But sentient systems like this are also important for maintaining and preserving the social status of many jobs and professions. Sentient systems exist in many forms. The socio-psychological perspective argues that all tasks in organisations require both a task and a sentient system. However, not all organisations are able to provide necessary clarity about roles and boundaries. For example, the volunteer assisting the charitable, professional organisation can be a focus of ambiguity because the allocation of tasks conflicts with the paid professional. This means it might be difficult for the volunteer to receive feedback about his or her performance.

3.7.5.4. The individual's 'groupishness'

A core assumption critical to the operation of the STSA is the individual's relationship with the group. Individuals provide the organisation with roles, without which it could not exist. Because organisations have *'encompassing tendencies'* (Goffman, 1961; 15), individuals collude in supplying more than just the requisite role. STSA assumes that the individual requires group membership for meaning, *'to confer status, to confirm his picture of himself, his identity...'* (Miller, 1993; 19) and finds support in sentient groups that may or may not correspond to the boundaries of the relevant socio-technical task groups. The quality of the sentient relationships both inside and outside the organisation impact on the effectiveness of task performance either by supporting or opposing it (Miller, 1993;19).

Sutherland argues that,

> *'...when individuals lose a feeling of personal significance in their work, similar stress manifestations occur (see Trist and Bamforth, 1951). These deprivations disorganise the most developed adaptive functioning of the social self, and lead to the increased dominance of the primary self with its insecurities and more primitive compulsive relations. Such regressive disorganisation is almost universal. With individuals whose sub-systems are a constant threat, the loss of their usual sources of relative security confronts them with the extra danger of their secret selves being exposed'.*

And therefore,

> *'The origin and nature of the individual's groupishness is thus no problem. From the very start he cannot survive without his needs for social relatedness being met'* (Sutherland, 1990; 131-132).

3.7.5.5. The basic assumptions of organisations

William Bion (1961; Menzies Lyth, 1981) provides a theory of the development of basic assumptions that supports the application of STSA (see also Introduction). Bion's view is similar to Schein's theory of basic assumptions (see Chapter Two) in its function but is formed in quite a different way. It postulates that, at any one time, a group operates one of three basic, covert

assumptions (dependency, flight-fight and pairing) to which its members contribute anonymously and in ways that they may not be aware. Although this theory cannot be falsified (Brown, 1967; 40) it adds power to an analysis and illuminates other tangible factors.

Of Bion's three basic assumptions, the most common is dependency. For example, an organisation that originated from the ideas of a singular, charismatic entrepreneur reaches a crisis of management when entrepreneurial methods are no longer appropriate to its changing business. The individuals and groups talk about the need for autonomous groups and the desire for increased independency in their functions etc., but they actually behave as if they were still dependent upon the founding entrepreneur. Disruption of this most basic assumption creates anxiety about who is going to make decisions and how the group is going to manage making decisions.

The second assumption is a valency or a tendency towards fighting or fleeing an enemy. This is observed in situations where groups are so disorientated by the effects of change or threat of change that they respond angrily or retreat to the safety of isolated groups, functions. Basic Assumption theory argues that the acting out of these assumptions are used to avoid the actual work that is involved in developing and growing, in being creative and in stretching – in confronting the development that the individuals 'know' (at an unconscious and/or a conscious level) has to be done. During a clinical study, Ken Rice (1951) noticed that when faced with severe change and dilemmas of reorganisation and external threats to competitiveness, the group he was working with split into two groups of leaders. One group agreed to negotiate on wages and the remaining group collaborated with management on change and reorganisation. What Rice noticed was that the negotiating group's latent task was actually to encapsulate workers sentiments of fight with management, leaving the others free to face the change and development that was unavoidable (1951).

Finally, Bion observed that some groups avoid essential developmental work by fixating on pairs of individuals within the group and the enterprise that represent an idealistic form of hope (1961). Bion identified that the group behave as if the pairing will solve the problems that the group as a whole are unable to face. But there are various kinds of pairing – when a group fixates on an external organisation or individual who can solve what the group perceives as intractable

problems. For instance, the group's fantasy that they will be able to recruit a singular individual who will change everything.

Basic assumptions alongside the other analytical concepts are used as tools to examine why individuals and groups behave in this way.

The proposition is that the application of these concepts used in concert with specific instances of the school-level data will,

- Reveal the dynamic nature of the social and the strategic work context in which values are expressed by individuals, and in which groups react to preference statements in particular ways;
- Explain specific distortions and conflicts of values and provide an analytical basis for relating those distortions to the strategic situation at the school and organisation levels;
- Provide a basis for explaining conscious and apparently unconscious behaviours in which individuals and groups act in ways that are apparently contradictory or antithetical to values;
- Describe the relationship between the individual expression of values and strategic events at school and organisation level.

3.7.6. Presenting the case studies

Each case is presented in six parts,

1. The relevant context of the case is presented (see method for choosing a case above). This is consistent with the assumption that the school's management structure operates in an open system in which individuals exchange information with each other, with the organisation's history, with other ET and non ET schools, with the wider education sector and with its immediate environment and strategic situation. The assumption is that this exchange of information is a force of energy that alters and affects the decisions that individuals and groups make. A description of strategy at both school and organisation level will be integrated into the context in order to establish a basis for interpreting how schools and the organisation as a whole are likely to respond to strategic events.

2. The case is presented. Each case concerns a specific incident that draws into relief ET's values in such a way that it presents a strategic situation for the school, i.e. a situation that either impacts or could impact on the school *and* on the organisation as a whole.

3. An analysis of the facts of the case is presented. The facts of the case are redrawn, analysed and supplemented with additional information that might open up explanations for the individual and group behaviour observed in the case.

4. A description of the primary tasks of the management groups is offered. This is based on the assumption that there might be a difference between what the individual members of the group and organisation 'should' be doing, what they think they are doing and what they are actually doing.

5. An analysis of the groups' boundaries and the task and sentient systems involved.

6. Finally, there is an analysis of the groups' most basic assumptions, to explain implicit and explicit behaviours.

3.8. Limitations of the methods and the study

The first limitation is the values that I bring to the data collection and its interpretation. I tried to account for my role as researcher, parent and participant but social science research is not value-free and those roles are embedded into the case studies and their analysis. Inevitably, the data that I chose to see, hear and to record is deeply personal making this aspect of the study irreplicable. The premise of the study, the concepts that were applied to the data and the case study approach, are however, replicable (see Chapter Seven).

A second weakness is the dominance of North-American and Anglo-Saxon assumptions and traditions reflected in the literatures.

A third weakness is that the literature that is referenced in this study does not distinguish between privately owned organisations, the volunteer/charitable organisation (Educate Together) or other forms. This is because of the assumption that the whole individual is present in the organisation regardless of its form and regardless of whether profit, or some other end, is the objective. There is no valid reason for distinguishing between individual values and their relationship to what happens in the organisation. However, my experience of organisations is limited to public sector and voluntary/charitable organisations that are limited by guarantee and many types of formal and informal associations including some profit-making enterprises. To the extent that this is not the complete currency of organisation types, then, I regard this as a limitation of the study.

The fourth limitation is that most of the individuals that are represented in the Operational Data and reflected in the case studies in Chapter six were parents of children attending ET schools – parental pathologies are, therefore, present in the data.

Fifthly, the Presentational Data in Chapter Five is reliant on a small number of the very large community that is ET. The actual founding group of ET was a very large group of twenty or thirty people. But, in practice and for good practical reasons, a smaller number became a central working group. This is also the case in this study; a small group of the founders – the central working group – were asked to present the story of ET. I did not interview all the other founders to find out if the Presentational account given by the central group is true. I adopted the assumption that this central group had access to the direct experience and knowledge of the organisation's founding, its archival memory, key dates, key events etc.

Of the many thousands of people that are active in ET, I have accessed a few hundred, at the very most.

Sixthly, my ability to negotiate access to schools was dependent upon the staff of the national office. I was a familiar face in the sector and some schools were willing and open to the prospect of being 'researched'. Schools that were not so open and willing to engage with research may have produced different results.

Finally, ET was chosen because the leaders (CEO and Board of Directors) of the organisation understand the organisation as values driven. So, whilst this provides a rich setting to explore and examine values, it is also a limitation in terms of those organisations that may not understand themselves in the same way. However, the limitation is offset against the focus on the individual and the fact that the methodology does not discriminate between ordinary individuals and those individuals who may have a very deep understanding of what values means in practice.

3.9. Conclusions

This chapter described the methodology of collecting, analysing and preseting two levels of data – Presentational and Operational. It also provided a detailed conceptual framework for analysing the most substantive tranche of data – the school-level Operational Data. This chapter described the struggle in

terms of finding an appropriate approach to methodological and interpretive issues given the findings from the literature and the unique puzzle being scrutinised. The essence of this struggle was to maintain a balance between representing and understanding the tangible contribution of individual values to local, school-level strategy and the implications for strategy at the level of Educate Together as a whole.

The next Chapter represents the first of two Chapters (Chapters four and five) that present an analysis of the Presentational Data (Section 3.5 above). Chapter Four provides a detailed analysis of the genealogy of Ireland's national school system (Section 3.5.1.) and Chapter Five provides an account and an analysis of the founding of ET.

Chapter Four: The history and administrative genealogy of multi-denominational primary education in Ireland from 1791 to1965.

> *'It is necessary to go around it, and view it from different points, to get an adequate conception of its magnitude'* (The Times, 24th June, 1864 referring to the Irish national system of education).

4.1. Introduction

This Chapter represents the first of two Chapters that provide an analysis of the Presentational Data (see Sections 3.5., 3.6. and 3.7. above) collected for this thesis. For two reasons, the historical genealogy of the national school system is an inherent and critical element of ET's evolution and its narrative; the original national school system was intended to be multi-denominational from as early as 1790 but never achieved this aim, and, secondly, the founders made a decision to design a multi-denominational structure within the existing national school system. This had far reaching effects on the organisation's strategy and the relationship between strategic actions and aspirational values.

> *'The lesson is that in appraising organizations we cannot draw conclusions regarding administrative practices unless we can place those practices in a developmental context'* (Selznick, 1957; 118).

This chapter is provided on the basis that any interpretation of an organisation's behaviour should be placed in its context (Selznick, 1957; 103). It has been argued that we can learn more, not by comparing similar events in different organizations, but by seeking and analysing patterns of events in the same organisation over a long period of time (Katz, 1951; 144). It is particularly important to position an analysis of Educate Together (ET) in a historical context because the organisation formally reintroduced multi-denominational education into Ireland's national school system one hundred and eighty-seven years after it was first proposed as a central tenet of education.

Ireland developed a model of multi-denominational education in the late eighteenth century. At that time there was a willingness amongst the peasantry to support indigenous schools and a high status was placed on education. The Roman

Catholic prelates could, it is argued, tolerate a multi-denominational[19] system because of the existence of Protestant proselytising societies, and the government's willingness to yield to the prelates' demands. The central aspiration in the original design of the national system was:

> *'... that in the schools a strong and positive effort was to be made to mix children of all faiths, with the hope that by learning to live together as pupils they would at least tolerate each other as adults'* (Akenson, 1970: 158).

The historians argue that multi-denominational education was an accepted course of action for Ireland at that time:

> *'The lines which the national system assumed were determined by years of cumulative educational consensus, as articulated in a genealogy of official government reports on education. Individual personalities were important in shaping the events of 1830 and 1831, but everyone involved spoke in the vocabulary of the conventional educational wisdom. From the vantage point of the present century and within the perspective of Irish history, the creation of the Irish national system of education in 1831, seems a natural indeed, an almost inevitable event'* (Akenson, 1970; 121-122).

But Ireland's national school system rapidly became, and uniquely remains, in terms of Europe, North America and Canada, denominational in its structure and character. The rest of this chapter traces the detail of the system's genealogy from 1791 to 1965.

First, this Chapter sets the scene for the establishment of the national school structure in 1831 by charting the philanthropic and industrial influences on

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[19] The term multi-denominational system was NOT used historically – occasionally *undenominational* was used – the term multi-denominational is being applied here because the essence of the historical approach was the same as today's multi-denominational arrangement. It was intended that the education system would educate pupils of all Christian religions together. The term used in ET today is *multi-denominational,* which, in that context refers to schools that accept children of *all religions and none* and facilitate instruction outside of school hours to any religion *whilst also offering* a programme of in-school (i.e. timetabled) instruction that implicitly recognises all religions and none equally. The term is inelegant and frequently confused with *non-denominational* which means a school that offers no religious instruction or references of any kind. However, given no better substitute, the term multi-denominational will be used throughout the remainder of this text.

education between 1790 and 1831. Then it follows the story of how the national school structure developed from 1831 in what was a failed opportunity for a multi-denominational education system. Independence in 1921 resulted in no administrative change but set in train a pattern of under-resourcing of the national school system. Finally, events between 1954 and 1965 led directly to the establishment of a new chapter in the education system.

Two volumes of original historical documents provided the source material for this chapter. The volumes were collected and edited in 1987 by Aine Hyland – a founder of Educate Together - and Kenneth Milne. A number of authors provide interpretations of the different periods of Irish education history. Other references are noted in the text.

The Industrial Revolution led to changes in traditional social patterns that, in turn, led to the growth of voluntary and philanthropic efforts to provide systems of mass education. The British Sunday school system was one such example. The Sunday school was viewed as independent of the Church authorities and was governed in a philanthropic and paternalistic manner. The first Irish Sunday schools were established in 1793 when the upper classes in England and Ireland were deeply concerned with popular revolt. The schools welcomed pupils and adults to engage in scriptures but also reading and spelling for the purpose of making the scriptures more accessible. Atkinson argues that the reason these early school structures did not develop into regular day schools was because there was a fear that too much knowledge would be dangerous (1969; 72).

The roots of today's national school system can be traced back to a document dated 1791 by the Commissioners of Irish Education Enquiry.[20] Those first education Commissioners set in train a pattern of educational commissions and reports that have continued to the present day (Hyland and Milne, 1987). The 1791 Commissioners surveyed the different types of schools and were severely critical of the standards, conditions and pay of school-masters, and the insufficient provision for education amongst the poor (Akenson, 1970; 71). The Commissioners recommended a national system of education for pupils of all Christian creeds. They recommended that the local parish school be managed by a group of local

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20 Copy of the report of commissioners appointed by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in 1788 under the provision of an act, 28th GEO C111, C15'. The Commissioners surveyed and reported on parish schools, diocesan schools, royal schools and charter schools, 1788-1791.

laymen with representation from at least two lay Protestants and two lay Catholics. Akenson quotes in his text (1970; 71-72): '*it is our opinion that the pupils of Roman Catholics and Protestants should be admitted indiscriminately into the schools, and that the clergy of each persuasion should attend for the purpose of instructing the pupils belonging to their respective communions in the principles of religion.*[21]

The twin principles of access for all pupils and just arrangements in the provision of religious instruction were to become the cornerstone of government policy for the next seventy years. But enacting these principles meant that existing parish schools would have to be placed under new structures; that *'the control of local parish schools should be taken from the iron grasp of local protestant vicar and placed in the hands of a body composed chiefly of laymen'* (Akenson, 1970; 73). Atkinson[22] remarks that the proposals '*amounted to the wholesale abandonment of the traditional policy of entrusting education to the agency of the Anglican Church in Ireland'* (1969; 90). He argues that the political context was created after the French Revolution. The fear of large-scale revolt led to a Church-State alliance in defence of order. It was seen that the greatest need was to '*condition the lower classes to resist the influences of revolutionary propaganda'* (Atkinson, 1969; 91). The State recognised that any system of education was going to hugely depend on co-operation with the Catholic bishops (Atkinson, 1969).

The mechanisms, rules and standards of education that became part of the Irish national school system were also influenced by a number of early voluntary education efforts. The Hibernian Society of London (1806) had established three hundred and ninety schools by 1818. One society in particular: The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, led to the establishment of the national school system. It was better known as The Kildare Place Society and was established in 1811 by a group of businessmen, bankers and lawyers. The society set out to be religiously neutral; governed by men from the Catholic, Protestant and Presbyterian communities and:

> *'divested of all sectarian distinctions in Christianity'* (Coolahan, 1981:11).

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Norman Atkinson published, Irish Education: A History of Educational Institutions, in 1969 and Donald H. Akenson published The Irish Education Experiment in 1970.

After The Act of Union in 1800, attention and interest in popular education continued to increase. The Royal Commission of Education was appointed in 1806 and reported its recommendations in 1812. It recommended a general plan of education for the lower classes, again stressing, '*keeping clear of all interference with the particular religious tenets of any, and thereby inducing the whole to receive instruction as one body under one and the same system and in the same establishment'* (Atkinson, 1969; 90). The Commissioners were unanimous that no national system of education could be provided unless the central principle - *of not disturbing the religious tenets of any* - was clearly understood and averred.

The Commission's recommendation was based on the view that the system of education in Ireland should:

> *'be explicitly avowed, and clearly understood as its leading principle, that no attempt shall be made to influence or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or description of Christians*[23] (Hislop, 1987:65).

> *'This effort to draw a distinction between secular and religious instruction was to prove a most contentious one: each of the denominations disputed it, seeing the whole schooling process as an extension of pastoral care with religion interpenetrating all facets of education. Moreover, in the context of strong denominational animosities and a live tradition of proselytism, the concept of a mixed education system would prove difficult to realize. The churches were anxious to benefit from state finance in support of schooling but each denomination strove to shape the national school system towards its denominational requirements'* (Coolahan, 1981:5).

The Commission also recommended the centralised control of schools, textbooks and the training of all teachers. These recommendations were highly influential in the administrative schema of subsequent education policy (Hislop, 1987:64) and continue to be influential.

On foot of the recommendations of the 1812 Commission, The Kildare Place Society was quickly supported by government grants for the purpose of providing a

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23 Fourteenth Report of The Commissioners of The Board of Education in Ireland, 1812.

'well-ordered Education amongst the labouring classes of this country' (Hislop, 1987:83). It contributed an innovative model of teacher training for men and women, and introduced the concept of the model[24] school (Atkinson, 1969: 71). The Society also published its own texts and developed a school inspectorate system. By 1831, it had made contributions to 1,621 schools with a total of 137,639 pupils. It received two and a half million pounds in grants from the government between 1811 and 1828.

Despite its own rules and principles, the Society distributed grants in a haphazard manner and the schools enrolled far more Protestant than Catholic pupils (Atkinson, 1969: 70-71). However, many of The Society's principles and objects[25] later became the basis of the national school system when it was established in 1831 (Akenson, 1970; 87),

- The governing body was representative of all the religious communities and intended to provide an education to all Christian denominations without influencing any particular religion;
- The schools were open to boys and girls;
- The Society operated the principle of combined literary and separate religious instruction.[26] The pupils of different Christian faiths were only separated for the purpose of religious denominational instruction;
- Its intention was to support schools where the appointment of teachers and the enrolment methods were not influenced by religious distinction and where all proficient pupils would read the scriptures without note or comment;
- Where the mode of instruction would encourage pupils to regard each other without prejudice and produce charitable feeling for their neighbours regardless of their religious persuasion;
- Specific religious instruction ought not to be introduced during school-hours;

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[24] A model school is a training ground for teachers; it is an actual school with pupils and was called a model because it developed the pedagogic methodologies and practiced a philosophy of education. The Minister of Education is patron of the Model School in Marlborough St in Dublin 1 – the building is in the same grounds as the Department of Education.

25 Extracted from Eighth Report of The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, Dublin 1820. Appendix No.VI, pp.60-64 (Hislop, 1987:87).

[26] "It was clearly intended that pupils of different religious beliefs should undergo their literary and moral education together and engage in doctrinal religious instruction peculiar to their own denomination on separate occasions" (Coolahan, 1981: 14).

- The model of instruction would give to parents and pastors as they thought fit) a facility for specific denominational instruction outside of school-hours;
- The Society did not control internal school operations but would make a recommendation that a system of instruction be adopted;
- The Society did not build schools nor did it provide all operational grants but where schools operated the recommended principles the Society provided furnishings and fittings, books and materials;
- The books were carefully selected so as not to interfere with any particular religion;
- The Society recommended that due to its limited contribution local Associations be formed for two purposes:
- To support schools;
- To ensure that the system of instruction was adhered to,

In addition, a model school was developed to exemplify the mode of instruction and for the training of teachers (Hislop, 1987: 83-87). Initially, the society was well received,

> *'It is obvious that the Kildare Place Society was radically different from the proselytizing societies....unlike others, it was truly undenominational in character. The support, or at the least benevolent neutrality, of the Roman Catholic clergy, combined with aid from parliament, meant that that the society bid fair to be a National system of schooling for the Irish poor. Its administrative methods were not those of the petty proselytizers, but were suitable to a system of schools covering the entire nation'* (Akenson, 1970; 88-89).

Despite its considerable pedagogic and organisation success, within ten years the Kildare Place Society was in trouble with the Roman Catholic Church. The number of Roman Catholics on the governing association was always in the minority. Daniel O'Connell [27] argued that the Society's practice of reading the scriptures without note or comment went against Roman Catholic teaching and therefore, the Society was not offering equal facilities of education to Catholic pupils. Proselytising emerged in some of the schools and the Society made grants

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27 Daniel O'Connell, himself a member of the Kildare Place Society made a speech to the society in 1820 asking it to explain, and change its contradictory activities.

available to other educational societies that were explicit in their proselytizing intentions (Hyland. 1987).

In 1824, the Catholic Bishop of Kildare, Dr. J.W. Doyle, had presented a blueprint for the national school system. The Bishop suggested a mixed system in which the pupils '*...of all denominations would be educated together, the right of parents to decide the form of religious instruction being maintained intact'* (Atkinson, 1969; 91). Atkinson argues that Doyle's views were popular with other Bishops, although there was a concern that Catholic pupils must be protected and given adequate means of religious instruction.

In 1828, a House of Commons Committee had approved the principles of the 1812 Commission. In 1830, Bishop Doyle's friend, Thomas Wyse, a Catholic, and Member of Parliament for Waterford, produced a plan for comprehensive education based on a local-state partnership. The parishioners could chose the teachers and the denominational clergy could deliver religious instruction, whilst the overall administration would be delivered by the Board of Education.

4.2. The Stanley Letter; establishing the national school system in 1831.

Some months later, the 1831 foundation document for the system of national education was produced. It was written by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Lord E.G. Stanley, in a letter to the Duke of Leinster that is colloquially known as 'The Stanley Letter'.

The Stanley Letter contained proposals for a national education system (Farren, 1995: 3). The document is the critical landmark in education both in terms of policy and political socialization (Coolahan, 1987; 13). The Stanley Letter also laid down the administrative antecedents[28] for today's national school system. In particular,

'*...as one of the main objects must be to unite in one system pupils of different creeds...*'[29] (Hyland,1987: 98-99)

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[28] Essentially the power structure in the national school system has not changed since Stanley's decree. It rests on a critical division of power – government (through The Minister of Education and Science) has centralized control/approval and distribution of funds, per capita grants, professional wages, curriculum, rules and regulations and the inspectorate, whilst the local national school has autonomy in the appointment of teachers, principals, religious education and ethos.

29 Quote from a copy of the letter found in the Irish Office, London dated October 1831. Full title of the letter was "A letter from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, to His Grace the Duke of Leinster, on the

The Chief Secretary's proposals included the following,

- All schools would admit pupils of all religious persuasions but not interfere with the tenets of any and to be free from 'even the suspicion of proselytism' (Hyland, 1987; 101);
- The national system would be controlled by a Board of Commissioners of National education;
- Grant aid would be given to those applicants who could support the grant with local funds, including a teacher's salary, maintenance costs and one-third of building costs if required:
- The curriculum would support 'combined moral and a separate religious education' (Hyland, 1987; 100);
- Five days of schooling were to be devoted to secular education and two days to religious with clergy free to instruct pupils of their denomination before or after school hours;
- Secular and religious text books were under the control of the Commissioners;
- Supporting scriptures were sanctioned by the Board and only these could be used;
- One day, not Sunday was set apart for religious instruction to be given by pastors or those approved by parent or guardian;
- Managers of the schools had to make facilities available for denominational instruction and it had to happen either before or after the ordinary school business. Public notification was to be given to ensure that denominational instructions was received only with parents permission;
- Inspectors were to be appointed to ensure rules were enforced;
- A model school for training was to be established in Dublin.

The State's role was that of assisting local initiatives on the basis of local schools adhering to the rules and regulations of the newly appointed Commissioners of National Education. However, local funding never matched the government's expectations and this was a matter of concern throughout the lifetime of the Commissioners (Coolahan, 1987; 13).

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formation of a Board of Commissioners for Education in Ireland. NB. Two versions of the Stanley letter are in existence. Whilst there are significant differences between the two versions, they do not concern this study.

The British Government aimed to draw a distinction between secular and religious instruction in Ireland, whereby:

> *'...the young people of all denominations would be combined for the former while purely doctrinal instruction would be a responsibility for individual churches and be conducted at separate times for the pupils of the various denominations'* (Coolahan, 1987: 11).

The intention was that the national school would be open to pupils of all denominations and none. The phrase '*combined literary and separate religious education'* summarized the stated aims of the Commissioners of National Education at the time (Farren, 1995: 4).

> *'In the context of post-Union politics, the government felt that the schools could serve politicizing and socialising goals, cultivating attitudes of political loyalty and cultural assimilation. The danger of separate school systems operating without official supervision needed to be countered. Further, theorists such as Adam Smith had urged that the state should promote literacy and numeracy at elementary level as an essential factor for industrial progress. Ireland, as a colony, could be used as an experimental milieu for social legislation which might not be tolerated in England where laissez-faire politico-economic policies were more rigid and doctrinaire'* (Coolahan, 1981:4).

Indeed, 'Ireland led the way in many aspects of the State's involvement in education within the United Kingdom' (Coolahan, 1987:13).

Lord Stanley's letter reiterated the values of the 1791 document. The implicit philosophy was, according to Akenson, part of a broad educational consensus that had been forming for five decades (1970; 59) - *'The ideas Stanley presented...were by 1831 part of the conventional vocabulary of any official or politician thinking about Irish education'* (Akenson, 1970; 115).

> *'The greatest political problem of the National Board, however, was to win allegiance to its policy of mixed or inter-denominational schooling. All the churches had a strong preference for state supported denominational schooling*

under the control of the individual church[30]*'* (Coolahan, 1987; 14).

The ideals of The Stanley letter were implemented for a short time only: '*No concessions to denominational practices were permitted during the hours of secular instruction'* (Hyland and Milne, 1987: 124). Theoretically, the schools were meant to be mixed but, by1868, the vast majority of the 5,600 National schools were catering to *either* Catholic *or* Protestant pupils.

The main opposition to Lord Stanley's proposal came from the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster[31] not, as is widely believed, from the Catholic Church. The system forced the Presbyterian ministers '*to share the powers of educational decision with the commissioners of national education'.*[32] This was untenable. The head of the Presbyterian Church, The Rev. Dr. Henry Cooke, denounced the Commissioners because of *"the despotic power with which it is vested"* (Akenson, 1970; 162). But, Anglican clergy in Ireland also resisted the national system: arguing that it would intensify bitterness between faiths by marking the difference between Protestant and Catholic pupils (Akenson, 1970; 192). The Anglican Church also pointed directly to the apparently acceptable principle of proselytising Catholics, arguing, that the national system involved excluding: *'a common source of instruction, that volume which authoritatively inculcates, under the most awful sanctions, universal charity, mutual forbearance, and the cultivation of peace and order'.*[33] Like the Presbyterian view, they did not conceal their disappointment that the power of education was being placed in the hands of the Commissioners. The Roman Catholic prelates, meanwhile were operating on two parallel tracks; on the one hand, they publicly stated their preference for a State funded system of Catholic education and on the other, they were engaged in private collective bargaining with the

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[30] '*individual'* refers to the Diocesan Bishop and his chosen representative, the local priest or clergy. Pope Gregory the XVI said *'...that this kind of education should be left to the prudent discretion of the each individual bishop...*' Rescript of his Holiness Pope Gregory XVI to the four archbishops of Ireland, in reply to the appeal to the holy see on the subject of the National System of Education in Ireland (Dublin, 1841).

[31] The Synod of Ulster as it existed prior to secession in July 1840 refers to the members of the Synood. After 1840 they were joined by the Presbyterian church in Ireland.

[32] Henry Cooke, *National Education:* A sermon preached in the Presbyterian church, May Street, Belfast, January 1832, Belfast, 1832, pp 28-30.

[33] A speech delivered by the Lord Bishop of Ossory and Ferns at the annual meeting of the Church Education Society for Ireland, held in the Rotunda, Dublin, April, 1852, pg 9. in Akenson, 1970; 192.

Commissioners over the acceptable concept of combined literary instruction and separate religious education (Akenson, 1970; 96).

In the 1830s the Catholic clergy applied for funds and quickly filled schools with large numbers of Catholic pupils. It was the position of the Presbyterian, Catholic and Anglican churches that prevented these schools from becoming multi-denominational (Akenson, 1970; 202). The Established Church continued to defend its philosophy of scripture teaching without note or comment and had difficulty understanding the Catholic Church's position. In principle, the Catholic Church had no problem with combined literary instruction up and to the point of a combined reading of the scriptures. However, '*the Catholic hierarchy was absolutely clear that scripture reading should only take place when it was appropriately and authoritatively mediated*' (Akenson, 1970; 95-97).

The substantial public debate on the national school system focused almost entirely on the issue of mixed denominational status. The State continued to insist on this cornerstone of its policy despite the fact that, in practice, the system rapidly became denominational. While there were examples of multi-denominational schools with joint managers, teachers and a mixed body of pupils, they were the rare exception. The differences between these schools and the denominational ones were that,

- Religious instruction was subject to the time and choosing of the manager;
- The timetable for religious instruction had to be called in advance;
- No child was compelled to remain during the religious instruction of pupils of another faith;
- Clergy of all denominations had access to the school.

In 1870, the Powis [34] Commission officially gave recognition to the *de facto* position and made a series of significant recommendations (Coolahan, 1987:13-14). The Powis Commission established that where there was only one school, religious instruction was to be confined to fixed hours and each denomination were separated for their religious instructions; no religious emblems were allowed to be on display. For locations where there was more than one school under different denominations,

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34 The Powis Commission Chaired by Lord Powis – Title of the original report was: 'Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions in Ireland for the purpose of elementary or primary education; also into the practical working of the system of national education in Ireland' 1870 (C.6) xxviii1.

such schools were recognised as separate for a particular denomination and the rules above did not apply. Further, it was given that,

> *'the minority being free to retire, and the teachers being bound to put them out when religious instruction is given to the majority, the managers shall be bound to provide proper shelter for the pupils who are of a different religious denomination from the teacher'.*[35]

This effectively endorsed the expansion of a denominational system. Perhaps the Commissioners imagined that there would always be an adequate supply of multi-denominational schools. In practice,[36] this ruling applied to those pupils who attended the school and were not of the dominant denomination.

The Powis Commission also agreed that the religious orders (convents and monastic institutions and the Christian Brothers, in particular) were included as appropriate patrons of schools. Other Powis recommendations included the introduction of the payment by results scheme - individual teachers were monetarily rewarded for high-test grades; and mechanisms were introduced to increase the contribution of local funds.

After disestablishment, the Intermediate Act of 1878 provided The Christian Brothers' Schools with State aid, on the condition of a Conscience Clause. The Commissioners of Education proposed,

> *'1.To repeal, as regards the Christian Brothers' Schools, the present Conscience Clause embodied in Rule 76; and 2. to reverse the whole intent and policy of the Intermediate Education Clause by excluding every child who is not a Roman Catholic from the advantages of the secular education given in these schools'* (Dickinson, 1896*).*

The Presbyterian Church viewed this as a means of State endowment of the Roman Catholic Church (1895).[37] A minority of Commissioners emphatically

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[35] Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions in Ireland for the purpose of elementary or primary education...1870, C6. Xxviii1.

[36] In 2006, there is no research that explains how schools manage pupils of minority religions during religious instruction (Hyland, a personal interview, 2006).

[37] Resolutions unanimously adopted by the Presbytery of Belfast, 1895 – outlining their objections to the New Rule adopted by The Commissioners in 1895.

dissented from the decision. Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland views were put forth arguing for the success of the system[38] in education and religious terms. The Methodists pointing out *'that it is perfectly fair to all classes and creeds in our land, and tends to promote friendship and harmony amongst persons of different religious persuasion'*.[39] A unanimous resolution was adopted in 1895.

4.3. What happened to the values in 'The Stanley Letter'?

The State was concerned with socialisation and politicisation in its promotion of schooling and the main churches viewed schools as vital for denominational control and power. These early struggles between Church and State *'proved to be very durable,'* as it is only the last generation that has challenged the Catholic Church as victors (Coolahan, 2003; 132)

Lord Stanley's *'daring stance against a prevailing climate of proselytism'* was as *'a guiding premise for the national school system* (Coolahan, 2003; 133). Coolahan argues that the churches ultimately opposed a mixed denominational system.

It could also be argued that the Commissioners of Education set its demise in motion. Lord Stanley's decree that mixed creed applications should be favoured was not followed through or investigated. The Commissioners of National Education themselves did not press for a multi-denominational approach. They were *'to look with peculiar favour'* on applications for schools that were jointly managed by Catholics and Protestants (Hyland, 1993) but routinely they favoured applications from people of good standing and most of those came from the Catholic lay and religious community. The Commissioners relied upon the rules of the national system to enact their objects, promote religious tolerance and service religious instruction without proselytising. But the rules were neither inspected nor enforced. The joint clergies were not forced to work together and the distinction between a school designated as a whole community trust and one intended as a medium of specific religious responsibility rapidly disappeared. Individual clergymen from both the main churches applied for aid and proceeded to establish

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[38] Dickinson quotes statistics of enrolment in support of the system. In 1834 there were 1,106 schools and 145, 521 pupils enrolled. By 1893 there 8,459 schools and 1,032,287 pupils enrolled. The contributors to the argument point to the fact that the enrolment figures would be higher once compulsory education was introduced and enforced (Dickinson, 19XX).

[39] Minutes of Conference held December 1895 by the Methodist Church.

religious fiefdoms (Akenson, 1970; 150). Further, the State supported the denominational teacher training colleges from 1884, another major concession to the denominational emphasis.

The Commissioners also failed to enforce Lord Stanley's ruling that schools must contribute to the building and running costs. The Commissioners strengthened their own levels of control by paying for all expenses in certain schools but reduced the power of any grass roots support and diluted the idea of the school being a '*local civic institution'* (Akenson, 1970; 151). Akenson argues that local capacities to raise funds were weak and mixed faith fundraising attempts were difficult to imagine. It is possible that the whole system would have declined had the Commissioners not delivered funding at the level they did (1970).

By 1851, the intended multi-denominational system was effectively denominational. This was advanced by changes in the make-up of the Commission and the loss of the leading figures and visionaries who had held effective control for 20 years. The Catholic Church continued to make strong representations to the government to give formal recognition, by changing the national school rules, to the denominational nature of the system (Hyland, 1989; 90-91). Although drafts of revised rules were proposed, they were not accepted,

> *'Power slipped gradually from the Anglican hands and, after disestablishment in 1871 was gone almost entirely...The Irish religious revolution, when combined with a policy of increasing treasury intervention in Irish affairs, inevitably meant a transformation in the way the affairs of the commissioners of national education were conducted'* (Akenson, 1970: 4-5*).*

By the mid-1800s only four per cent schools were under mixed management (Hyland, 1993).

4.3.1. Innovations and reform

At the end of the nineteenth century a more 'child-centred' approach to education was also being discussed. This was because of dissatisfaction with the national school system, which was regarded as *'too artificial, too bookish and narrow'* (Coolahan, 1981:33). This new thinking was inspired by the work of Froebel, Pestalozzi and Rousseau, who argued that the interests and needs of the child should be at the centre of their education.

The Belmore Commission (1897) recommended a wider curriculum, an emphasis on kindergarten education and an approach to the school experience that was more humane and interesting. In the revised programme, teachers were encouraged to adopt 'heuristic, discovery-type teaching methods' (Coolahan, 1981: 35). This was one of the first curricular reforms of the education system, introducing modern, revolutionary approaches to a still undeveloped system. The quality of the programme's implementation was poor due to insensitive handling in its introduction to managers and teachers, varying school and class sizes, low pupil attendance, lack of funding and the continuing problem of the state's dissatisfaction with the amount of funding contributed by the local school patron. However, small numbers of teachers did receive in-service training in the new programme and significant changes were introduced at the infant level through the introduction of drawing and singing. In addition, promotion in the use of the Irish language by the Gaelic League (a theme that would have huge implications for later reforms after independence) and a less rigid, bureaucratic inspection system meant that school life became more pleasant and interesting (Coolahan, 1981; 36).

As the power balance shifted with Independence, greater attention and concern developed around the education of Irish culture, language and history. This aspect of education had been completely neglected:

> *'It is noteworthy that within these various state initiatives Ireland was viewed as an integral part of the United Kingdom and there was no official concern to preserve and develop the Irish language, history and other aspects of a specifically Irish cultural identity. This neglect, allied to various economic and social developments, led to a serious decline in the sense of Irish cultural separateness, despite efforts by the Young Ireland Movement led by Thomas Davis in the 1840s'* (Coolahan, 1987; 15*).*

Other parts of the National school system managed to be innovative and, inter-denominational training institutions were established successfully. For instance, The Commissioners of Education founded a Central Model school and an inter-denominational training college for men in 1831 and another for women in 1842. A similiarly structured agricultural training college was founded in 1838 in Glasnevin, Dublin, the purpose being to educate pupils in modern farming methods. And from

the late 1840s, a nationwide scheme of district model schools and district agricultural schools was being established (Coolahan, 1987).

Model schools also became an important feature of the national school tradition. The first model school for training teachers was opened in Marlborough Street, Dublin. By 1863, there were twenty-eight model schools under the patronage of the state and managed by the National Board of Education. The model schools are important because they were some of the very first schools fully financed by the State and most were managed as multi-denominational (Hyland, 1993):

> *'In the nineteenth century, the National Board's training colleges and district model schools were run on inter-denominational lines and were directly managed by the Board itself. As such they drew the hostility of the Catholic Church authorities. From the early 1860s Catholics were forbidden to attend them. The Powis Commission (1868-1870) found against the model and agricultural schools and supported the claim for denominational training colleges. When this latter was achieved in 1883, it symbolized a significant defeat for the original national education policy. Agricultural model schools were closed down and, while the district model schools were allowed to continue in existence, their impressive building and accompanying facilities became grossly under-utilised. Thus, many facets of the original grand design of the National Board were significantly altered and their promise not fully realized'* (Coolahan, 1987:14-15).

Throughout the nineteenth century, Ireland's national school system *'was highly controversial, widely denounced, and imperfectly understood'* (Akenson, 1970:1). But the administrative mechanisms and, indeed, many of the rules that had currency in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are still in practice today.

4.4. The impact of Independence, 1921- 1954.

> *'In the administration of the Irish education, it is the intention of the new government to work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music and*

tradition of Ireland, their natural place in the life of Irish schools'[40] *(*Pádraig Ó Brolcháin in Coolahan, 1981: 41*).*

Upon Independence, the emphasis was on curriculum reform and *'cultural revolution based on schools'* (Coolahan, 1981; 39). There was no attempt or interest in administrative reform. The Department of Education was established in 1924 to coordinate primary, secondary and technical education branches under the one Minister for Education: *'the inherited pattern of administration, financing and control remained very much as it had been under the British regime. No commission was officially established to investigate the whole system of education and no effort was made to introduce comprehensive legislation for education'* (Coolahan, 1980; 39). The Commissioners of National Education were disbanded on the eve of the transfer of powers. The new national curricular programme was operational on 1st April 1922 and established a pattern in education that would continue for the next fifty years. The key element was the revival of the Irish language and its use as a medium of teaching. The intention was *'to develop the best traits of the national character and to inculcate national pride and self-respect'* (Coolahan, 1981; 40).

A revised curricular programme was introduced in 1934 and remained policy until 1971. Prompted by the slow progress of the implementation of the Irish language in schools, the new curriculum narrowed the subject range in order to advance Irish language teaching and the use of Irish as a medium of teaching:

> *'The general programme offered a narrow subject-range, the stress was on handing on a cultural heritage in the "Gaelic" tradition. All schools, great and small, urban and rural, followed a common curriculum. Mastery of the Irish language was the primary goal of education policy'* (Coolahan, 1981; 43).

In 1947, the The Irish National Teacher's Organisation (INTO) published *A Plan for Education,* advocating a more child-centred approach with wider subject range including literary, aesthetic and practical subjects. Strains between the State and teaching profession meant that these proposals were not adopted because the

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40 The new Chief Executive Officer for Education, Pádraig Ó Brolcháin quoted in *The Irish School Weekly* 11th February, 1922, p 127.

Council of Education of 1954 called for no fundamental changes (Coolahan, 1981; 45).

Consistent with the original structure laid out in The Stanley Letter, the State was viewed as having a subsidiary role only. The system was deeply fragmented and inefficient; in 1922, eighty per cent of the 5,700 National schools were either one or two teacher schools). Proposals for the amalgamation and creation of co-educational schools were not permitted by the Catholic bishops, although, some amalgamations did take place in the 1920s and 30s. Maintenance of schools was a huge issue for local managers, many of whom failed to provide funds. Continued pressure from the INTO to put the responsibility back on the State was opposed by the Catholic Church hierarchy as infringing their managerial rights. The first state grant for maintenance of school buildings was not given until 1962 (Coolahan, 1981).

The national school profile remained as a single-sex, single denomination school, funded by the State which made no effort to alter or redirect the control mechanisms:

> *'Underlying this pattern was the conservatism of the political system and political aspirations and the churches of the time. The de facto denominational system was not interfered with'* (Coolahan, 1981; 45).

> *'In the post 1900 period, the majority of funding was coming from central State sources and the system was declared by the Catholic hierarchy as being as denominational as they could want it, with the vast majority of schools being managed by individual clergy'* (Coolahan, 1981; 37).

4.5. The critical events of 1954 and 1965.

The *Report of The Council of Education on the Function and Curriculum of the Primary School, 1954* set a new context that would change the demand for alternative structures in the national school system. The rationale for the Council's recommendations is significant in terms of the development of the founders of ET and worth quoting in detail,

> *'In Ireland, happily, there is no disagreement as to the place religion should occupy in the school. ...The*

undenominational principle underlying the "system of national education"[41] *was obnoxious to our people, though at least that system has the merit of recognizing that Religious Instruction was an indispensable constituent of the curriculum'* (section 194).

'The outcome of that past struggle is that our primary schools today are essentially religious and denominational in character. They are owned and managed almost exclusively by religious bodies, and their primary purpose is religious. Though the State makes certain demands of them by reason of the public moneys contributed towards their building and maintenance, they are in the main really parochial schools conducted on behalf of particular denominations' (section 195)

'... the difficulties encountered by the Commissioners of National Education were, for the greater part, due to their failure to recognize the demands for denominational education. These demands did not come merely from members of one religious faith but from all those who objected to the principle of "mixed" education and who favoured private (i.e., non-State) ownership and control of the schools. In actual fact to-day the overwhelming majority of the National schools are denominational in the sense that the trustees, manager, teachers and pupils of each school are of the same religious persuasion; less than 3% of the total are "mixed" schools, i.e., attended by pupils of different religious affiliations, and the State, in fact, assists pupils of religious minorities to enable them to attend schools of their parents' choice. Hence we consider that the theoretical object of the "System of National Education" which is "to afford Combined literary and moral, and Separate Religious Instruction to pupils of all persuasions, as far as possible, in the same school..." is at variance with the principles of all religious denominations and with the realities in the primary schools, and consequently that it needs restatement. We suggest that it be amended in accordance

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41 A Reference to The Stanley Letter and the system established under The Commissioners of National Education

> *with Article 44.2.4 of The Constitution, and that the fullness of denominational education may be legally sanctioned in those schools which are attended exclusively by pupils of the same religious faith'* (The Report of The Council of Education on the Function and Curriculum of the Primary School, 1954 reported in Hyland, 1992; 124-125).

The Council argued that the fundamental purpose of the national school system be changed (Hyland, 1992; 134):

> *'In accordance with Article 42.2.4 of the Constitution and that the fullness of denominational education may be legally sanctioned in those schools which are attended exclusively by pupils of the same religious faith'*[42]

The recommendations were considered for two years by a Departmental committee under then Minister for Education, Richard Mulcahy. The Minister's intention was to consult with all interested parties before making any final decisions. However, the government and changes to the system were delayed for a further nine years.

Finally, in 1965, under Minister for Education, Patrick Hillary, a new version of the Rules of National schools gave explicit recognition to the denominational character of these schools (Hyland, 1992; 134-135). The elements of the 1965 Rules of National Schools that most concern this study are: Article 44. 2.43 (of Irish Constitution, 1937).

> *Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.*
>
> *In pursuance of the provisions of these Articles the State provides for free primary education for pupils in national schools, and gives*

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[42] The report of The Council of Education on the Function and Curriculum of the Primary School, 1954

explicit recognition to the denominational character of these schools.

The critical point Hyland argues is, by placing on a statutory basis, the recognition of the denominational character of the national school, the State authorised school managements to give first preference to pupils of their own religious denomination. She argues this led directly to demand for an alternative model where pupils of all religions, cultures and social classes would have equal right of access (Hyland, 1992; 135).

4.6. Conclusions.

This Chapter presented the analysis of the first strata of Presentational Data; described in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.5.1.). This Chapter provides an analysis of the historical context and administrative genealogy from which ET evolved and is justified by the assumption that empirical knowledge about values and strategy can be deepened if qualitative, context rich and context-specific methodologies are applied to research studies.

This Chapter details the fragmented, conflicted, and, ultimately failed attempts to institutionalise valued behaviours, attached to what we now call, multi-denominational education. The values implied in The Stanley Letter proposed that children of different faiths be educated together. The fragmentation and dilution of those values occurred at the social level and at the inter-organisation and intra-organisation levels. The State's Commissioners seemed unable to vouchsafe or implement their own system, laying the path for denominational control. The Kildare Place Society succumbed to institutional pressures and acted against its own objects as a non-proselytising, civic initiative. At the core of this story is a values conflict about whether education is a secular instrument, or an extension of pastoral care in which denominational religion is viewed as indivisible from all facets of the education process. The former reflected Protestant and Anglican values (represented by the State and the Established Church), and the latter reflected the values of The Roman Catholic Church.

Ultimately, each denomination worked to shape the national school system to its own denominational requirements.

Chapter One identified that in the nineteenth century, rational, enduring principles were being promoted throughout western society. This

philosophy encouraged self-improvement and hard work as a path towards individual autonomy, enlightenment and the discovery of the 'self'. Paradoxically, the individual, who has learnt to value autonomy, discovered that its path relied on social relationships and modes of practice that were socially constituted; the individual may claim to hold certain values but his/her ability to enact those values whether for him/herself or for others will depend on the social structures of which he/she is an indivisible member. The period of history described in this Chapter equates with the period of rational influence described in Chapter One. Indeed, the proposal of the State to put aside religious differences in the interests of the common good in order to provide an equitable, standardised education system for all, is an excellent example of rational principles being applied to education.

Chapter One identified that Strategic Management is an application of the rational principle - an amalgam of organisation-related disciplines based on the generic assumption that the organisation as a whole can be shaped and directed towards previously conceived goals and purposes. The purpose of this study is to try to find out if values are represented/embodied in organisation structures, goals, and purposes, where they come from, how values are represented in the efforts of individual managers/groups to shape the organisation and, finally, if there is a relationship between what managers desire through values and what actually happens to the organisation. If, for the purposes of analogy, the national school system is viewed as an organisation, this Chapter identifies that there is a tenuous and fragile relationship between the State's previously conceived values and goals and what actually happened to the national school system.

Chapter Two identified that the research effort in the values-strategy field can be understand in two broad strands: values treated as coherent, reflected in the assumption of shared understanding and common goals by members of the organisation, and values treated as incoherent/ambiguous/conflicting with no such assumptions in operation. An examination of the literatures reveals no apparent or obvious organisation benefit in treating values as coherent, other than to indicate that top managers/manager teams are in some way a reflection of what is happening in the organisation and where the organisation is heading.

Historians have identified that multi-denominational education was the *conventional educational wisdom* of the time. But, given what happened to the national school system, this perspective does not stand up to scrutiny.

There is no evidence that these values were coherent or shared by any of the parties involved despite stated desires and the advantageous political and cultural situation, e.g. that a multi-faith education structure would be palatable given the long tradition of proselytising by the Protestant churches.

This part of the story of the evolution of the national school system can be more readily understood if it is based on an assumption of incoherent, conflicting and ambiguous values. Since the system began, this ambiguity was and is being dealt with by each and every parent/church group that has decided to set up a national school in this country. Subsequent chapters illustrate how this particular ambiguity continues to be played out at the ET school level. Paradoxically, the complexity of the national school system in terms of its social, religious, cultural, historical, economic and political associations is probably the feature that makes it so attractive to deeply held values and to the desire of people to access the education system and shape it to their own values. As Professor Coolahan argues,

> *'...One of the most important features of today's Irish education is its deep-rooted past; its roots in religious traditions, political and social upheaval and rapidly changing economic structures – in spite, or perhaps, because of this, Irish people have consistently displayed the highest regard for education* (Coolahan, 1981:141).

This desire to shape the national school system according to conflicting and ambiguous values – but values nonetheless - continues today. The next chapter (Chapter Five) provides a detailed account of one group of people – the founders of Educate Together - who took on a historically challenging strategy - to replicate the existing structures and shape a multi-denominational alternative within the system.

Chapter Five: The founding of Dalkey School Project from 1965-1983.

5.1. Introduction

This Chapter represents the analysis of the second strata of Presentational Data described in Chapter Three (see Section 3.5.2.). It is an account and analysis of the founding years of Educate Together (ET) from the perspective of a core group of founders. Consistent with the methodological approach described in Chapter Three, this Chapter provides a richly contextualised account of the founders' values and the strategic actions that led to the establishment of the Dalkey School Project (DSP) and, later, the Educate Together sector. It incorporates a profile and personal history of the individuals involved and their circumstances in deciding to establish an alternative structure within the national school system. Finally, this Chapter captures the influences and varied responses of the wider, cultural, social, religious and political environment to the work of the founders of Educate Together.

ET began with the formation of DSP Ltd and the establishment of *The Dalkey School Project* (DSP) national school (1978). The phrase, *The Dalkey School Project* is not just the name of a school – a local, national school just outside Dalkey in Co. Dublin – it was a focal point for individuals and families who wished to have their children educated together, regardless of denomination.

Educate Together emerged over a critical period of the 1960s and early 1970s in a changing Ireland. The facts and values that merged and evolved into the grass roots movement that became ET are complex and influenced by many individual and institutional contexts.

The analysis is split into two periods; The first period is from 1965 to 1974 and describes attempts by some of the founders to establish a multi-denominational school *within* the denominational system.

The second period begins in 1974, at the decisive point when the founders recognised the fundamental difficulties of this and agreed to establish a multi-denominational school *outside* the denominational system. This part of the story concludes in 1978 with the opening of the DSP in temporary accommodation, and briefly outlines the events that led up to the school moving into its permanent premises in Glenageary in 1983. At the close of this chapter, a brief account of the

national organisation, Educate Together from 1983 to 2001 is given.

See Appendix Three for an overview of Educate Together from 1966 to 2006.

5.1.1. The political and legislative backdrop in 1965

In 1965, The Department of Education published the Rules for National Schools giving explicit recognition to the denominational character of all national schools (see Chapter Four).

The combined effect of the 1965 Rules of National School and the 1971 Primary School Curriculum altered the context of education in Ireland. Critically, it created a practical complication for the profession of teaching and an inherent contradiction for school management. According to the new curriculum, all schools were expected to offer a curriculum that would integrate religious and secular instruction. However, in recognizing the denominational character of the National school without regard to the rights of children of other religions or to the rights of parents to choose their child's religious education, the curriculum was effectively inoperable (Hyland, 1993). The assumption was that a denominational ethos would permeate the whole school environment. The option of removing a child during the timetabled period of religious instruction became meaningless. The following excerpts from The Rules of National Schools illustrate the contradiction:

> *'Of all parts of a school curriculum Religious Instruction is by far the most important, as its subject matter, God's honour and service, includes the proper use of all man's faculties, and affords the most powerful inducements to their proper use. Religious Instruction is, therefore, a fundamental part of the school course and a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school'* (Rule 68, Rules of National Schools, 1965).

Rule 69 goes on to contradict the spirit of Rule 68 by providing that no pupil shall receive or be present at Religious Instruction without the approval of his/her parents. At the time, there were no other rules or statutes of any kind that made provision for the integrated education of non-Christian children or for families that pursued non-theistic philosophies.

In essence, this was the political and legal basis for establishing an

alternative structure in national (primary) education.

5.1.2. An overview of the founders of ET

As a result of the emerging political and religious environment, the founders were prompted to establish a grass roots movement through which parents disenfranchised from the education system could express preferences for their children's education.

This tiny group of three to five people became a large group of hundreds, and is now made up of thousands.[43] Of the many founders, four William {Bill} and Aine Hyland, Micheal and Pat Johnston, and Desmond Green were consulted for this study.[44] Bill died in 1996. Bill's perspective is a critical part of this story. It has been gathered from Aine and from the personal writings that have been maintained as part of an archive. The Hylands and Johnstons initiated the grass roots movement through their joint involvement in St Patrick's Church of Ireland National School, Dalkey in the late 1960s. Desmond Green was also a critical figure and joined the movement as a member of the first DSP committee on 23rd February 1975. These individuals provided leadership and modelled the values that are still in evidence today. The relationships between this core group and the wider circle are described by one of the founders,

> *'...there were some people more in the centre... but the total picture could not be seen unless you saw each ripple in the pond. There was no point in determining that the ripple at the centre was the most important. Actually, all the ripples were equally important in order to get a picture...* [45]

The founders' origins and life experiences are described in this Chapter.

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[43] In October 2006, there were 41 ET schools, approx. 6,680 pupils enrolled in ET schools, 390 teachers and between 35-40 start up groups around the country (source ET head office).

[44] Other significant individuals involved between 1966 and 1975 included David Spearman, Helen Fahy, Hilary Jenkins, Jim Love, Hilary Pratt, Dermot Hourihane, David Cabot, Jill Cox, James Buckley, Mavis Arnold, Patrick and Anne Willis, Isobel Moore.

[45] Interview with Desmond Green, October 2002.

5.1.2.1. William and Aine Hyland

Aine Hyland[46] came from an educational background. Her father, Tomas Domhnallain, was an Irish language scholar and historian. He was a schools' inspector and author of the textbook *Buntus Cainte*[47] (1967). An exceptionally religious man, he attended mass daily with his children. The Domhnallains were an Irish speaking family with strong nationalist views. The third of thirteen children, Aine's seven sisters are all professionals and leaders in Irish education.

From 1949 to 1950, when Aine was aged seven, she attended a co-educational, multi-denominational school modelled on the original Stanley Letter ideal. This was one of the old landlord schools developed in the 19th century under Lord Farnham in Cavan. There were roughly equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children under two teachers. The principal teacher had always been a Protestant and the Assistant Teacher had always been a Catholic. Attending this school was a critical experience in Aine's later career as a secondary teacher, international university lecturer and researcher, educational policy driver and historian, advisor to a range of Irish governments and, in her most recent position, as Vice President of University College Cork.

It was her first and only experience as a student of lay teachers. The school environment itself was appalling. The dry latrines and general deprivation were a world that she'd known nothing about. However, the principal was a remarkable teacher and meeting Protestant children, probably for the first time, was a revelation to Aine. The names of the Protestant children were different (Mabel, Annabel, Mildred) and she found this fascinating. The children were combined for secular education and separated for religious instruction. This was a critical experience in forming DSP. When Aine started studying the history of education in her early twenties, she realized that this was one of the typical schools envisioned by the Commissioners of National Education from 1831. Just before starting in Farnham, she had made her first communion in a private convent in Drogheda. But the catechism taught in the Kilmore (County Cavan) Diocese was different from the Catechism that she had learnt in the Diocese of Meath:

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[46] The information provided in the story was from an interview with Aine Hyland in March 2006. In September 2006, she retired as Vice-President of University College Cork.

[47] 'Buntus Cainte: A first step in spoken Irish' (1967, - recently digitally remastered and republished). A series of lessons based on linguistic research.

'To me there was no more difference between Protestants and Catholics than between Catholics who came from Meath and Catholics who came from the Diocese of Kilmore. We all had to learn different Catechisms.'

After the year and a half was up she returned to the Convent environment that she had always been familiar and happy with. Her different convent experiences were happy ones and she had no negative feelings about her Catholic education. She had, however, gained a fundamental understanding of the differences between the religions.

When Aine left school, she attended Carysfort Training College to train as a National schoolteacher. She remained in 'Carysfort' for three months and left in December 1950. It was a dreadful experience for Aine. She regarded the institution as an inappropriate environment in which to train teachers.

In 1959, at the age of 17, she entered the civil service at Executive Officer level and joined The Department of Education. She immediately absorbed a lot of responsibility, and this was the start of a seminal five-year period in her life. It was at this time that she became interested in education as an area of study. She was gaining skills in policy and practical implementation but it was the philosophies of education that she found fascinating. The Council of Education[48] and the Commissioners of Higher Education were, literally, working in the rooms next door to her office. This was a period of great ferment and debate about education. The younger civil servants were fascinated and deeply engaged in the debate but they were also being trained and inducted into the public service way of thinking, speaking and use of language. During her interview, Aine said that outsiders could never think in the mode of public service unless they were trained and socialized into those assumptions.

In 1962, she was seconded to work with the Investment in Education[49] team. The report was jointly commissioned by the OECD and the Minister for Education. It was published in 1965 as the first major statistical analytical appraisal of Irish

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[48] Report of The Council of Education on the Function and Curriculum of the Primary School, 1954 – see reference to their work in Chapter 4.

[49] *Investment in Education,* 1965. Commissioned by The Minister for Education in 1962 published by The Department in 1965. Under the Directorship of Patrick Lynch.

education (Coolahan, 2003; 141). It highlighted serious defects in the system, particularly in relation to access, gender and other forms of inequality that existed at all levels.

The report led directly to the introduction of free secondary education in 1967. Aine met William J Hyland (Bill) who was seconded for two years from the United Nations to work on the report as Statistician. He had attended Maynooth as a seminarian in the 1940s and for the remainder of his life he was agnostic.

Aine and Bill married in a civil ceremony in Geneva in 1964. Aine was 22 and Bill was 42. For a short time Aine worked in the International Labour Organisation and relished the experience of living and working in a Calvinist culture. The public service marriage ban in Ireland meant that her job in the Department of Education had been terminated. They returned to Ireland in 1966, when their eldest daughter was a year old. Bill took up a position as Senior Statistician at Assistant Secretary level in the Department of Education. He was charged with setting up the planning unit. At this time formal business policy (see Chapter One) and planning units were in development throughout the private and public sectors. He remained in that position until he retired in 1990. He was involved in establishing the community and comprehensive schools and the regional technical colleges.

In December 1966, their second daughter was born and they settled in Dalkey, County Dublin. Aine took the opportunity to finish a degree in Irish, English and French that she had begun before her marriage.

During his period in Maynooth, Bill had experienced great difficulty with the dogmatism of the Catholic Church and was determined that his own children would not be brought up in that kind of environment. His central problem was the way dissent was forbidden within the Catholic Church. Both Bill and Aine agreed that their children would not be baptized in any church. This was a strong position at that time; it was managed tolerably well by family and friends once it was not spoken of too openly. However, Aine was uncomfortable with the situation. She was acutely aware that educating their children was going to be difficult.

Bill Hyland's role and his influence in this story is pivotal. He was the conceiving architect of the Educate Together school system and spent a huge amount of his time thinking through the structural alternatives for a multi-

denominational school,

> *'Bill put in a huge amount of time; he woke me up morning after morning at two am and talked until five (am). He was thinking it through... thinking it through, thinking it through. We had to get the fundamental structure right because if we didn't, this school {Dalkey School Project} might survive but no other school could come after it. Bill always saw it as the beginning of the sector...'*
> (Aine Hyland, interview, 2002).

Bill Hyland was absolutely clear, for instance, that a certain number of the critical figures representing the movement, for example the Chair and the Secretary would have to be Catholics; *'respectable and practicing Catholics'*. Bill and Aine were conscious that they had not married in a Catholic church and their children were not baptised. Also, Bill was aware that because of his senior position in the Department, his public profile was limited. He was determined to find a Catholic figure who was *'as passionately concerned as he was and who might be freer to speak up'*.

Where possible, Bill's personal writings are reflected, or quoted, in the story below. He wrote extensively on the strategic options facing ET. His modus operandi was to consider an issue or strategic option, develop three to five alternative approaches and then, in great detail, consider the values inherent in each one.

For example, over Christmas 1974, before the first public DSP meeting was held, Bill wrote at length about whether the meeting should be held *before* or *after* the DSP Association was incorporated as a limited company. The two options he considered were whether to; *'**A**. 1. Hold the public meeting and formally constitute the Association inviting other persons to become members. Elect officers and a committee to approve a constitution. State intention to form a company with the committee as the board of directors'. 2. 'Form the company as appropriate after the public meeting'.* Or *'**B**. 1. Set up company as constituting the association without any public meeting, naming some persons (presumably members of the provisional committee) as temporary officers of the company and registering as shareholders those who have already paid their fees'. 2. 'Hold a public meeting to invite other people to become shareholders in the company and let the public meeting be*

regarded as the first A.G.M. of the company so that a new board of directors can be appointed'.

He then developed five broad criteria, such as 'Action should be such as will increase the chance that the school will come into being broadly along the lines required...', and 'Action should such that any compromise required to achieve the objective should do as little damage as possible to the ideals of equal treatment and respect for human dignity which are basic to the project'. The other criteria identified that '...a desirable multi-denominational balance be maintained...' and '...it should be attractive to a wide spectrum of parents...'

He then evaluated sixteen advantages and disadvantages in relation to the two options. He identified that option B was fundamentally undemocratic and would damage political support on the ground. The action would be equated with making the arrangements socially exclusive in that Catholic individuals would be perceived as second-class persons.

As the story unfolds, it will become clear that this approach to analysis was critical to the organisation's strategy. Bill's analytical style equates strongly with the rational-analytic approaches to strategy at that time. The style approximates to the classical strategy approach described in Chapter One. Throughout his writings, he carefully considers the impact of the intellectual and the values perspectives on the project.

A further example is very revealing. In March 1980, almost two years after the DSP had opened, Bill made a case for holding an internal research event or events that would capture the teachers', pupils' and/or parents' attitudes to the school. He argued in the short paper that there was a need for adult education in relation to the school's purpose and principles and to *'raise consciousness'*. He wrote, '*Whether we like it or not, we are a unique and unrepeatable event in Irish education and hence cultural history. If this data is not recorded now it will never be recorded. It would be rather a pity to forge...the uncreated conscience of our race" and then remain quite silent on the matter'*. The survey was eventually conducted in 1988.

5.1.2.2. Micheal and Patricia Johnston

Micheal and Pat Johnston were both born in Ireland but went to secondary school, college, and got married in England. They, too, experienced the

duality of a family across religions and cultures – in this case, the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Churches. Pat was bought up in the Presbyterian Church and Micheal, the Church of Ireland. Pat's mother viewed the national school system as the most rounded and effective education for young children. However, they were a middle class family and the tradition at that time was that middle class Protestant children did not attend national schools.

Micheal Johnston is the son of Denis Johnston, the Irish playwright, broadcaster and war correspondent. His mother, Sheila Richards, performed in the first production of *The Plough and The Stars* by Sean O'Casey. Aine Hyland comments on the values Mike and Pat brought to the ET movement:

> *'He {Mike} was very much part of the Presbyterian tradition; the non-conformist – he and Pat didn't conform; they were very strong on a genuine and deep respect for the individual which was fundamental to them. Therefore you accommodated everyone – they were totally inclusive in their values and that is what we shared.'* [50]

The tradition in the Anglican Church of sharing power and of lay people being active members of their church meant that Micheal and Pat Johnston had a strong sense of independence and individualism. This contrasted greatly with Aine Hyland's experience of her church. As a child, she was taught to always obey the church and the Parish Priest. Even Aine's father, a great Irish language scholar, obeyed the Parish Priest when he refused to register the children's names in Irish. As a result Aine Hyland is registered as Anne. At that time, obeying the church was more important than individual principles or ideological beliefs.

Micheal and Pat settled in Sandycove, in south Dublin. Micheal was a producer in RTE. When Micheal and Pat's eldest child was born in 1961, they investigated all the National schools in the area. At the time, there was virtually no involvement of parents in the education of their children and no understanding of how the education system worked. They gradually became aware that the school system was denominational and that the local schools would not accept their Presbyterian children.

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[50] Aine Hyland in interview 11th May 2006.

5.1.2.3. Desmond Green

> *'I know that the Department of Education for a long time thought I was a lawyer. I never told them I wasn't'* (Desmond Green, interview in 2002)

Desmond Green joined the DSP Committee as a committee member in February 1975. Desmond[51] was born in the Midlands of Ireland in the 1940s. Raised as a Catholic, he attended primary school in Athlone. He went to university in Dublin and does not recall thinking anything remarkable about his education at the time. After college he went to North America for ten years, where he was exposed to different cultures and the realities and subtleties of living in a multi-cultural society. Living in the southern United States for two years, for the first time his religion made him part of a minority group. The Baptists and Fundamentalists had huge influence in what was effectively '*mission country*'. Later, in Canada, teaching and doing a Masters degree in chemical engineering (University of New Brunswick, Frederickton NB, Canada) he was conscious of Empire influences and the English Protestant tradition. The University had Amish, Lutheran and Episcopalian churches on campus. He developed strong connections with a variety of people who were ministering to other religions. He was impressed by the Amish commitment to farming and was fundamentally interested in the human interactions of people coming from different traditions.

He married an Episcopalian in Canada. In order to marry a non-Catholic in a church a special permit was needed. He began a process of gentle questioning as to why this was the case. After exchanging correspondence with the Bishop, he realised that the institution rules were static and you had to comply if you wanted something from the church. At a later stage questions about their children's religion surfaced. His wife had to take Roman Catholic instruction and make a verbal commitment to bring the children up as Roman Catholics. This did not undermine the religious beliefs of his wife's family who were less concerned about the children's religion than he was.

> *'That was in the late sixties, the way I experienced it in North America. There was the living in duality – shared religion in the*

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51 Desmond Green is a successful businessman who devoted 6 years 'almost on a full time basis' to the establishing of DSP (Interview was conducted in October 2002).

family gave a focus to different backgrounds and different cultures and different values and what values were brought to that.'

During this process, he critically observed that the person who is most committed is also the person most likely to win the advantage; it was not simply that the rigours of the institution were imposed upon them, as a couple.

The subsequent sharing of religions within their family created a sense of *duality* and a focus around other religions, cultures and differences. He became aware of the precise values attached to those differences. They returned to Ireland in 1971 with one child and another on the way. Within another two years, they realized that schooling was going to be difficult. It was another two years after the birth of their second child before he began to talk and think through the issue.

5.2. A strategic rehearsal - St Patrick's, Church of Ireland National School, Dalkey, 1966-1974.

In 1966, Micheal and Pat Johnston met with the school manager[52] and Rector of St Patrick's Church of Ireland National school, the Reverend Desmond Murray, to discuss the school as an option for their eldest child, Brigid. Murray's view was that St Patrick's was a *'National state school'* that accepted all religions. Micheal and Pat enrolled Bridget in 1966 and proceeded, as parents, to get involved with the school as it grew. Aine and Bill's eldest child Fiona was accepted into St Patrick's, three years later.

Early on, it became apparent to Pat that there were perceived differences between the families from the area who attended the school, families from outside the area and families that were not Church of Ireland:

'I bought the kids to the Church {St Patrick's Church of Ireland) quite soon after Brigid started. Two of the mothers, high profile, local mothers met outside the church and said "Oh, how nice to see you." And I said, "Yes, Brigid is going to the school." They said, "Oh, when did you move into the area?" I said, "I live in Sandycove." They said, "But, we haven't seen you around." I

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[52] The school manager is nominated by the Patron (in this case, The diocesan Bishop) who was the local clergyman. The school manager is charged with the direct government of the school and the conducting of the necessary correspondence with the Department (1986 Constitution of Boards of Management and Rules of Procedures)

said, "No, actually I attend the Presbyterian Church in Blackrock." "Oh," they said to each other, "She's not one of us." I didn't know what to say or where to turn. I just couldn't believe it. It had never crossed my mind that being Presbyterian was any different' (Pat Johnston, interview, 2002*).*

5.2.1. St Patrick's NS in the context of a changing Ireland

It was '*a time of ferment for the curriculum and a rehearsal for a multi-denominational experiment'* (Aine Hyland, interview, 2006).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the culture of Ireland was changing and the specific values around education were frequently exposed to question and debate. The troubles in Northern Ireland had re-emerged and forced questions[53] about the role of education. In the south, adults were increasingly emerging from the school system with unwelcome memories. There was a sense that a great number of people were feeling their way towards new ideas and an improved way of educating children.

St Patrick's Church of Ireland National school (St Patrick's NS) was established in 1894. Its patron was the Church of Ireland Archbishop. At that time, Church of Ireland National schools were a powerful symbol of class divisions within the Protestant population. The serving classes (the children of chauffeurs, coastguards, policemen, gardeners etc.) attended the national schools whilst many of the elite continued the traditions of the 19th Century and chose private 'Prep' schools in Ireland and boarding schools in England and Europe.[54]

St Patrick's was picked as a pilot for the introduction of the 1971 Curriculum. This was significant for the values that were later adopted by Educate Together. In the late 1960s in Ireland, the Department of Education and the Inspectorate had developed a rationale for building an understanding around child-centred philosophies in schools. The 1971 curriculum supported this approach and it was focused around all children regardless of their ability or background. Certain schools and principals – Florence Armstrong, in this case - were picked by the inspectorate because of:

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[53] Aine Hyland interview, 2006

[54] 'The tendency for the elite to send children to schools abroad remained strong until Irish schools started to compete more successfully with their foreign counterparts' Logan, 1989; 28.

'their innovativeness, for their respect for children and for their child-centredness. They were already philosophically wed to this curriculum.'[55]

The new curriculum, widely welcomed for its innovations (Hyland, 1993), did not regard the separation of literary and religious education as an advantage:

'..the separation of religious and secular instruction into differentiated subject compartments serves only to throw the whole educational function out of focus...The integration of the curriculum may be seen...in the religious and civic spirit which animates all its parts'[56]

The role of media was also important – for the first time, television and radio offered Irish people the opportunity to ask and address questions, in an indirect manner. The extraordinary coincidence of the Second Vatican Council meant that the Irish people and the Catholic Church were embracing change at the same time (Drumm, 1999; 25).

Aine Hyland believes that once the process of questioning had begun, it was never going to stop:

'for some people, once the lid was open they were never going to go back into their boxes again and that would certainly have been true about Dalkey'.

Underpinning the philosophy was inclusivity and the child at the centre of the process. Florence Armstrong, the principal of St Patrick's, was regarded as demonstrating and epitomising child-centred practice. She was highly regarded by the Inspectorate. Her working practices set a new standard for Inspectors because she was already practicing the future curriculum. The Inspectorate was delighted with the methods that Florence Armstrong was using to implement the piloted concepts. Florence eventually became the first principal of Dalkey School Project, in 1978.

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[55] In discussion with Aine Hyland, May 11th 2006.

[56] Department of Education, Primary School Curriculum – Teacher's Handbook, Dublin, Browne and Nolan, 1971.

Florence Armstrong is a symbolic figure in this story. But, because she was not leading or initiating the management and structural changes core to the strategic development of the movement, the reader might be forgiven for thinking that she was an absent figure. It is important to remember that she was symbolic to the multi-denominational movement as a whole because she was one of the first principals in the country to demonstrate new practices in educating children of different denominations together. In fact, much of the activity recounted in this story was indicative of the *implicit support* for Florence Armstrong's work and the work of her staff.

5.2.2. St Patrick's NS Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

Micheal and Pat Johnston set up St Patrick's PTA with the Reverend Desmond Murray – the school manager. The PTA Constitution was agreed in October 1968 and the intention was to provide '*...opportunities for both parents and teachers to meet and discuss matters of common interest'*.[57] Membership was open to all parents and teachers of the school. The committee consisted of three elected officers and four elected members (AGM), one of whom had to be a teacher. The principal and the school manager were ex officio members of the committee. At the time there were very few PTAs in Ireland. Indeed, in 2006, a little over half the national schools in Ireland had active parents' associations, let alone parent-teacher associations.[58] The teachers in St Patricks' nominated a teacher to sit on the PTA. The original committee structure provided the basic template for PTAs in Educate Together schools. This template is widely used today (see Chapter Six).

The Powis Commission of 1868 had suggested greater local involvement in the management of national schools. But at the time, there was no structure available for parents to get involved in schools. It was not until after the Second Vatican Council that any changes were made. In 1969, the Catholic hierarchy issued a statement, supporting parent/teacher associations and, in 1973, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, Sean O'Connor, urged the establishment of Boards of Management (BOM) that would include both parents and teachers. In 1975, the apparatus for the expanded BOM was formalized and introduced. At the time, the patron appointed the Chairperson and the majority of the Board members

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[57] St Patrick's National School, Dalkey, Parent/Teacher Association Constitution, October 1968.

[58] See www.npc.ie (National Parent's Council)

(Coolahan, 2003; 143). The technical rules have not changed much but their practices and assumptions have changed completely (see case studies in Chapter Six). In the early days, the BOMs had administrative duties, responsibility for day-to-day running, teacher appointments and Department correspondence and did not impinge directly on educational policy (Hyland, 1992; 150).

In 1968 the operation of an active, progressive structure such as the PTA in St Patrick's was highly unusual.

The PTA introduced voluntary contributions from parents - a concept that was critical to ET's growth from 1978 to 2000 - in order to pay for the school's growth. St Patrick's NS school had sixteen on its enrolment in 1953, sixty-two in 1958 and one hundred and fifty one by 1970. The school was rebuilt in 1964. The PTA financed two new prefab classrooms between 1968 and 1970. In 1980, there were two hundred and three enrolled. As the school grew its assembly hall had a dual purpose as a day-to-day classroom and as a parish hall.[59]

Tensions between the local parishioners and 'new' parents began to deepen as these changes took place. It was an ambiguous relationship, however. The parishioners were proud of the school's academic achievements and they resented it when, in 1971, the acting school manager the Reverend Eric Young (1970-1972) sent his children to another private school.[60] Nevertheless, there was a view that the school had become *'too important to the parish and had non-traditions'*.[61] It has to be remembered that the provision of the Church of Ireland national school was to provide education to the lower middle and working class Protestants, as explained above.

5.2.3. The struggle develops and the values become clearer

Because of their respective roles in education, Aine and Bill Hyland knew about Florence Armstrong's work and about the fact that she was modelling new skills and thinking in education. They were very happy to take a chance on St Patrick's because they regarded the work as revolutionary. Florence was instituting

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[59] Email correspondence with Micheal Johnston September 2006 from his archive of records and correspondence that provided details of the school's growth.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Michael Johnston, interview October 2002.

changes that were not only affecting the way parents saw the education of their children; they affected how parents saw their relationship with the education system.

Micheal and Pat Johnston, along with other parents, regarded their role as supporting a *'wonderful'* principal and staff of teachers. Their central concern was the quality of the educational experience for the children. The PTA had encouraged substantial local contributions and an enthusiasm for growth and change. The school grew from one to three teachers and began to enrol Church of Ireland children from outside the parish, then a variety of *'non-conformists'* and, finally, '*liberal Catholics'*.[62] Predictably, tensions began to grow between the parents and the wider parish. Tensions increased further when the school raised sufficient funds to add two temporary classrooms to the existing structure. In a relatively short space of time, the school had attracted a wide range of religious and cultural experiences.[63] St Patrick's had become a focal point for the expression of new teaching methods and democratic structures in a child-centred atmosphere.

In 1971 the Reverend Desmond Murray, the school manager, became ill and moved to a '*lighter*'[64] parish. In February 1972, the acting school manager announced a new policy limiting the numbers of children to one hundred and ninety. The PTA reacted strongly. They had not been consulted and felt that the decision was not in the childrens' educational interest. Also, any reduction in school numbers would have to be managed by a selection (enrolment) policy that would diminish the school's multi-denominational character. The manager felt that, the PTA was interfering and broke off relations with the parents, choosing only to talk to the Chairperson. The parish vestry, the committee of local church members supported the decision.

It was regarded by the parents as a school with a distinct set of values, 'a strong commitment to the New Curriculum and an interdenominational[65] character.

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62 In conversation with Pat and Mike Johnston, 16th October 2002 in Burdett Avenue in Sandycove.

63 In conversation with Sharon Burrell, (a former student of St Patrick's from 1972-79), 3rd February, 2003. She recalls children who represented Plymouth Brethren, Muslim and Jehovah's Witness faiths.

64 Email correspondence with Micheal Johnston September 2006 from his archive of records and correspondence

65 Note written by the Chair of St Patrick's PTA, Michael Johnston and addressed to the members of the PTA re: The Archbishiop's Compromise, dated 7th December 1972.

The multi-denominational aspect of the school had developed naturally – it was only when it was threatened that the PTA realized its value'.[66]

A delegation from the PTA met with the Church of Ireland, Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Buchanan who pointed to the financial crisis facing the Parish – if the parents wanted a bigger school, they would have to pay for it. The Archbishop facilitated a second meeting with the school manager, representatives of the PTA, and the parish vestry. From that meeting, the '*Archbishop's compromise*' was derived.[23] In December 1972, Micheal Johnston, as Chair of The PTA, informed the parents that the Archbishop had agreed a new and restricted enrolment policy for the school. The compromise was as follows:

> *'1) That the school should be allowed to advance to become a six-teacher school: there should be agreement to build one new classroom and one General Purpose room, provided that;*
>
> *2) The parents should take over the burden of school maintenance from the parish. (Last year 1971/72 the Parish estimated that this would cost them £700: the P.T.A. gave the Parish £700 towards these costs);*
>
> *3) The P.T.A. should take full responsibility for the local costs of the new buildings;*
>
> *4) The P.T.A. undertake not to demand further building on parish ground.'*[67]

After the Archbishop's' meeting, the PTA met and agreed, that, whilst a short-term commitment was not possible at short notice, the overall suggestion was worth full consideration. Eventually, the vestry also agreed to consider the Archbishop's Compromise and established a sub-committee for that purpose. The PTA committee put three options to the membership,

- Accept the Archbishop's compromise;
- Accept a modified version of the compromise; establish a management committee under Department of Education rules with

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[66] Handwritten note in the St Patrick's file of papers (1972-1978) dated sometime in 1974.

[67] Ibid footnote 22

adequate parental involvement. An enrolment policy should be agreed that provides parents with equal right of entry to the school. In the case of limited availability, priority should go to Church of Ireland parishioners and those parents with children already enrolled in the school. Once that allocation has been satisfied others in the locality should have access. Selection should be guided by entry at the younger age levels so that the school grows to the required size (a six teacher school). Modifications should take place regarding use of buildings so that building space does not have to be split between the needs of the school and the needs of the vestry;

- Or that there should be no more development of St Patrick's. *'...but that the P.T.A. and the parish together, and with the encouragement of the Archbishop, seek to persuade the Department of Education to set up a pilot multi-denominational National school, on the recommendations of the Church of Ireland (who for local financial reasons cannot continue their important experiment in this direction), local parents and teachers'.*[68] And the PTA accepting interim responsibility if there is co-operation on this point;
- Or, take no action, '*wait and see*'.'

The full ramifications of the compromise have to be recognized; The Archbishop said that the school did not have any money to support the continued growth of St Patrick's and, that the growth of the school would be limited to six teachers. No matter what accommodations were reached between the PTA and the parish, these facts were inescapable. Micheal Johnston's view was that the Church of Ireland authorities, although supportive, were wary of taking too strong a lead.[69] Given that there was parish fall-out as a result of the changes that had taken place and given that the Rector of the school was not keen to continue the *'experiment'*, the Church of Ireland appeared not to be prepared to move against institutional norms.

The memo to the membership concluded that the solution lay somewhere between the second and third options.

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[68] ibid footnote 22

[69] In conversation with Michael and Pat Johnston, October 2002.

The new enrolment policy was enacted in response to continued demand from 1973.

At this time both the Johnston and Hyland families had new babies. Aine and Bill became aware that these new restrictions were extremely significant, both for them and for other families whose children were not baptized within the Church of Ireland. Their young children would be able to attend St Patrick's because siblings of enrolled children were given preference.

In March 1973, a new rector and school manager, the Reverend Frank Williams was appointed. Relations between the PTA, the vestry and the Reverend Williams deteriorated from the outset.[70] The PTA felt there was a lack of consultation between the Reverend and the principal and staff. Early in 1974, the Reverend Williams hired a teacher without informing the principal.[71] As the school had grown since the late 1960s, the space became increasingly inadequate. By 1973 and 1974 it was clear that both the built space and the site's potential were inadequate. The problem of buildings with dual purposes had not been resolved. The view was that there were not enough teachers or enough classrooms. The sense that the school *'had grown beyond being a purely parochial school for the children of parishioners'* had been a continued source of friction as children from other denominations were admitted. These factors combined to produce a strategy of restricting the numbers to the school in accordance with space regulations at the time, fifteen square foot per child, or about one hundred and eighty children[72].

The key issue for the PTA was the enrolment policy and the dilemma that the criteria presented. The view was also expressed, however, that children of different denominations were learning and playing together and this had proved attractive as demand for places had continued to grow.

> *'However, the physical and material problems facing the parish have caused the Manager to favour limiting the numbers admitted. Consequently it has become apparent that implicit in the dilemma facing the school is the question of discrimination between 'Parish*

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[70] PTA Committee report summarising St Patrick's recent history dated 1974.

[71] Chairman's Report, Hilary Pratt, AGM St Patrick's PTA, June 20th 1974.

[72] Correspondence with Department of Education, 8th March 1974.

children' and others – either the principle of selection by priority for the former or the principle of openness. All the parties are therefore confronted by a development which was not foreseen when the school took the initial steps toward growth and expansion'.[73]

In 1973 at a General Meeting of the PTA, a resolution was passed by a majority that, '*any policy of selection of entrants was totally unacceptable and that restriction of numbers at this stage would seriously damage the educational interests of the children.*'[74]

In May 1973 a sub-committee[75] of the PTA formed to investigate the possibilities of a new national school in the Dun Laoghaire area. They printed a short description of the school and requested signatures and contact details in support of the idea. The statement read:

'We, the undersigned are a sub-committee of the Parent-Teacher Association of St. Patrick's National School, Dalkey, formed to investigate the possibilities of a new National School in the Dun Laoghaire area, which would be multi-denominational, co-educational and run by a committee of management within the framework of the Department of Education rules.

We believe there is a real need and desire for this type of school in the area, and that it would be an important development in the context of Ireland to-day'.

The committee went to work and within two weeks had collected five hundred signatures supporting the school in the interests of six hundred and fifty six children under the age of twelve. On the basis of this case, they started writing letters to the Minister for Education, Richard Burke.

On 27th February 1974, the PTA met with Richard Burke. The meeting was to discuss the inadequate space and the educational disadvantages that were resulting, the dilemma around restriction of enrolment that was presented to the PTA, and the

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[73] Ibid footnote 26.

[74] ibid

[75] Dermot Hourihane (Chairman), Jill Cox, Patricia (Pat) Johnston, David Cabot, James Buckley, Patrick Willis and Mavis Arnold.

possibility of funding a separate multi-denominational school. In a letter to the Secretary of the PTA (Pat Johnston on 29th March 1974), Liam Cosgrave TD, responding on behalf of the Minister, said that funding a multi-denominational school would be unconstitutional because it would discriminate against the level of aid given to schools under the management of different religious denominations.

The full consequences of legally enshrining the denominational nature of national schools became clear (Hyland, 1993) when, on 8th March 1974, St Patricks' PTA received an additional letter from The Department of Education:

> *'As is stated in the Preface to the Rules for National School under the Department of Education, the State gives explicit recognition to the denominational character of National schools. In accordance with this principle, it would be expected that priority in enrolment would be given; first, to children of Church of Ireland parents living within the school district (which is not co-terminous with the parish of Dalkey); second, to children of other Protestant families and, thereafter – to the extent to which space might be available – other children; and it is suggested that acceptance of children for enrolment should, in future be decided on that basis'* [76].

The Department of Education took the view that the problem of overcrowding in St. Patrick's had come about because (from the same letter above):

> *'...children have been enrolled in the school who would normally be expected to receive their primary education elsewhere than in St. Patrick's. As is stated in the Preface to the Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education, the State gives explicit recognition to the denominational character of National schools'*

The 1965 Rules had established, in an unambiguous manner, the enrolment policies of all denominational schools. The State, having no legal basis to provide for the education of '*other children*', *'saw no reason to make provision for them within the national school system'* (Hyland, 1993).

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[76] From Mr Padraic Breathnach, Primary Branch, Department of Education on behalf of the Minister for Education, 8th March 1974 (a copy of the original letter is in the archive but it is missing Mr Breathnach's officer position). The author of the letter refers directly to the Minister's view on two occasions.

This, effectively, was a return to the segregated enrolment system. This posed difficulties for many parents who realized that their children would not gain access to the school because they were either not from the area or because they were Catholic. Because the school operated a sibling policy, parents with children already in the school would be able to secure places. For Aine and Bill Hyland, however, the reality of the statement was far more significant; if the policy had existed prior to the enrolment of their first child, they might not have been able to get their children into school.

In June 1974 the PTA passed a vote of no confidence in the policy of the Manager of St Patrick's and invited him to resign. They requested that the Archbishop, as patron resume the management of the school and negotiate a new form of management committee.[77] They assured the membership that such a committee would be consistent with the management structure outlined in the 1965 Rule for National Schools. At the time the teacher's union (the INTO) was still negotiating with The Department of Education about the terms under which Boards of Management would work. At that point the Reverend Williams and the vestry committee had decided to reduce and maintain the school's enrolment to one hundred and seventy.

Because education resources are allocated on the basis of enrolment numbers, this move effectively prevented the development of an eight-classroom school. It also meant that the school could not maintain its multi-denominational character. In order to reduce numbers only twenty-one new Junior infants would be admitted each year. The majority of these children would be either local or nearby Church of Ireland parishioners. Prior to the restricted enrolment policy, the new intake of junior infants was typically one third Roman Catholic, one-third Church of Ireland and one-third other Protestant denominations[78].

In September 1975, St Patrick's established its first Board of Management. Members included two elected representatives from the parent body. Pat Johnston was elected to the Board and was simultaneously a member of the PTA. The arrival of Boards of Management meant that school managers/rectors were no longer *ex officio* Presidents or Chairs of parent or parent-teacher associations. This was

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[77] Notice of PTA's AGM dated 21 June 1974.

[78] Ibid - PTA Chairman's (Hilary Pratt) Report, June 1974.

because the Board of Management had taken over the work of the school manager. The school manager role was redundant from that time.

In June 1976,[79] St Patrick's PTA debated the consequences if the school manager was not automatically the Chair of the new Board. They changed the PTA Constitution accordingly. Again, in an essential rehearsal for what was to come, the PTA was extremely well versed in all the procedures and rules for National Schools. Through their representation on the BOM, the PTA was also able to receive duplicate sets of correspondence from the Department of Education (usually referred to as '*The Department*'). This meant that both the parents and BOM had access to the same correspondence.

In January 1975,[80] the principal, Florence Armstrong was seconded to Africa for two years. Her secondment was extended twice. In fact, she never returned to St Patrick's as she secured the position of principal in Dalkey School Project when it opened in September 1978. Her departure had a catalytic effect. Her leadership in terms of curriculum innovation was critical and conditional to the school's success. Once Florence Armstrong left, the school's curricular approach returned to conventions and a lot of the children left St Patrick's to attend another National school.[81] Once the DSP opened in 1978, a lot of children left St Patrick's to attend DSP. A former student of St Patrick's recalls feeling left out and sad as thirty to forty children eventually left St Patrick's to attend the new school.[82]

In challenging the norms during this struggle with St Patrick's, Micheal and Pat Johnston realized that religious and class segregation was actually a function of the education system[83]. It had been painful for some but it also clarified the values around which the future sector would be built. Once the education system was

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[79] St Patrick's PTA notice of the AGM, 23rd June 1976.

[80] Parish of Dalkey, *Contact:* A monthly Review of the Affairs of St. Patrick's Church, Dalkey. January 1975.

[81] Interview Aine Hyland, 11th May 2006.

[82] In conversation with Sharon Burrell, (a former student of St Patrick's from 1972-79), 3rd February, 2003.

[83] During a conversation with the Minister for Education, Richard Burke, Pat Johnston recalls that he said the tradition of the Church of Ireland schools was to accept, Church of Ireland children, Protestants, Hottentots and others'.

exposed in these different ways, the founders' motivation increased and the vision they formulated became clearer and clearer.

5.3. Establishing the Dalkey School Project 1974-1983

5.3.1. The significance of The Department of Education's letter.

> *'They were not baptized and if every school had such an enrolment policy, they would have no right to an education...the fact that they were not baptized and because they were not card holding members of any church meant they had no right to education in any National school in this country at that time. That was extraordinary to me...From the time that letter came out, the Department {Of Education} had formally approved and translated the 1965 Rules into a right to exclude children not of that denomination. That to me changed the whole picture'.* (Aine Hyland, interview, 2006)

This was the critical issue for the founders; Aine comments,

> *'It was hard to get that across. It was a very real issue in my life. This was the formal position. Once that letter came from the department, it changed everything as far as I was concerned. It was when I became militant and decided that if it has to be confrontational then it has to be confrontational. My three children had no rights in this country...Others would say 'but it doesn't matter'. It mattered hugely then. Maybe to me because I hoped that these issues would have been resolved in Ireland'.*

In 1968, Aine Hyland had completed her Higher Diploma in Education in Trinity College, Dublin and was greatly influenced by the historian and lecturer, Susan Parkes, who subsequently supervised her PhD. It was Parkes' influence that helped Aine to make sense of the diverse experiences of her life. The disparate and disconnected educational experiences of her childhood, her father's influence and her work in the Department all finally made sense when she understood the origins and the workings of the national school system. The knowledge she had about the education system was central to maintaining a clear focus when it came to setting up the DSP in the 1970s,

> *'Most people in Ireland at that time assumed you had to have a senior church person as a patron of a National school. I knew that that was not the case. Even in the Department, senior officers did not realize that. I knew that we might have to fight it. But there was nothing in the rules that required the church to be a patron of a school.'*

The customized practices that had emerged after the State had achieved independence highlighted the extent to which the State had become subservient to the Church. However, Aine saw huge potential in the system. She understood that the Bishop had no *de facto* role – the *Churches had decided* that the Bishops could be patrons but there was nothing in the regulations that precluded anyone else from being a patron.

> *'I was determined not to be deflected. I knew that {if we wanted to open a separate school} The Department would say, 'Go back to the Bishop and if the Bishop agrees, then you can open'*[84]

By 1975, as the DSP association was being formally established, Aine had completed her Masters in Education. This was also a great time of excitement in education. The curriculum innovations in St Patricks' were no longer unique as there was a questioning of education values all around the country.[85] The publication of radical thinking like A.S. Neil's *Summerhill* and the development of the Comprehensive system in England and Ireland was influencing thinking. The Department of Education, had contributed constructively to that debate through a series of public meetings around the country. They actively encouraged parents to get involved in the debate about the kind of schools they wanted and what their ownership should be.

5.3.2. The first public meetings that led to the formation of the DSP Ltd.

In June 1974, the sub-committee of the PTA charged with the job of examining the possibility of setting up another school printed a notice asking the public to attend the first of its two open meetings (30th June and 21st July 1974) in Ross's Hotel in Dun Laoghaire. By that time the sub-committee had established the name *Dalkey School Project* . The typed notice identified that the steering

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84 Interview with Aine Hyland, 11th May 2006

85 Aine Hyland interview 11th May 2006

committee had only made one decision; to provide a multi-denominational school under democratic management in the Dalkey area. Michael and Aine recall that the question of patronage was considered at length and, at times, with controversy. The preference was always for a local patron. History (since the Synod of Thurles, in 1850) had established that a patron was typically a Bishop or a person who equated to the landlord role; i.e. a person who could, in fact, act as patron to a number of schools. Desmond Green recalls that the idea of a limited entity as a patron was obvious and common sense. There was no Bishop and there was no question of one person being a patron, so it was obvious that the patron should be a group of individuals with common interests and values, represented by a legally constituted body. But, perhaps the most significant aspect of this founding strategy was that Aine and Bill Hyland had specific knowledge of the Department of Education's likely response to such an idea. Aine realized that outsiders could never think in the mode of public service unless they were trained and socialized into those assumptions. Both Aine and Bill knew that the Department could not conceive of such a structure in the context of the management of a national school. The Department was simply concerned with whether the DSP should *'exist at all'*.[86]

The notice for the first meeting proposed five principles for such a school:[87]

- A child-centred approach to education under the new curriculum;
- Co-educational;
- Multi-denominational – Catholic, Protestant and other children must have equal right of access to school;
- The school to be a National School, run by a management committee which shall be democratic;
- Planned, perhaps as a pilot project, to develop to an eight-teacher school, with one teacher for each year of the National school cycle.

The two meetings were open to the public but characterized as private in the sense that those attending subscribed to the above principles. This indicated the extent to which the *Dalkey School Saga (Irish Times* headline, 17 March 1975) as it became known, was attracting controversy. The notice stated the desire to engage with public debate but only after, the DSP had been formally constituted.

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[86] Desmond Green interview, 2002

[87] 'Multi-denominational National School for Dalkey: The Dalkey School Project, 15 June 1974, Michael Johnston, Convenor.

About forty people attended the first meeting, which was convened and chaired by Micheal Johnston. Aine Hyland took the minutes. The outcome was the establishment of the DSP Steering Committee made up of Micheal Johnston, Aine Hyland, Helen Fahy, Hilary Jenkins, David Spearman, Isobel Moore, Patrick Willis.

Desmond Green was elected onto the committee in February 1975. He had heard about Micheal Johnston through one of his work colleagues. Desmond was specifically interested in the development of a new model of education:

> *'I spoke at it {the meeting}. I think a lot of the people had come through an experience in St Patrick's in Dalkey in which they had attempted to make a Church of Ireland school multi-denominational. But you couldn't actually transform an institution that was denominational into one that was multi-denominational. In my opinion you would have to have a fresh start.*
>
> *I had none of the scars of the battle in St Patrick's...so I suppose some benefit of me was that I was fresh and had no interest in their previous battles...*
>
> *Because what I was interested in was actually formulating this idea, abandoning the past, and setting up a new model. So that is really where it came from. And the inner dynamic of thinking that would satisfy the cultural and religious traditions for both my wife and I – and that it would respect them'* (Desmond Green, interview 2002).

Desmond's objective was to stay committed until the school was built.

> *'...there was an enormous demolition of ego involved in it. That was a terrific thing. I think that after a couple of years the position that I felt between myself, Aine and Mike was that the ego was gone....I was involved in a couple of personal growth movements, so I used the techniques....for instance at meetings I would try and ensure that no one could speak three times until everybody had spoken once. These are obvious things now but in the 1970s they weren't' (*Desmond Green interview, 2002*).*

Desmond contributed these values alongside a pragmatic approach to action.

He provided appropriate structures for meetings with teachers, children, the State, politicians and representatives of the Churches:

> *'For instance, when we went for meetings with the Department of Education, I always had one person whose job it was to sit and not participate but to know what the objective was of that meeting... to remind people who were speaking what the objective was if they got off track. That was their job. They were not to participate but to think about the other two delegates from DSP and make sure they weren't derailed.... The preparation for meetings was enormous'.*

The second public DSP meeting was held three weeks later (July 1974) and forty-nine people attended. A draft constitution was prepared between the meetings. Supported by Bill Hyland's strategic analysis, the steering committee decided that the purpose of the meeting would be to amend the draft Constitution, pass a resolution giving the committee permission to *'...proceed with the setting up of a company called the Dalkey School Project using the draft Constitution as finally agreed as a guideline...'*[88] and to enlarge the steering committee.

The significant outcome of the second meeting was the agreement of the rules for the organisation; the DSP Constitution.

The first meeting of the now constitutionally recognised membership was held on 23rd February 1975, in Ross's Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, and the formal Executive Committee was elected; Chairman, Micheal Johnston, Secretary, Helen Fahy, Treasurer, Jim Love with committee members, Hilary Jenkins, Hilary Pratt, David Spearman, Jim Buckley, Aine Hyland and Desmond Green.

Helen Fahy had worked with Aine in The Department of Education and both had left their positions after marriage. Helen, was from a Catholic and nationalist background. She agreed to become the secretary. Whilst she was not '*staunchly*' Catholic, she was broadly representative of the Catholics who wanted their children to be educated with the children of other denominations.

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[88] Notice of second DSP meeting by Michael Johnston, 18 July 1974.

In February 1975, the DSP was established with 230[89] members. In addition to the main principles, the central tenets were established over the course of 1975 and 1976:[90]

- 'The Dalkey School Project exists as a focal point for everyone who would like to see the establishment in Ireland of schools that are multi-denominational, co-educational and under democratic management, wherever and whenever there is viable support for such a school;[91.]
- Our objectives are national, but to begin the process of achieving them we have decided to focus our efforts firstly on a pilot project in which we can make such a school a working reality. Over a number of years there has been evidence in the Dalkey area of substantial support for these aims and so this area has been chosen for the pilot project. Our intention is to set up a National school in the area with five underlying principles (See above);
- A Dalkey School Project school will be subject to Department of Education's Rules for National schools as all other National schools are, and as in all National schools it will be subject to the sections of those Rules that deal with religious education. The Management Committee of such a school will have the responsibility to determine the exact form that religious education in the school takes, with the requirements of the parents of the school as the determining factor. The Dalkey School Project would not necessarily expect this form to be identical in every school;
- The word 'democratically' has been carefully considered by the Dalkey School Project; two elements particularly must be represented on such a democratic committee – the representatives of the consumers, the parents; and of the professionals, the teachers. The word 'predominantly' was retained in the interest of flexibility: for example, it would enable a representative of

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[90] This text is from the Introduction to the report, *Dalkey School Project: Survey of Attitudes and Preferences,* Chair, The Dalkey School Project, Michael Johnston, 13th June 1976, p1.

91 The words 'Educate Together' first appeared in 1975 as a brand/ letterhead and logo. The original purpose and principles continue to be reflected in the ET charter dated 1990 and amended in 1999 (see Appendix One).

> transfers who might in the future wish to transfer a school from the denominational sector to the multi-denominational, to be on the committee; or a representative of the Department of Education, or of a Local Authority. But in such a school the elected representatives must constitute a majority of the Committee'.

An ET staff member and long term volunteer recalls that the founders of ET established the values long before they had made a decision even to open a school;

> *'They seemed to always have had that openness. And that sense of willingness to listen to ideas, and to change and adapt and take people's views on board. They never assumed to be the kind of people who said this is the way we want it, and that's it. They seemed to have been very encompassing. And genuinely inclusive, and I have a feeling that that is where the ethos came from – the whole idea of facilitating. I think had it been a different group, that thought that DSP would be the only school then...but they were passionate about pushing their ideas out... they seemed to have the confidence to push until they would cease to be <u>their</u> ideas. That doesn't seem to have bothered them much. I find that unusual'* (Deirdre O'Donoghue, interview, 2001).[92]

5.3.3. Operating a statistical survey to assess demand for multi-denominational education.

From 6th October to 4th November 1975, the executive committee undertook a professional survey to assess the demand for a multi-denominational school in the area of Dalkey. Desmond Green managed the entire process and Bill Hyland supported the development of the methodology and the validation procedures. Bill's position in The Department prevented him from having a public role in the development of the DSP. The survey represented a strategic turning point. The founders in one sense had to support their assumptions with a rigorous and scientific test; they had test how consistent their values were with the values of the local population. The objective, of the survey, was to determine the degree of support for

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[92] In conversation with Paul Rowe (CEO) and Deirdre O'Donoghue (national coordinator, 28th June 2001)

the association's values and for a school with a multi-denominational enrolment policy.

In order to ensure the validity of the results and because of a similar survey undertaken in Dublin,[93] the DSP established a survey committee and conducted a number of pilots. Then the methodology and procedures were carefully developed. The survey covered a one and a quarter mile radius from Dalkey Town Hall. Five supervisors were allocated to five survey districts. The sample was drawn in unique linear lines determined by a random procedure through the districts. Over forty-nine data collectors and six coders were trained and given detailed instructions on how to deliver and collect the questionnaire.

Collectors were instructed to encourage survey contacts to fill in the questionnaire, even if they disagreed with the ideas. The anonymity of the respondents' was preserved as the control forms were deposited in a safe deposit box in the bank. The survey cards were punched professionally for computer printout.

Representatives from the three main political parties accepted an invitation to act as monitors to the survey and the entire process was made transparent. Completed questionnaires were received from 1,022 houses. A response rate of 77% was achieved. Almost 70% of all respondents were Roman Catholic. There were 476 families with young children who completed the questionnaire. 68% had a preference for multi-denominational education and 47.3% said they would definitely send their children to a multi-denominational, co-educational and democratically run national school. 70% of all respondents supported at least two of the three principles contained in the DSP proposal (multi-denominational, co-educational and democratic management). More than half of those who preferred denominational education were also in favour of these aspects of the DSP proposal. The survey collected critical demographic data about the ages of all children

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[93] In a ballot held in the Marley Grange and Highfield estate in September/October 1975, a total of 387 adult residents said they wished to have a denominationally-integrated primary school established for this area....The Archbishop of Dublin, Most Reverend Dr Ryan said "...surveys do not prove anything, because the terms are not clearly spelt out" (Statement by Marley Grange and District School Committee, circa, 1976). It was the view of DSP committee that the Marley Grange survey, which was a valid methodology, was perceived as invalid by external groups and used against the Marley Grange campaign. They were determined to avoid the same mistake by making sure that the scientific validity of the survey could not be undermined.

(including those houses who did not return questionnaires) in the area. The final report contained 50 pages of detailed statistical analysis and commentary[94].

Subsequent surveys supported the DSP findings. In particular, MacGreil's 1977 study: 'Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland' where 77.8% of respondents '*supported a radical concept in education, i.e. 'interdenominational, mixed, free community schools'*,

MacGreil commented,

> *'In the Irish context this is considered a highly liberal position, since the vast majority of schools are single-sex, denominational, non-community schools'* (MacGreil, 1977; 412).

5.3.4. Publications opposing the DSP and the changing political context.

During the period prior to and during the survey, the extent of resistance to the DSP became clearer.

Two counter publications appeared in the Dalkey area. One, '*Have the snakes Come Back: Education and The Irish Child,'* was written in 1975 by a group of Catholic parents and published by Vera Verba Publications, Dublin 1. It is an essay on the rise of secular education at a global level, arguing that the movement was initiated by The World Bank and UNESCO, amongst other global institutions. It argued in favour of subsidiarity and limited State involvement in education.

The second leaflet was distributed throughout the neighbourhood of Dalkey in 1977 (via domestic letter boxes etc). It was titled: '*The Dalkey School Saga: Has the Government surrendered to the multi-denominational pressure groups?*' It was published by the Council of Social Concern, Ely Place, Dublin 2. The main aim was to counter the results of the survey that had received considerable publicity. It announced the imminent opening of the DSP and warned against the dangers of atheist education systems. The reference to the Government was irrelevant as it was not until the publication of the Education Act in 1998 that the Government had a statutory basis to engage in the delivery of education structures.

For the founders, the survey was strategically critical. They published the results in June 1976:

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[94] Dalkey School Project. Survey of Attitudes and Preferences, June 1976.

'...the survey was very powerful...to energise us in terms of knowing we were on the right track and that this was what was wanted. The major challenge at the time was that the religious background of children would be respected. That was where a lot of the battle was. The institutional churches did not want their power and authority being subverted, as they saw it.'[95]

The survey meant that the Department of Education's objection to the school (no viable demand to predict the school's sustainability) was no longer tenable. This did not prevent the Minister for Education at the time responding to the results of the survey; '*on the basis of the information available to him, the accommodation in the existing schools...is fully adequate to meet requirements on the basis of the number of pupils from the area for whom provision will be necessary in the immediate future.*'[96]

The Minister for Education (1976), Richard Burke was not in favour of the DSP's proposal and would not engage in direct correspondence or dialogue. The Minister, quoted in The Irish Independent, September 1975 said,

'Neither my own reasoning, nor the evidence available in this and other countries, suggests to me that a fundamental change in the provisions for religious education in National schools could properly be characterised as reform'.

But his view was not party policy because Garret Fitzgerald was beginning to talk about shared education models. Fianna Fail was also beginning to use different language to describe future education models.

Both the Labour and Fine Gael parties were supportive, despite the views of the Minister. Jack Lynch expressed a view in The Irish Independent in 1977 that there must be *'some modicum of inter-denominational education'* (Hyland, 1993). It was DSP practice between 1975 and 1978 to consistently inform all the political parties of developments. It was engaged in intensive fund-raising and a search for suitable premises. Whilst there was support from the Labour Party, it was the policy

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[95] In interview with Desmond Green, October 2002.

[96] Letter from a representative of the Minister for Education, Richard Burke, TD dated 25 May 1976.

of the founders to act on an all-party basis in relation to information and communication.[97]

In 1977, Richard Burke became European Commissioner of Agriculture and Peter Barry became Minister for Education. Initially he would not be drawn into the debate, offering instead to develop policy at a later stage.

Events changed utterly in the next few months. There was a general election in June of 1977 and Fianna Fail went into Government. Before the election took place the BBC made a radio programme for the Open University about multi-denominational schools in Ireland. They interviewed John Wilson as the opposition spokesman for education. When asked about the Dalkey School Project, he said '*...his party was committed to such projects where they were viable and the people wanted them. Fianna Fail was also committed to meeting the wishes of those who wanted the traditional denominational or voluntary schools...Wilson said he did not see any danger to religion by the introduction of multi-denominational education.*'[98]

The Programme was aired on the 18th August 1977 and talks between the Minister and the DSP executive committee began shortly afterwards. Wilson acted on his pre-election promise and instructed Department of Education officials to begin discussions with DSP with a view to enabling a new school. He wanted to establish exactly what their proposal was and said that he could see no reason why the school should not go ahead. So, the DSP went from making arguments of principle and values, to the practicalities of opening up a school. However, another year of work was involved in finding suitable premises.

5.3.5. DSP opens its doors and builds a permanent school, 1978-1983.

Prior to opening, however, the main problems were finding suitable premises, obtaining planning permission from the local authority for change of use and conforming to the Department of Education's standards. Over the years, fluctuations in population and school mergers had resulted in half-empty and abandoned school buildings all over the country. The numbers of schools dropped dramatically after the famine but many of the buildings and lands remained. However, Church Trustees would not negotiate with DSP.

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[97] In conversation with Michael Johnston October 2002.

[98] Irish Times reportage of the radio programme,19th August 1977.

Finding suitable premises took almost six years. The DSP first purchased a house (14 Vesey Place, Monkstown, Co Dublin) as temporary accommodation and then eventually purchased a site on a new estate in Glenageary. In fact, the Dalkey School Project has never been in Dalkey but that was never viewed as a problem – the founders regarded location as a critical device to break down traditional class and religious boundaries.[99] The schools' current location is situated midway between a middle class and a more working class area (see case studies).

Throughout the history of ET, school accommodation has been the main practical difficulty. The kind of accommodation that has been used has varied enormously from domestic houses, to rugby clubs, and conference rooms in hotels to reused buildings.

In 1978, patrons of National schools had the responsibility for providing and paying for the school site (this was taken over by the state in 2003 – see Chapter Six), and for paying 15% of the capital costs of the building structure. The State paid the salaries of the teaching staff and the per capita grant given to each child for books, equipment and maintenance.

The temporary accommodation required to open the DSP was purchased by a group of 12 people who became directors of a limited company in order to buy the house. They took out a mortgage and rented it out to the DSP Ltd. The Department of Education agreed to pay a portion of the rent. The school was over-subscribed immediately and a number of children went onto a waiting list.

The school opened its doors on 1st September 1978 with seventy children and three teachers, Florence Armstrong, Jayne Doran and Sile Harrington. The school expanded by one teacher each year until reaching its maximum preferred size. In 2006, DSP has 239 pupils, eight classroom teachers and four resource teachers.

On the first day, parents were asked if they would, voluntarily, write down their religion on the pre-enrolment form in order to illustrate that the school intake was, in fact, multi-denominational. This satisfied the Department's need to establish an operational definition of multi-denominational.

The day before the school opened, the DSP was refused planning permission by Dun Laoghaire County Council for temporary change of use of a house. The

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[99] Desmond Green interview, 2002

school had to open in contravention of planning permission. In practice, this meant that each parent had to give their signed consent for their child to attend the school. This was extremely stressful for the founders, although they responded in different ways; balancing the huge moral responsibility against the political point scoring,

> *'I was sick over that, but you see, Mike had a totally different attitude to confrontation...whereas to me it was shattering that we might have 3 teachers to let go. They had given up their jobs and I wasn't even thinking of the legal implications because in those days you didn't tend to have legal issues like you do today. It was the moral responsibility we had taken on. I just found it enormously difficult; that is why I think everything has been easier ever since. We had nothing behind us. We had no money; we had nothing. For me, it was so difficult that whole first year... '* (Aine Hyland, interview).[100]

Because the DSP founders' invented the initiating structure, and model of operation, they were able to place careful controls over the whole process. Three of the founders – Micheal, Aine and Desmond - played key Officer roles in *both* the BOM and Patron groups during an extended period of DSP's early development.

The following year in, 1979, the school moved into another floor of the building in Vesey Place and in February 1979, the Council gave permission to build the school in its permanent and current premises in Glenageary. However, delays in getting planning permission to commence building were protracted. The DSP had to rent two further premises in order to accommodate expansion. In 1980, part of the school moved to the Presbyterian Hall in York Road in Dun Laoghaire. And in 1981, fifth class was housed in prefabs in the old technical college in Sallynoggin. In 1981 the resident's association of Glenageary began an appeal to prevent the school from being built in their neighbourhood. By 1982, the school was operating in three different sites. The residents withdrew their appeal within the year. However the DSP ran out of funds just as building was due to begin in October 1982.

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[100] Aine Hyland, Interview, 11th May 2006.

Gemma Hussey became Minister for Education in November 1982 and in 1983 she met with the DSP Ltd and secured funding to complete the building. By that time, the school was housed in four different locations, the fourth location being St John's Hall, Dun Laoghaire.

DSP operated in temporary premises for six years during which time the school grew from eight to three hundred pupils and from three teachers to ten. DSP's enrolment policy has always been on the basis of first come, first served.

On 6th March 1984, permanent DSP premises opened and all the pupils attended school from that day. On 28th May 1984, Gemma Hussey, The Minister of Education, in the presence of the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch formally opened the DSP. The total financial burden for the DSP Patron was £150,000 in capital costs and running costs of £12,000 per annum (Hyland, 1993).

> *'The DSP is good for trips and it is a friendly school. I also like the shared areas because we can get together more and be more friendly to each other. We have our own library and that is good. I also have a lot of friends. I think the DSP is the best school yet.'*[101]

5.4. Commentary on the founding values and strategy.

The founders of DSP designed a new and compatible patron structure and positioned it within an existing system that they understood in great depth and detail. The founders were motivated by a changing educational and social context and because they were directly discriminated against by the denominational national school system.

DSP Ltd was established with clearly defined values because St Patricd's NS provided an opportunity to strategically rehearse and test the tensions between what was socially possible in terms of peripheral values. The St Patrick's NS experience made it abundantly clear to the founders that *'we were not approaching a solution, and the decision was made that progress could only be made under a new body – which was in due course, Dalkey School Project'.*

The founding group (i.e. not just the four individuals interviewed for this

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[101] The poem is recorded in a DSP school project, 'History of The Dalkey School Project' by Sonja Hyland and Rosalind McGrane aged 10.

study) was made up of individuals from different backgrounds but broadly speaking two traditions, Protestant and Catholic[102]. As a group they frequently had to deal with intergroup cultural and value differences. Aine felt that there differences were rooted in religious rather than conceptual difficulties; they had nothing to do with the 'core' values of the DSP. Rather, these differences were manifest in day-to-day behaviours; such as, whether home-made biscuits or bought biscuits should be used at fundraising events, whether a pub was an appropriate meeting place, the value placed on punctuality, whether material or net curtains should be used on the windows of the new school and the kinds of events considered suitable to bring supporters and activists together. One such event was a long-standing fundraiser - a food market on Saturday mornings in Dalkey town centre. The group conflicted over the standard of food that should be sold at the market and whether it should be home-made or bought.

Whilst these issues may appear to be trivial, they are not. They were the manifestations of different social, cultural and religious traditions that came together with a shared aim.

An influential Department of Education inspector, Con O' Sullivan, had known Florence Armstrong for some years. His thinking mirrored the integral nature of the 1971 National School Curriculum. According to Aine, he argued that the values of child-centredness, cooperation, collaboration and the recognition of difference were integral to the curriculum's tenets. He supported opportunities for classes of children and teachers to work together in different ways, through the concept of shared areas and by applying opportunities of scale:

> *'... recognising for example, if you have third and fourth class together sometimes one child might be more ready to work at fourth class level and another might in fourth class might more ready and you should leave plenty of opportunity for that and his view was that by having two teachers collaborating having a large central area where up to sixty or seventy or even eighty children would be working together in an activity based way without rigid*

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rows of desks. It was almost a ploy to force the teachers out of having rows of desks. I still think it was a great idea but it was probably too demanding for teachers as very often happens. This makes more sense now, having have done a lot of work on multiple intelligences; the concept that you would have a much bigger space so you could have activity centres for different intelligences. In that context, a sixteen- teacher school (i.e. four hundred children) *in general would be better and would also fit with the known demand.*[103]

But the cultural differences within the founding group made this an impossible assumption to share. Aine claims that the Protestant tradition simply could not conceive of large schools. But the norm across the national school system is for small schools, In 2006, the average number of pupils in Church of Ireland National schools is sixty and the average in the Catholic Church National schools is one hundred and forty.[104] As a result, the founders' arguments in favour of this aspect of educational experimentation did not progress.[105]

Twenty-nine years later, the majority of schools in ET operate traditional classroom teaching methods. The specific pedagogies used in ET is not a central concern of this study which is centrally concerned with the relationship between management structures, values and the shape of Educate Together. The concept of shared teaching described above is not practiced as a norm withi the Irish education system, which relies on traditional classroom based methods. However, a study on the values in the education aspects of Educate Together has recently been conducted (see Mulcahy, 2006).

The founders' direct attempts to introduce pedagogical experiments in DSP, were, by and large, unsuccessful,

'The teachers were very involved in the design of the school, how the school would be set up, for instance, the shared area for teaching which I think is gone now. It is, I think, a pity. I think

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[103] Aine Hyland, Interview, May 11th 2006.

[104] Based on the average enrolment in Catholic primary schools and in Protestant primary schools from the schools listed on the Department of Education's website, June 2006.

[105] See Mulcahy 2006, a doctoral thesis that addresses this question.

they are back into individualism, which is a shame. I think that the walls have gone up rather than gone down and that is symbolic in some ways. I mourn that element passing, the isolation of the walls between them {the teachers}. Being without walls poses enormous problems and challenges for everybody but that is what we have to face. It's easy to erect a wall and then operate within it. If you take it down its more difficult, its more challenging' (Desmond Green interview, 2002).

Aine argues that the Anglican and Church of Ireland traditions encouraged constructive dissent and disagreement. This was not the case for Catholic people, at that time. She recalls that she later worked closely with people who were '*on the other side'* – Department officials, local residents, educationalists, religious representatives who were anxious that St Patrick's revert to its denominational status or who were unfavourably disposed to the idea of a multi-denominational school. The fact that they had disagreed made no difference to their ability to work together – a feature Aine still finds fascinating:

'...a lot of the writing about the controversy at the time, particularly from a very narrow Catholic perspective didn't understand the tradition in the Church of *Ireland; the tradition of open discussion and dissent – the permission for dissent that is a fundamental part of the Church of Ireland...civilized dissent is not part of the Catholic culture. It can be extremely personal and nasty.'*

This suggests that the founders were connected to a strategy that exposed fundamental differences between them in terms of their expectations of what was or was not possible,

'I wouldn't underestimate the challenge for people who were brought up Roman Catholic. In fact, you had to make a very significant sacrifice to abandon some of your core beliefs to do that. It's not to abandon your core beliefs but abandon the structures that you have been used to and accepted your whole life. And, suddenly you were being castigated by the representatives of those structures; that was a very painful process to go

through. So it took a lot out of Aine and me. Mike didn't come from that tradition in the same way. And we also had to protect ourselves from people who had a violent hatred of the Catholic Church. If you were coming from a position of hatred you were very unlikely to be productive. So, you had to make distinctions that you were not going to go with the flow in certain areas, you were going to go against the flow. Then as you did that over years, you made too big a sacrifice to go back, you have gone on a journey and you owed it to yourself to continue on' (Desmond Green interview, 2002).

The tension was in the desire to hold to traditional values whilst also changing individual behaviour and outlook. It was a process of resolution and compromise within the founders' critical emotional, intellectual, temporal and conceptual tipping points. The importance of attaching the concept of child-centredness to the concept of multi-denominational education was, for example, a strategically critical tipping point. For instance, at one of the first public meetings, a member of the audience had interpreted the term *multi-denominational* to mean all Christian religions. With no opportunity for debate, Micheal Johnston quickly stood up and stated that multi-denominational meant that '*no child was an outsider*'. Multi-denominational came to mean all religions and none. This did not mean that the debate ended there. Far from it: debate about this unwieldy and inelegant term continues today. During the founding period, there were considerable social, political, legislative, religious and cultural pressures that forced the founders to be clear in saying *'...we are not against anything, we are inclusive.'*[106] This was in response to the norms of the time and the view that *'you had to be something'*. And because social stratification was a central norm in Irish society, it was unthinkable that an education strategy could be all embracing and all encompassing.

The St Patricks' experience taught the founders about functioning conflict – that it was alright to disagree, to get upset, to fight, to rage internally but ultimately the ego was not what was important[107]. It was as if the DSP movement represented an opportunity for changing social thinking at a grand scale and for testing out

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[106] In conversation with Desmond Green, October 2002

[107] ibid

theories at a micro level.

The founders may have gathered around a set of values that they held in common but the extent to which strategies could be subsequently implemented to make them 'core' values was very much a function of social, religious and cultural values of that time.

5.4.1. Values and micro- strategy.

This tension between rehearsing, testing and activating values in practice and as they were understood in the wider social sense led the founders to adopt a pragmatic approach to micro-strategy,

> *'I was pragmatic. Obviously, I said if we know what we want and there is no point in reinventing the wheel every time...just to prove that we can invent another wheel'* (Desmond Green interview, 2002).

There was also the critical issue of presenting a united front. If the movement had split or if ideological schism emerged, the State would never fund the DSP. The founders knew this implicitly.[108]

However, the pragmatic, practice based approach to strategy was used to manage the conflicting values described above. The founders assumed from the outset that all stakeholders had a right and a desire to be informed about the issues that concerned them (see Case One for a contrasting incident). Adopting a stance of openness meant that challenges, failures and conflict could be managed without schism or dissolution.

Thus the founders attempted to emulate the following values through everything they did,

- Structures that were inclusive, equal in terms of opportunity, accessible and transparent in terms of policies and decision with due regard to the needs of parents, the professional teacher's position and the protection of individual children;
- Practices and policies that are sensitive to religious, economic, educational, social, ethnic minorities/grouping or families on the fringe of society;

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[108] Aine Hyland interview, 2002

- Sensitivity in designing open consultation systems with and for parents and teachers with due regard to the role of the professional teacher and to the role and needs of the principal;
- Transparency, openness and accessibility of information and information processing methods and practices including the proper recording, reporting and disseminating of decisions and timings;
- Where possible, accommodating the lived experience of the child;
- That pragmatism was supported by specific values;
- Being fully informed of *all* the procedures, rules, laws and practices that were likely to affect how the strategy was perceived and affect outcomes (e.g. the patron as legal entity – see case studies for a contrasting approach at the school level, where management groups tended not to inform themselves unless faced with a crisis);
- Meeting preparation including the use of role-play to ensure that all the possible perceptions and perspectives were taken into account;
- Reflective practices focusing on self-awareness and group dynamics.

5.5. An account of ET during the intervening years, 1981-2001.

In 1981, the second ET school was established in Bray and was called the Bray School Project. This was made possible because the Bray group were able to use the DSP model (the Constitution of the DSP Association) and as a template. The core group of founders reflected in this account retained their involvement in ET for many years. They held key roles in the management groups of DSP, in the national coordinating committee that was established and two of them became trustees of Monkstown ETNS under the patronage of DSP Ltd. The founders were also keen to move on in the right way and make room for new values and experiences,

> *'I had a lot of meetings with Mike (Micheal Johnston) and Aine about what we would do from now on. We would have to break some umbilical cord, Mike didn't want to do it that way, but then I brought in a facilitator to talk to us about how we move away. That we had to hand over. We had to give it away, this project had to be able to exist without us. We couldn't be stuck into it*

*forever...we would still remain deeply connected but what I didn't want was the old leaders ruling the present. We had to get out of the way' (*Desmond Green, Interview, 2002 talking about the period after DSP was established in its permanent home in 1983*).*

The founders of the DSP worked closely with Bray's start-up group, although still in the process of securing permanent premises for DSP.

When DSP tried to extend its patronage to Bray, the Department of Education said that one school could not be a patron of another school, thereby insisting that Bray have its own patron. The Assistant Secretary of the Department involved, Finbar O'Callaghan, was strongly opposed to multi-denominational education. He was also a personal friend of the Hylands. For Aine, it was the sad realization that:

'life is full of those contradictions....'

The inability to take advantage of economies of scale and scope is the single most important factor in the slow development of the sector between 1978 and 1987. The next school to open was North Dublin National School Project (Ballymun-Glasnevin) in 1984.

Notwithstanding this significant economic factor, the sector continued to grow making the most of an informal network of people who were willing to assist new groups to establish schools around the country. At no time was ET ever short of groups and individuals who were active in establishing a school. But the reinvention of strategy for each new patron, whilst difficult, was consistent with the founders' strategy in working with social and individuals values;

'...the ways in which different communities have interpreted the original model have widely varied. This variation in interpretation was actually implicitly acknowledged in the names of the first eleven Educate Together schools. All included the name "Project"...and the sector was for many years referred to as "The Project Schools". There was certainly no attempt to enforce any uniformity in interpretation. For many, the definition was clearly seen as a loosely defined quartet {Multi-denominational, Child-centred, Democratic and Co-educational} of principles around which ethos was an inclusive process of discussion of policy

and curricula development' (Paul Rowe, ET CEO, 2004).[109]

In 1984, the founders and a number of the people involved in Bray and North Dublin National School Project established the Educate Together Committee to provide a national coordinating effort. Aine Hyland was Chairperson from 1988 to 1996. The purpose was to identify efficiencies and provide support around the ethical and values issues as demand for schools grew around the country. The committee also represented ET interests and made formal submissions to national educational bodies.[110]

The Department of Education introduced the concept of temporary and permanent recognition in 1987 and applied these regulations to multi-denominational schools and to the Gaelscoileanna sector:

> *'The new regulations (not included in any rule book or circular but cited in letters from the Department {of Education} to the new Projects) stated that multi-denominational National schools, if recognised, would have temporary or provisional recognition only in the early years (an unspecified period) and during this period the schools would not be eligible for any capital grants. This meant at the stage when the school would be growing most rapidly and would have to spend money on refurbishing and furnishing temporary premises, no capital grants would be available'* (Hyland, 1993).

The Department of Education set limits in terms of pre-enrolment lists and a variety of other 'rules' but the sector continued to work to open schools. Also, demographics meant that national schools around the country had surplus classrooms (Hyland, 1993). Nonetheless, accommodation was and remains a crippling issue for new schools.[111]

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[109] Keynote address given at Educate Together's Ethos Conference in 2004.

[110] Submissions were made to OECD Review of National Education Policy in Ireland (1991); The Primary Curriculum Review Body (1991); The Primary Education Review Body (1991); Green Paper on Education (1992); White Paper on Education (1995)

[111] In 2006, 64% of ET schools are housed in temporary premises. Source ET Head Office Statistics.

In 1985 Sligo School Project applied[112] to the Department of Education to open in a disused glass factory. The Department refused to give permission because there were empty classrooms in a local Catholic school. A Senate debate developed as to why the Department would not recognise the school. The Department of Education then refused permission for the school to open in prefabricated classrooms on a VEC site, even though the VEC was willing to act as host. It was pointed out during the debate that Sligo ET had petitioned the Catholic patron of the local school to take up residency in the disused classrooms but the Church was not prepared to negotiate with them. The Minister of Education, Patrick Cooney's replied,

> *'In an effort to help the project {Sligo ET}, we drew their attention to the fact that there were empty classrooms at taxpayers' expense in the town. The management of those schools and the project people did not reach a meeting of minds, and in retrospect, that did not surprise me...There was nothing I could do about that because the State does not own the school. This is a private school and the school project when set up will also be a private school; it will not be owned by the State although it will be State supported and State assisted. This is the system we have. I have no power to twist the arm of any school board and say they must give these people their spare space. I can only point the people in that direction'* (Senate debate, 30th October 1986, from Hyland, 1993).

Sligo School Project was given recognition in 1987.[113] Despite the fact that the State was contributing over eighty per cent of the building costs of a national school, paying the salaries of the teachers, the capitation grant for each pupil it exercised no control over the lease of the buildings. Hyland points out that the State never intervened to prevent the sale of a national school to the multi-denominational sector (1993).

Minister for Education, Mary O'Rourke was supportive of ET and seven schools opened between 1987 and 1991, bringing the total to ten. She intervened

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[112] Criteria and Procedures for the Recognition of new Primary Schools, Report of the steerting committee, September 1998. Appendix 1, Ordinary National School Applications for Recognition, 1986-1997, pg 81.

[113] Ibid, pg 81.

directly in the Sligo Project case to provide additional prefabricated classrooms on the site of the old Model School. The new schools opened in Cork, Sligo, Kilkenny and Limerick. In 1990, the Minister sought school transport benefits for children attending ET schools. This provided free transport for children living outside a three-mile radius but within travelling distance of an ET school. Previously, this had been denied.

Ranelagh Multi-denominational National School (Dublin) set a new precedent for the sector. St Columbas' Church of Ireland National School had been in existence for a century but the church authorities wanted to close it in the late 1980s because the number of Protestant pupils was falling. The parents, again with the support of Minister O'Rourke, persuaded the Church of Ireland authorities to transfer the lease and title to its newly formed patron group in 1988.

In 1990, Educate Together established The Educate Together Charter (see Appendix One) and formed the beginnings of a National Executive from its grass roots as its governing body. A further eight schools opened between 1993 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2006 the sector doubled. In the 2006 academic year, there were forty-one schools, 6,631 pupils and over six hundred teaching staff.

A number of significant events between 1997 and 2004[114] altered both the National school system and Educate Together. First, in 1997, ET was incorporated into a company limited by guarantee. The Articles of Association provided that the membership was drawn from the incorporated patrons of schools established since 1978, and the nominee of the Board of Management of each school. This group of people was named the National Executive (NE). The purpose was to represent the sector and provide a focus around common objectives. And to support and assist members to enhance the delivery of education to the children in the sector. Further, its function was to vindicate the rights of families who wanted to avail of a multi-denominational education.[115] The intention behind incorporation was to separate the grass roots from executive functions because the membership was viewed as sovereign and independent. In practice, the NE was made up of two people from each school – one patron nominee and one BOM nominee. The membership was

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[114] The Ministers for Education at this time were Michael Martin, TD 1997-2002 and Noel Dempsey, TD 2002-2004.

[115] ET paper, 'Work of Educate Together National Executive', 9th June 2001.

declared unlimited, and by 1999 this amounted to over thirty people. This was a large group and an ungainly instrument in terms of making decisions. An officer board of three people had formed over the period to assist decision-making. In time this structure was viewed as inappropriate to the democratic core at the heart of ET.

Then, the Education Act was published in 1998. The Act did not equate a patron with a denominational body and positioned the BOM as the entity with legal responsibility for running of national schools. For the first time ET was free to patron schools centrally. This option was offered to all new schools from 2000 (see Case Two).

- In January 1999, the Department of Education and Science announced that it would meet the entire cost of new sites for school building projects and fixed a cap on the local contribution for new building costs at €63,000;
- Per capita grants to cover each child's education expenses were increased significantly between 2002 and 2004
- In 2003 the Department of Education and Science announced its new building programme and finally and officially gave recognition to the appalling state of many of the country's National schools and to the need for new schools in developing areas;
- In 2004 the details of the school building programme (the criteria for deciding how to allocate resources, the list of schools who were to receive building/maintenance grants, the dates when the work would begin etc.) was published and made available to the public.

For the first time in the history of the national school system, the state was taking responsibility for the purchase, development and upkeep of land, property and buildings and for the quality of the educational environment in the National school system. Further, these events heralded the prospect of policy based decision-making and transparent, equitable processes in the workings of the Department.

As a result of these changes, the relationship between the patron and the BOM had to change. For instance, for the first time, the BOM was not as reliant on the patron for routine or for emergency funding needs. It also became possible to plan for expenditure given that capital expenses were underwritten by the state. But the

changes also created an ambiguity about the need for the patron to fundraise to the same extent (see Case Two).

For the first time ET was free to plan strategically. In 1998 ET started negotiated funding from Atlantic Philanthropies to set up a head office and support a national team of staff. In 2001, ET published its strategic statement to double the sector within five years. And in 2001 ET hired its first Chief Executive Officer to manage the work of the organisation on behalf of the National Executive. In 2002, consultants were hired to begin a review of governance structures. In 2004, it restructured and created a Board of Directors to manage the business of ET. This comprised ten Directors, nominated and elected from the membership and a further two Directors who were co-opted. The National Executive was then restructured as a national forum; the grass roots of the sector. The national forum's function was to inform the Board of Directors of developments on the ground and in the schools and to provide feedback.

5.6. Conclusions.

This Chapter offered an analysis of the Presentational Data collected from the founders of the DSP – the intention of the founders was that in setting up the DSP, they would establish the basis for an entire sector of multi-denominational schools within the national school system.

The founders succeeded in designing and realising an alternative multi-denominational structure within the existing system. As individuals, and as a group, the founders held and contained symbolic, strategic and pragmatic roles that were critical to the success of this strategy. The story of the founding and birthing period illustrates that, for broadly similar reasons, the founders found commonality through the expression of a set of values about children of different faiths being educated together. This was *explicitly* related to *the founders'* needs for a multi-denominational structure/school. It was *implicitly* related to the founders' jointly held assumptions about the benefits of progressive methods of education and the educational advantages (e.g. the protection and promotion of progressive pedagogical methods) that arise from the democratic input of parents alongside teachers in the management of schools.

Etched deeply into this story is a resurgence of the complex Protestant and Anglican values that were described in Chapter One. Recalling that in the

nineteenth century Utilitarian philosophers argued that the criterion for action should be the happiness of the greatest numbers of people and that the pursuit of self-interest as a replacement for social responsibility would result in utopia for all. Thus, *'the individual moral agent, freed from hierarchy and teleology, conceives of himself and is conceived of by moral philosophers as sovereign in his moral authority'* (MacIntyre, 1981: 61). Recalling also that Jeremy Bentham was core to the concept of utilitarianism. He argued that:

> *'... mankind has two and only two motives to his moral thesis ... to choose...action or implement that policy which will produce as its consequences the greatest happiness – that is, the greatest possible quantity of pleasure with the smallest quantity of pain – of the greatest number'* (MacIntyre, 1981; 61).

It is this deeply complex and contradictory idea that best captures the intentions, values and strategies of the founders of DSP and ET. On the one hand, they pursued self-interested needs - ensuring that *their* children, along with a minority of other children, got access to the basic education being denied to them by the State. And, on the other, the founders fundamentally believed that their broadly held values and intentions would benefit Irish society in the long term. A set of different, but equally utilitarian assumptions were also instrumental in the original design of the national school system. But, in 1831 these assumptions were unpalatable to Irish society (see Chapter Four). It could be argued that the values had to be held in storage for over a hundred years in order for elements of the original design to become palatable and then reshaped in accordance with the values of a dramatically changing Irish society in the 1960s.

Chapter One identified the seductive premise, and promise, of Strategic Management - that the organisation as a whole can be shaped and directed towards previously conceived goals and purposes. The founders of ET did not fail in their intentions. They succeeded in opening DSP and establishing a sector of schools that operate multi-denominational enrolment systems. But, neither did they succeed entirely. This analysis shows that the extent to which the founders could successfully implement strategies to reflect all the desirable values was a function of the dominant social, religious and cultural values at play generally - just as it was in the nineteenth century. Whilst the founders had an explicit strategic intention – to open a multi-denominational school within the existing system - their

modus was not to engage in persuasive debate or hard-edged advocacy, rather their preferred approach was pragmatic, constructive and reflective. This was because of their explicit recognition that the values they claimed to hold or support, were not necessarily the values of others. Indeed, throughout the story, there are plenty of examples of the founders working successfully with people who held different or even contradictory values and assumptions. The pragmatism of this approach meant compromise because the values of other key constituents, individuals and groups were just as relevant. As a result, it was relatively easier to open a school with a multi-denominational enrolment system, than it was to instigate and sustain pedagogical innovations. The values that were acceptable to the social institutions, organisations and individuals involved were more likely to be realised in practice than values generally perceived as peripheral or, at best, tenuous. Having stated this, it is important to recall and retain the fact that, in the 1960s, in Ireland, even imagining a school like DSP was deeply radical.

Chapter Two described values against two broad strands: values that are treated as coherent, and values regarded as incoherent/ambiguous/conflicting. In terms of strategies that the founders employed, and, the strategies that succeeded, this analysis illustrates,

- The importance of the explicit needs of the founders and the coherent values that were reflected in the strategy to create a school in order to put into practice a multi-denominational enrolment system;
- The marginal importance and the relative incoherence/ambiguity/disagreement amongst all the groups/individuals/organisations involved, in the values that supported other strategies – e.g. pedagogical innovations in DSP, parental involvement/democracy and child-centredness.

This Chapter illustrates vividly, the role of values in the strategic intentions of ET"s founders and the actual events that resulted in the founding and birthing of the DSP and ET sector. Recalling the concluding comments of Chapter Four, it is far easier to understand the starting point of this evolution, if the lens used assumes coherence and incoherence, conflicting, ambiguous and, even elusive values, rather than simply assuming that coherent values provide a basis for shared understanding and common goals.

It is a great testament to the founders that they took on a tacit, collective responsibility not to assume everyone thought the same way they did. Instead, they made sure that the aspirational values, they claimed to represent, were exposed, examined and interrogated for further, greater and deeper meaning. If anything, their work is a signal that it maybe strategically destructive to overestimate the extent to which people share values or hold common assumptions – what would have happened if the founders had not activated this tacit 'value'? It is probably because this 'value' was embedded deeply in the founders' process, that ET was able to continue to evolve into a major national education system. Subsequent events in ET illustrate that relative strategic failures alongside strategic successes encouraged, first the founders, and then others to continue to test and rehearse ways in which they can make the values active, living practices (see Chapter Six).

The next Chapter provides three analytical case studies based on the Operational Data collected from ET schools (see Section 3.7. above) and situated in the present time.

Chapter Six: Three case studies illustrating values and strategy *together* in the organisation.

6.1. Introduction

This Chapter presents three case studies drawn from the Operational Data (see Section 3.7.) at the school level. This Chapter marks a significant change in terms of the level of analysis *and* the type of data being used. Chapter Four reflected Presentational, academic accounts of the history of the national school system and Chapter Five reflected Presentational accounts from founders and staff members on the establishment of DSP and the emerging ET sector.

Through a case study approach, *this* Chapter reflects the ongoing, day-to-day concerns of management groups in three ET schools. As described, in detail in Section 3.7.2., each case was chosen according to certain criteria. The main criterion was that the incident must cast or draw ET's values into relief in some way - as a distortion, a development, an ambiguity, a contrast, an evolution, a challenge, a dilution, an undermining, a significant aspect etc. It is the satisfaction of this criterion that indicates a particular incident as inherently strategic with strategic consequences for the organisation as a whole.

There are three case studies. The three incidents were drawn from two of the three schools involved in the research – Mansfield ETNS, Ford ETNS and Scott ETNS. All three schools offered a rich and extensive tapestry of strategic incidents, however, in order to guarantee the anonymity of three schools (see Table One below for the case number, the name of the school, the name of each of the management groups involved and the details of each school's stage of development and size). An additional protection was offered in that two of the case events occurred in one school but the case is presented as if it took place in the third school. There is only one methodological disadvantage in presenting the data in this way; the research did not take into account or determine the consequences of a single school experiencing two strategic incidents in a medium-term timeframe. The strategic incidents reflected in the cases are typical of the incidents observed in all three schools involved during the time of the study. Also, the validity of the chosen incidents was supported by the Operational Data collected at sectoral level (see Section 3.6.1.). Numerous incidents of a similar nature were reported anecdotally and informally to the researcher.

The process of writing up the case studies is described in detail in Section 3.7.4. Each case is analysed using the STSA framework laid out in Chapter Three (see Sections 3.7.3 and 3.7.5.). Each case is presented in five parts as described in Section 3.7.6.. First, the immediate and wider organisation, cultural, social, economic, sectoral contexts of the case are presented followed by the strategic incident at the heart of the case. This is followed by an analysis of the facts of the case, which, in turn is followed by an analysis of the management group/s' Primary Task (see Section 3.7.5.1.). Finally, the boundaries of each management group are described and analysed and, this is followed by an assessment of the management group/s' most basic assumptions. At the end of each case, and in light of the analysis presented, the strategic consequences for ET, as a whole, are considered.

Before Case One is presented, the context of ET at the time the case work was conducted, is described.

6.2. The context of Educate Together.

6.2.1. Historical, structural and statutory context.

When the Department of Education denied DSP Ltd. the right to patron other schools, Micheal Johnston, founder recalls that:

> *'Other people saw what was happening and wanted it too. I think the missionary torch was carried by each of these schools as they got going toward the ones that were following on behind them. We went to the initial Bray meetings...and when Bray got to a certain point, Bray said "let's just use one patron; one patron body for the two {schools}".'*

But,

> *'The Department {of Education} found difficulties with it, so instead of being bogged down with those difficulties, the Bray School Project set up a limited company also. It had a separate patron. And I think that is a good example of just how pragmatic the whole movement was'* (Micheal Johnston, interview, 2002).

This illustrates clearly, the intention to grow the sector from DSP and the value of viewing all existing schools as interdependent with new schools. It was the only way the founders were going to achieve their aim to grow the ET sector and offer families a choice.

In the 1970s the BOM structure for all national schools was just developing. The process of introduction was slow because, traditionally the diocesan Bishop appointed each school manager – usually the parish priest. But the BOM structure was a truly radical development in the democratic management of national schools and for the involvement of parents in their children's education.

DSP's founders worked hard to establish a legitimate BOM structure in the first ET school. The democratic management of the school was a central tenet behind the founding effort. At that time and because the BOM structure was fledgling, the patron retained more power and authority. Before setting up the DSP Board of Management and just before the school was opened, Bill Hyland reflected

that the patron would retain a veto over values, should a BOM act in contradiction to preferred values:

> *'The DSP can in principle require/advise/permit or forbid the Board of Management to do/from/doing something. ...In the unlikely event that a B of M {sic} began to violate the basic principles of the DSP, it would have to step in/to {sic} see that this was not allowed to continue'.*[116]

In current times, BOMs manage the day-to-day business of national schools on behalf of the Minister for Education and Science. All BOMs in every national school operate the same way. Each BOM has eight members; two parent representatives, elected from the parent body; a teacher representative; the principal, two patron nominees and two members co-opted from the wider community. The patron appoints the Chair and the whole group appoint a Secretary and Treasurer. Because the majority of national schools are Catholic, the Catholic Primary School Manager's Association (CPSMA, 2004) has been instrumental in standardising BOM rules, procedures, agendas and values for all National schools. These standards are published in the CPSMA's *Management Board members' Handbook* (the most recent edition is 2004*)*. The CPSMA Handbook differs somewhat from The Department of Education and Science's own rulebook, *Boards of Management of National Schools: Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure* (2003). This document provides a basic description of the procedures for electing and nominating members and for appointing teachers. The most recent edition reflects the growing diversity in Ireland's schools (2003). For instance, the procedures for selecting members of the community to the BOM are specific to the values and religious teaching of Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Educate Together, Gaelscoileanna and Muslim schools (see for instance, Appendix C; 16-17).

The use of the CPSMA guidelines reassures the State that both the day-to-day and the more unusual problems are attended to in a standardised, predictable way. With over a hundred years of school management, a huge amount of experience is reflected in the CPSMA Handbook. The use of the Handbook is important for ET as a minority sector within the national school system – although, this study did not attempt to find out if all ET schools use the Handbook. There is another factor that

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[116] Ibid, footnote 4

makes the use of the CPSMA guidelines very important to the children, families and staff of all schools - protection. The CPSMA has very clear guidelines for managing confidentiality. School BOMs frequently have to address personal issues including difficult family circumstances and child abuse. It is vital that the interests and personal information of individual children, families and staff members are protected. Of the cases presented in this Chapter, Ford ETNS actually used the physical CPSMA Handbook as an explicit basis for their meetings. Mansfield ETNS and Scott ETNS used the CPSMA Handbook implicitly in the operation of agendas, functions, recruitment procedures etc.

The Department of Education and Science's rules for national schools are reproduced verbatim in the CPSMA Handbook. The Handbook also provides a detailed description of the relationships of the partners and extensive details on practical regulatory, legal and financial issues that the BOM has to manage. These include a description of the relationships between the BOM and the internal and external organisations and groups with which it is interdependent - the Bishop, the parish, the pupils, the teachers & staff, the parents, the Inspectors of Education, the Department of Education and Science, the CPSMA structure and conferences, the primary school Teacher's union, Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), the local primary and post primary schools, the local health, caring and charitable services in the community, provision of school facilities to local groups and organisations in the local community, and other service providers such as the school's insurance company. In each and every case, the CPSMA clearly identifies its values in relation to how it expects a BOM to deal with its environment (17-21).

For instance;

> *'The Bishop, as leader of the Catholic community in the Diocese and as Patron of the school has ultimate responsibility for the school. The Bishop delegates some of his responsibility to the Board of Management, which is accountable to him. There will be contact between the Board and the Bishop on a number of specified issues – for instance, the appointment of the Board, the appointment, suspension or dismissal of teachers, finance, school ethos... The Bishop is entitled to request reports or documentation from the school... The Bishop should be informed of any matter of*

interest of concern to the Board of Management which is likely to enter the public arena' (2004; 17).

And, in relation to teachers;

> '*The teachers are the single most valuable and important asset of the school. If teachers are happy in their work, this will communicate itself to the pupils. Pupils learn best in a calm and positive atmosphere. The Board of Management should meet the teachers informally at least once a year'*

And, in relation to the Department;

> *'It is important that the Chairperson and principal Teacher would become familiar with the different sections within the Department of Education and Science. It is useful to learn the names of the Officials dealing with the different areas' (*2004; 18 & 21*).*

And, in relation to the local community;

> *'While the main purpose of the school premises is the education of children, the school ought to be a focal point for the community and to be used by them for various activities, with the consent of the Board of Management etc... '*(23).

These quotes illustrate clearly the diversity of interests and values in the national school system. The practical reality of these values and different interests come to life in the management and day-to-day life of every national school.

The Handbook also includes a section called the '*Board of Management in Action'*. This includes a sample agenda in which each agenda item is described – anecdotally, it is understood that all ET schools use the same agenda format. It also includes a template for financial reports and for the principal's report.

A note on 'Cohesion of the Board of Management' for instance, reads,

> *'The Board members should review their perception of their role and the contribution of the Board to the School at least once a year....Board members must be assisted in realising and accepting that they carry the responsibility for the management of the school, subject to their accountability to the Patron and subject to the*

Regulations of the Department of Education and Science'(2004; 31).

None of these documents list the functions of the BOM. But the CPSMA Handbook *implies a set of functions* by describing in detail the BOM's relations with its internal and external environment. However, the Handbook's extensive appendices - one hundred and sixty four pages - indicate the range of BOM functions from recruitment of all staff, to facilitating school planning, administering admissions, facilitating the parent association/groups, all health and safety issues, financial control and accountability, insurance, schools policies such as behaviour or complaints, administration of all education-related funding schemes, and all matters connected to the maintenance and development of the school buildings and associated land.

The point being made is that, whilst the Department of Education and Science's rulebook provides the basic constitution of management structures, the CPSMA Handbook effectively mirrors 'good' practice. This suggests that in crisis (see Case Two), a BOM should refer to the CPSMA Handbook even if it is not a Catholic school. The Handbook is an excellent illustration of the difficulty of writing down values as they are actually practiced on a day-to-day basis. The Handbook has evolved over a hundred years and has drawn on the experience of thousands of schools and parish systems within the Catholic Church. The three Cases below illustrate the difficulties of new and relatively new organisations (ET being a new organisation relative to the Catholic Church's national school system) in developing and working through the practical implications of aspirational values.

The 1998 Education Act is a critical document in understanding the changing relationship between school patrons and BOMs. The patron requests recognition for a new national school from The Minister for Education and Science, appoints a BOM and then delegates duties to that board as per the Education Act. The BOM is effectively, but not technically, accountable to the patron (Section 15) and the patron can also dissolve a board (Section 16 – see also Rule 14 in *Rules for National School*).

The key passages of the Education Act (1998) are ambiguous in relation to how or even *if* the patron's values can inform school policy,

'It shall be the duty of the board to manage the school on behalf of

the patron and for the benefit of students and their parents.' (Section 15.1.).

'...a board shall...consult with and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board.' (15.1.2.c).

And,

'...the BOM shall...uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...' (15.2.b).

And,

'...the board shall have regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditional, languages and ways of life in society (15.2.e).

These sections do not state that the patron has absolute authority over values or the interpretation of values in relation to objectives and behaviours. Ambiguously, the first section states the BOM is accountable to the patron with respect to the values that inform and determine *the school's* objectives and behaviour, and, the second section states that the BOM's values should be informed by the make-up of society and the requirements of democratic society.

Practical difficulties arose for educators in 1965 (as described in Chapter Four and Chapter Five) when the *Rules for National Schools* legally enshrined the denominational character of all national schools. This was at a time when secular and child-centred curricula and philosophies were beginning to influence Irish education. The current edition of the CPSMA Handbook (2004) states clearly that in the case of Catholic schools;

'As a formal agent of education within the Catholic community, the school models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ'.

The apparent contradictions between the CPSMA Handbook and the Education Act suggest that the national school system still operates

under the assumption that there is no separation between a patron's influences and the behaviours and method and modes of education found in a school - as if the patron is the promoter and defender of the school's values and the behaviours that instantiate those values. The assumption is the same as that discussed in Chapters Two and Three in relation to coherent values; that organisations 'have' values. In relation to schools, the Education Act refers to the '*characteristic spirit'* that is integral to a school's '*objectives and conduct',* but the Act does not make explicit what this means.

The assumption that there is no difference between what a school (or organisation) believes and how it behaves is extremely seductive and suggests that the premise of strategic management – the shaping and directing of the whole organisation into the future – is indeed practical and possible.

ET schools, of course, mimic the structures of the national school system in order to receive legitimacy and teaching resources from the State (this is dealt with in some detail through the case content). In adopting, wholesale, the existing denominationally structured national school system, ET schools had to adopt the assumption that its patrons' values are somehow embedded and integral to the normative and educational values of the whole school. In practical and pragmatic terms, this is very problematic and the reasons are vividly illustrated in the cases below.

6.2.2. The resourcing and funding context of ET and individual schools.

In order to understand the relationships and activities described in the cases, it is important to be aware that the resourcing and funding of ET schools exists in a specific context.

Chapter Four explained the historical basis for the patron's role in fundraising. The State has always understood its financial responsibility to education in the context of a local (patron) contribution. This arrangement dates back to 1831. Chapter Four explained the reasons why the local contribution assumption has always been an unsatisfactory and impractical solution to providing adequate resources to schools.

As explained in Chapter Five, the founders of DSP Ltd. had to fundraise for the cost of the rental of temporary school premises, for the capital costs of purchasing a site and building a school and for the cost of all

maintenance and upkeep. The burden was huge and, as a result, fundraising became an embedded and accepted part of a patron's activities. But changes that occurred between 1997 and 2004 altered the way State takes responsibility for the payment and upkeep of national schools (See Section 5.5 above).

After 1998, the nature of the financial burden upon parents opening up an ET school changed radically. For ET, the changes were strategically significant. ET Ltd. encouraged start-up groups to start working on setting up new schools without the spectre of having to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds (See Chapter Five) and ET Ltd began to plan for growth in a strategic manner.

The impact on local strategy for the existing schools was not so clear-cut. The DSP's fundraising strategy was not simply about raising funds. It developed upon a series of values about why they might give money, how much they might give and the methods through which they might give. There was also the desire that fundraising events would create opportunities for bringing families and children together for social purposes. But conflicting values were also a part of this story; that families have different amounts of disposable income and different values and traditions about giving or donating money. School fundraising also developed in the context that education was under-funded and families who chose a state-based public education system should not be paying for their children's education in the first place.

As a result, since DSP opened in 1978, a huge effort has gone into adapting methods of fundraising to ET's values. To some extent this is borne out by the fact that the well-established schools involved in this study tend to use similar approaches. The proposition is that, at the school level, fundraising activities, which are in themselves a dilemma, are not simply a means to an end they are also an expression of ET's values.

The three Case Studies are now presented.

Table One: profiles of the three schools from which case data is drawn

Case number	School name	Name of board of management (BOM) group	Name of patron group	School's stage of development /location	School size[117]
Case One	Mansfield ETNS	Mansfield BOM	Deckard[118]	Established/mature urban area	Medium
Case Two	Ford ETNS	Ford BOM	Weaver	Recently formed/rapidly expanding rural/urban area	Small
Case Three	Scott ETNS	Scott BOM	Ash	Established/mature urban area	Medium

6.3. Case One: Mansfield ETNS and its relations with a start-up school.

6.3.1. The context.

6.2.1.1. The local and sectoral context.

The location of Mansfield follows the pattern set by DSP. It is located on the cusp of a working class /middle class area. The area was initially developed by the State for public housing and has since matured. The demographic profile has changed from being primarily working class to reflecting a mixed social base. This is supported by the fact that at the time of the study, Mansfield was designated disadvantaged.[119]

Mansfield had just over two hundred pupils and nine class teachers. At the time of the case, its pre-enrolment list was oversubscribed (i.e. the demand for

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[117] The average enrolment in all Irish national schools is one hundred and thirty eight (see footnote 4 below). At the time of the research, the average enrolment in an ET school was one hundred and seventy students, approximately (ET Ltd 2005-2006). This figure reflects recent rapid growth and the fact that over the course of the research and write up (see Chapter Three) twenty-one schools opened. Newer schools are structurally smaller as the school grows incrementally beginning with one or two junior infant classes and gradually growing until all eight-class groups are full. This process of growth takes approximately six to seven years. So, a medium school by national school standards is an enrolment over two hundred pupils and a small school would be a hundred or less. Relative to the total number of schools (see footnote 4), there are few large national schools in Ireland – enrolments over four hundred (See Chapter Four and Five for explanation of this).

[119] This scheme was introduced in 1984. Schools designated as disadvantaged were given one extra teacher and a supplement on the per pupil capitation to pay for teaching equipment and resources. The designation was based on measures of unemployment, medical card-holders, housing and basic literacy and numeracy. In 2005-2006 this scheme was merged with DEIS, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools.

junior infant places exceeded the supply). Mansfield's nearest school neighbour was negotiating a new school building with the Department of Education, an indication of promising future enrolments. The size of the other National schools in the area reflected national averages[120] with enrolments of between one hundred and thirty and two hundred and eighty.

Mansfield had four management groups; the patron (Deckard), the BOM, an active Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the staff-principal group.

During the research period, I attended Mansfield's Whole School Meeting. This is a common tool of communication in ET schools.[121] A large part of the meeting was devoted to thanking the parents involved in supporting the school and particularly those parents who were members of Deckard – the patron group. The teachers that were present commented on the role of parents, the efforts of fundraising and other events that supported the teachers' work in the classroom. The teachers offered advice and support and were concerned that parents were made how appreciated their efforts were.

Another significant development for Mansfield ETNS at the time of the case was the recent develoment of a written Ethical Core Curriculum (ECC). This was illustrated by the children and developed through a sub-committee of teaching staff and Deckard - the patron body. The main purpose of the ECC was to clearly articulate the values that were being transmitted to children through the academic and classroom-based systems of teaching. During the research period ET Ltd was working on a similar publication for use in all ET schools. This was published in 2005 after the research for this study was completed (*Learn Together,* Educate Together, *2005).* See Mulcahy, 2006 for more details.

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[120] According to the 2006 enrolment figures on the Department of Education database of National schools there are 3,302 National schools and 457,388 enrolled pupils, i.e. an average of one hundred and thirty eight pupils per school

[121] Most ET schools are encouraged by ET to hold Whole School Meetings on an annual or regular basis. Whole School literally means all the staff, parents and management work groups. Some schools will have input from students. Because most ET schools have Student Councils, this is relatively straightforward. The children would not normally attend an adult meeting. It would be regarded as an intimidating environment. At one of ET's Conferences one courageous principal staged a Student Council meeting with her students in front of a hundred plus conference attendees. The intention was to show practice-in-action.

6.2.1.2. The context of Mansfield's patron – Deckard.

Mansfield's patron is named Deckard for the purposes of this case. It is a company limited by guarantee with a paid membership and a group of directors elected by the members (generally parents, but not exclusively so). The members are invited to stand for election to the committee at each AGM. The committee is elected annually.

Shortly after the research began, Deckard Ltd held its AGM. Three new directors were elected and seven returned for re-election. This pattern seemed consistent with other elections indicating that although, Deckard were elected annually, the group retained some of its knowledge and experience. All ten directors had children in Mansfield. None of Deckard's members were founding parents but at least two of the members had been involved with Mansfield for over five years. As with all ET patron groups, Deckard mimicks the original DSP; it operates a Chair, a Secretary and Treasurer functions. The data indicates that Deckard's agenda is roughly the same as that used in other ET schools. One member pf Deckard has a liaison role with Mansfield's BOM and attends the meetings of both groups. Deckard also has the power to nominate two members to the BOM. But, at the time of the case Mansfield's BOM was in the second year of its three-year term of office, so the case does not concern the forming of a new BOM.

Deckard's role in Mansfield is ambiguous and unclear in terms of its contribution to the school as a whole. Deckard's primary task is to promote and protect ET values as they are practiced and lived out in Mansfield by the management groups, the staff and the students. Over the course of the research, however, Deckard's only routine activity was the management of fundraising events. There was no clarity about why Deckard could not activate its primary task. The changed context of funding for national schools appeared to be impacting on Deckard. Over the course of the research, at least one of Deckard's members expressed frustration about the lack of clarity about their role at every meeting. These expressions usually involved or implied questions about why Deckard was fundraising; who had authority over the administration and allocation of the funds the group raised; and what Deckard's role was in the school.

6.2.1.3. The context of Mansfield's BOM.

The BOM Chair was a founding parent and at the time of the study had been in the Chair for a decade. The principal had been in his position for almost seven years. Apart from the principal and teacher representative, all the other members of the BOM were parents of children attending Mansfield. This is consistent with the BOMs in most ET schools. Mansfield also has a parent-teacher association (PTA). At least one of the two parent representatives on the BOM attended the PTA's meeting as a liaison member and reported back to the BOM. Mansfield's teaching staff rotates/shares its attendance at PTA meetings. At Mansfield's BOM meetings, the principal and teacher representative constantly affirmed and supported the parental role in the school. All four management groups (Deckard, BOM, PTA and Staff) tried to hold their monthly meetings at a similar time in order to co-ordinate communication.

Throughout the national school sector, BOMs and patrons are, typically, insecure about reductions in enrolment figures. This is because national school resources are distributed centrally by the Department of Education & Science according to the number of children enrolled on September 1st of the previous year. The ratio of teachers to children is very strictly managed; it is the main measure by which national schools are allocated teaching, capital and other resources.

To qualify for resources, schools must deliver the national curriculum and be recognised national schools. The national school curriculum was revised in 1998 and is rooted in a child-centred approach, i.e. the child's stage of personal, intellectual and emotional development determines the delivery of the curriculum and syllabi (See Chapters Four and Five). However, there is a mismatch between the philosophy underlying the curriculum and the Department's method for allocating resources. With the exception of schemes like the Designated Disadvantage scheme, referred to above, resources are generally allocated without reference to local knowledge or context. Diocesan Bishops provide teachers with support to deliver the Religious Education in each diocese but there are no other locally or regionally-based structures that gather information about a school's specific needs. The consequences are that BOMs are acutely aware that even a relatively small fall in enrolment can literally mean the loss of a full-time teacher or other essential resource.

Just before the case, Mansfield's BOM received a letter from the Department stating that because the school's average class size, as of September 1st of the previous year, was twenty seven and a half, Mansfield had lost a 'floating' teacher. The floating teacher provided support to the class teachers, to the library system and as a teaching resource. This innovation was considered to be 'good educational practice'.

Enrolment figures and growth statistics for the ET sector were not available at the time of the research but during the data collection period, there were constant claims by parents and teachers that new ET schools were heavily oversubscribed.[122] The other indicator of demand was the large number of ET start-up groups in operation at the time of the research – between thirty and forty groups of parents around the country were active in trying to establish their own school.

Mansfield's strategy is typical of most ET schools, to be a good ET school and to deliver excellence in child-centred education. Thus, schools that endeavour to be 'good' schools are always struggling with the tensions of enrolment versus resources.

6.3.2. Case One – Mansfield ETNS.

The events recounted in this case took place over three months but are analysed in the context of research that lasted over a year and involved all Mansfield's management and staff groups. The case concerns a number of parents who wanted their children to attend an ET school but found they could not definitively secure school places for the following September. This was because the pre-enrolment lists of other ET and/or desirable national schools were oversubscribed. As a result, some of the parents formed a 'start-up' group to establish a new ET school. This group would have been able to avail of ET Ltds' support service to start-up groups.

Start-up groups use a variety of communication tools (leaflets, public notice boards, public meetings) to inform families that a new ET school would be opening in their area. Communication is a critical component of the process because the Department of Education and Science will not give recognition or funding to a new school until it has a verifiable pre-enrolment list. At the time of the research, a

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[122] In 2005, for every child leaving an ET school to enter a secondary school, 2.49 children were starting in Junior Infants.

minimum of seventeen Junior Infants had to be pre-enrolled in order for a school to open.

In an effort to draw on practical help and support, the start-up group made contact with the only other ET school in the area, Mansfield ETNS. Through a friend, a member of the start-up group contacted a member of Deckard in the hope that they would share information with interested families and help them open the new school. The start-up group had received permission from the Department of Education and Science to open a temporary school at a community hall three miles away from Mansfield. ET operates a website which includes news about start-up groups and developments in the sector. It also operates a range of other digital and paper-based newsletters and memos to schools. The information about the start-up group was publicly available.

The outgoing Chair of Deckard *had* set a precedent by offering support to other start-up groups. At one of Deckard's meetings, the members were informed that the start-up group had made contact and was seeking support and information. A member suggested that someone from Deckard should attend the start-up group's next meeting and find out what they were doing. This was discussed in the context of *'supporting the growth of another school in the sector'* and the possibility of *'fundraising for two schools'*. But it was also immediately contentious because, as one member quickly pointed out, *'both schools are drawing from the same demand'*.

This discussion took up only a few minutes. Individual members appeared to be dealing with conflicting values – the desire to support the new school and the worry about what it would mean for Mansfield's enrolment. There was a palpable increase in tension amongst the group. The group agreed that one member would continue discussions with the start-up group '*at a distance'*. Two of Deckard's members subsequently agreed to attend the start-up group's next fundraising event or meeting '*…but purely on {sic} a personal capacity and {their presence at the event} should not be interpreted as a formal representative of this school'*.

Deckard's next meeting was three weeks later. The members who had attended the start-up group meeting, reported that a request had been made to circulate a letter about the new school to the families on Mansfield's pre-enrolment list. The start-up group had presented this strategy as being in the interests of both schools, i.e. to support the expansion of the ET sector and to address the issues of high demand for places in ET schools, and long-waiting lists. One of

the members who attended the start-up group's meeting voiced this argument on behalf of the start-up group.

At the third meeting, Deckard agreed to draft a letter and circulate it to families on Mansfield's pre-enrolment list. But this was expressed as being '*...subject to not endangering our own enrolment'*. While some individual members of Deckard were vocally supportive of the expansion of the sector, another member pointed out that '*our primary responsibility... is to our own school.'* Deckard agreed to take the letter to the next BOM meeting to seek approval to circulate it with the proviso that it should not *'affect our enrolment'* and that it should *'...go to the {pre-enrolment} list down to a certain point and for this year only'*.

Illustrating the ambiguity about the role and function of the patron, the members of Deckard behaved as if they were under the impression, that, in order to send a letter to the families on Mansfield's pre-enrolment list, they required BOM approval. The BOM has responsibility for administering the lists, managing the admission policy, administration of pre-enrolment requests and the offer of places. However, there is no rule, per se, that requires the patron to seek the BOM's approval to send a letter to families on the school's pre-enrolment list.

The matter was discussed at Mansfield's BOM meeting ten days later.[123] The liaison person (the member common to both Deckard and Mansfield's BOM) led the discussion. There was an immediate and significant increase in tension.

He reported that the start-up group had been given permission[124] by the Department of Education and Science to use a nearby community hall as a temporary school site. He also reported that Deckard had drafted and approved a letter of information for circulation to the families on Mansfield's pre-enrolment list. However, he cautioned that Deckard's desire to circulate the letter was subject to its effect on Mansfield's enrolment.

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[123] In some schools, management meetings (that concern BOM, staff and Patron groups) are held close together to aid coordination and decision making

[124] To qualify for 'temporary' school status (an arbitrary mechanism with no clear timeframe or consequences) under the Department of Education and Science, a National school has to have a legitimate patron (a company limited by guarantee or the head of a Religious Diocese), at least seventeen junior infants pre-enrolled and an appropriate premises.

The principal said, '*the school could not send a letter to the full list {of families on the pre-enrolment list} – there is a miscommunication somewhere.*' The draft letter was read out at the BOM meeting. It simply informed families that a second ET school was opening in the area. On foot of the principal's recommendation and after very little discussion, the BOM agreed that the letter would be sent only to those families *'who definitely don't have a chance of a place'*, i.e. they would send the letter only to families whose names were so far down the list that they were highly unlikely to be offered a junior infant place in Mansfield.

It was pointed out by the teacher representative that '*there are very committed parents on the current list who will keep children back a year and wait for a place in {Mansfield}'*, but the point was not developed by the other members of the BOM. It was quickly agreed that the letter could go to the families on the list *'who do not have a hope of a place.'* Again, the teacher representative said, *'all the parents with need of a place should be informed'*. Again, there was no development of this point. The portion of the BOM meeting given to this issue was very short – no more than a few tense minutes. The discussion ended with the acceptance of the principal's proposal that the letter of information would only be sent to those families whose children would '*definitely not'* be offered a place in Mansfield the following September. In effect, this meant that a relatively small number of families who wished to send their children to an ET school would receive information about the new school from Mansfield's patron and BOM.

As it turned out the letter was never sent because very soon after the decision was made, the start-up group decided not to open the school in the nearby community hall after finding a much more suitable premises five miles away in an area regarded as outside Mansfield's catchment area. The question being addressed in this analysis is, why did both Mansfield's management groups take a decision to restrict information from the start-up group given that,

- ET was established for families just like those of the start-up group;
- School-to-school support was the central strategy through which schools could open and the sector could grow;
- ET's values and the central tenet of democratic involvement by parents in the development and practice of schools and the growth of the sector;

- The growth strategy in operation across the sector and within ET Ltd. at the time.

6.3.3. Interpreting the case through Socio-technical Systems Analysis (STSA).

The purpose of this section is to analyse the facts and the details of the case through the STSA. As reviewed and rehearsed in Chapter Three, STSA concepts are used to analyse the primary tasks of the management groups, each group's boundaries, the related task-sentient systems and each group's basic assumptions. The purpose is to identify indicators that may reveal explanations about the strategic behaviours and values involved.

6.2.3.1. An analysis of the facts of the case.

At the BOM meeting where the decision was taken, the teacher representative was the only member to voice the view that all families with an interest in the matter should have access to the information about the new start-up school. Her view was that they ought to receive the information, arguing that there was no evidence to support a fear that circulating the information would be a danger to Mansfield's own intake, to recall her words, *'there are very committed parents on the current list who will keep children back a year and wait for a place in {Mansfield}'.*

It was as if she was making explicit an unspoken, tacit fear that the new school was a threat to Mansfield. How would this threat manifest itself and what was it that caused the teacher to name the most plausible source of threat?

Some families might decide to place their child's name on the new school's pre-enrolment list as a precaution, i.e. in case they were not offered a place in Mansfield. As identified above, anecdotal information suggests that it may be common practice for families to place their children's names on multiple pre-enrolment lists and to accept multiple places. Pre-enrolment lists of schools are treated as confidential and were not examined for this case study. At the time of the study, there were no other sources of information as to the extent of overlap on pre-enrolment lists. Mansfield had recently put together a sub-committee of the BOM and Deckard to review its enrolment policy. This was in response to the Education Act 1998 and to iron out some practical details such as managing requests by families to defer a place to the following year. This sub-committee produced its first draft policy for circulation shortly after the case period concluded.

The other possibility was that some families might decide not to take up the offer of a place in Mansfield, having decided, for whatever reason (e.g. location) to choose another school.

The teacher's preparedness to make the threat explicit, combined with the tension at the meeting implied that there was some insecurity about the school's ability to retain its pre-enrolment list. Further, the discussion about limiting the distribution of the letter only to those families '*who definitely don't have a chance of a place'* implied that, despite being oversubscribed, there was something tenuous about Mansfield's future enrolment. However, the source of this insecurity and its interpretation was unclear. There was no discussion about the BOM's confidence in its pre-enrolment list, the BOM's perception of family confidence in Mansfield or the appropriate size of the pre-enrolment list, i.e. there was no analysis of the actual pre-enrolment lists and the extent of over-subscription, the pattern of previous pre-enrolment lists relative to the take-up of offers of a place, or the numbers of families on previous pre-enrolment lists who had chosen another school. Although the personal data is confidential, the quantitative data is not confidential to the BOM or to the patron. Both had the legal right to examine Mansfield's pre-enrolment lists but this data was not examined nor was it asked about.

The enrolment of the four national schools in the immediate locale was stable and there was no indication that Mansfield itself was facing a reduced enrolment. In fact, Mansfield's pre-enrolment list was understood to be over-subscribed throughout the period of the research.

There was no discussion about how a nearby ET school would impact on enrolments, although it was implied. Specific statistical data was not available at the time. But there was anecdotal knowledge about local enrolment patterns in the neighbourhood and about other ET schools. In 2005, after the research period, ET data showed that the new schools were doubling in size on an annual basis, i.e. for every child leaving an ET school to enter a secondary school, 2.49 children were starting in Junior Infants (Educate Together, 2005). However, this growth was happening in the newly established schools, not in the well-established schools that had reached maximum intake across all year groups. New ET schools usually start with one or two classes of junior and senior infants. In subsequent years, they build this growth until all the year groups are filled, i.e. they expand rapidly for about six years and then the growth stops or slows down dramatically.

Increasingly, ET schools are moving away from the single class format as some schools have agreed to develop on the basis of scale. To some extent the Department of Education has forced this change by providing custom-built national schools based on a double class format.[125]

This means that if an ET school is established in a maturing area – like Mansfield - and the numbers of young families decline, the school has to attract pupils from outside the immediate area in the long-term to maintain minimum teaching resources. However, Mansfield is situated close to a rapidly expanding Gael Scoil and another national school with a good 'academic' reputation. Both schools successfully attract pupils from outside the area. Mansfield itself was thought to have a good 'academic' reputation, in addition to its multi-denominational enrolment policy.

Mansfield also had designated disadvantaged status at that time. While still vulnerable to the tension between school enrolment and resources, this special status meant that Mansfield *had* extra resources because it was able to satisfy the Department of Education and Science that a certain percentage of the children were relatively disadvantaged and required extra teaching resources.

Finally, there was no evidence that Mansfield had any problems above and beyond routine National school issues that might reduce enrolment numbers. If anything, Mansfield was very highly regarded both within ET and in general education circles. Over the course of four years of research for this study, Mansfield and its principal were regularly singled out as being particularly stable, effective and a good example of an ET school with regard to its child-centred policies and teaching resources.

Over the course of the case, it became clear that both the parent-members of the management groups and the teachers were concerned about the continued supply and growth of funds to meet the ambitions of the school. But none of these concerns were made explicit at the meetings. The teacher representative on the BOM was the *only* individual to argue the ET values case. It is also possible that the principal struggled with this tension, without making it explicit at the BOM meetings.

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[125] Although this figure is small it is double the average size of Ireland's National schools (2006) at approximately 135 enrolments.

However, this in itself would not explain Deckard's behaviour in choosing to delimit a decision it could have made outright.

So, did Mansfield's BOM and Deckard respond to a competitive threat? The competitive context described above was real enough but, if the facts and realities of the competitive threat were 'real' to the members, then it is *rational* to presume that they would have examined at least some of the facts. But this did not happen. The most significant testament to this is how little time this issue took up – the issue concerned a total of five group meetings which each ran for between one and a half and two and a half hours. Yet, this highly strategic event took up no more than two or three minutes of discussion at each meeting. This, in spite of the fact that, over the period of the research, it was common enough for management groups in Mansfield (and the other schools involved in the research) to spend hours, literally, discussing relatively small issues. For example, whether the list of school members and their membership status should be hand-written on a piece of paper or typed into a computer database. That is not to diminish the significance of this issue for the school. It is more about forcing the question, why a group would spend so much time on a relatively small issue and so little time dealing with a matter that was strategically significant to the school's future.

Finally, there is nothing in the Rules of National Schools, the CPSMA Handbook or the Education Act 1998 that explains the decision to restrict information from certain families. Also, there was nothing in the actions of the start-up group that suggested a break with existing rules or protocols. In the interest of impartiality in the enrolment of pupils, Rule 65 (4) of the Rules for National Schools disallows a BOM to canvas, give inducements or bring pressure to bear on families to move a child from one school to another. However, the essence of the rule is to prevent a school from altering its enrolment numbers and hence its payment of State grants. The rulebook states that Rule 65 is not intended '*to interfere with the attendance of children, subject to the rules at a particular school on educational grounds or owing to the suitability of its position'* (1965; 36*)*.

In sum, the facts of the case do not provide a rational explanation for the BOM or Deckard's behaviour or the final decision that was made.

6.2.3.2. Mansfield's primary tasks.

As reviewed in Chapter Three, the concept of the primary task can be

understood at three levels; the normative primary task – what task the groups ought to have been carrying out; the existential primary task – what task the groups' believed they were carrying out and, the phenomenal primary task – the task the groups were actually carrying out. This is an important analytical component because frequently groups may not be aware which task they are actually carrying out (Miller, 1993; 17). It helps reveal the way values inform processes and decision-making because, if there is a difference between what a group 'should' be doing, what its members believe it is doing and what they are actually doing, then that may reveal a difference between the normative, existential and phenomenal meanings attached to values.

The analysis offered below is based on the facts of the Case as they have been presented above.

Table Two; Analysis of the primary tasks of Mansfield's BOM and patron, Deckard, based on the events of Case One

Primary Task	Normative	Existential	Phenomenal
Deckard	To hold in trust, and protect and promote Mansfield's values in accordance with ET values.	To hold in trust and protect and promote Mansfield's values in accordance with ET values and to fundraise for Mansfield's BOM.	To fundraise for Mansfield's BOM. To avoid decisions that will expose the ambiguity in the patron's normative role.
Mansfield's BOM	To manage Mansfield on a day-to-day on a basis consistent with ET values, and in a manner consistent with the existing national school structure and State expectations.	To manage Mansfield on a day-to-day a basis consistent with ET values and, to ensure that the resources of the school are maintained.	To manage Mansfield on a day-to-day basis and ensure that the resources of the school are maintained.

Deckard's normative task involves a number of legal functions, such as appointment of the BOM but these items did not arise during the case period. In relation to the case, there was considerable difference between what Deckard should have been doing and what it was actually doing or was able to do. This is illustrated by individual members of Deckard who talked as if they wanted to

work in accordance with ET values but collectively behaved as if they couldn't. This theme drives the analysis below. Some of Deckard's members said that the group was not working on its normative task and expressed individual frustrations. But the group as a whole did not act on this awareness. Observation over the case period, revealed that the group was not attending to its normative task at all. Paradoxically, when Deckard was offered an opportunity to take up its normative role - using its position and expertise to support the growth of another ET school - it appeared to be incapable of doing so. First, the group chose to create a split between its role as a group of parents and its professional interest in the school, thereby denying the members' own empathetic feelings for the parents struggling to set up a new school. When the group made a decision to share the information with the families on the pre-enrolment list, the decision was subject to the approval of the BOM and attached to a caveat that the letter must not affect enrolments in Mansfield.

The case highlights the difference between normative, existential and phenomenal tasks. During the BOM meeting, the teacher clearly said the information about the start-up school should not have been restricted. This was an indicator that individual members talked as if they wanted to behave strategically, in terms of ET values, but collectively behaved as if they couldn't.

The BOM members agreed with the principal that the letter could not be sent to all the families on the pre-enrolment list. There was no discussion as to why. When the teacher identified that there was no basis to the perceived threat, the BOM limited the consequences of the letter by agreeing to send the letter only to those families who had no chance of being offered a place in Mansfield. The decision was inconsistent with ET values but the group made it anyway. On the basis of the case as it has been presented so far, the BOM's phenomenal task can be understood as preserving the schools' resources. Although, given that the BOM made no effort to examine the actual implications of the start-up group on its enrolment, this is an unsatisfactory explanation. An analysis of the differences between the normative, phenomenal and existential tasks seem to relate to the BOM's ability to act strategically in accordance with ET's values. Deeper analysis is required to unearth what the BOM's phenomenal task really was.

6.2.3.3. The groups' boundaries, task and sentient systems.

First, Deckard appeared increasingly isolated from the wider parent body. There were frequent references to the fact that fewer and fewer parents were actively involved in running/assisting the school. Second, the lack of a professional teacher within Deckard's membership meant that its make up as a management group was unique in the school. The presence of teachers on the patron body would be illegal.[126] In contrast, the BOM represented the full spectrum of Mansfield's roles: educators, parents, managers and the wider environment. Neither the Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) or the Staff group were unique groups within the school – the PTA had a teacher member and a number of teaching staff were also parents of children attending Mansfield or other ET schools. Third and most importantly, Deckard had no clear criterion for its performance or success. The group's efforts at fundraising were always appreciated by the other groups and described in terms of very hard work but Deckard's members continuously expressed their own disappointment and that their efforts were not adequately appreciated by the BOM. This suggests that the reason Deckard was unable to pursue its normative task was because its boundary function was sealed – effectively impermeable in terms of a regular and appropriate exchange of information with the BOM about Deckard's accountability, its responsibilities and its performance. For instance, there was even confusion about Deckard's role in attending to its fundraising task. The BOM technically had to approve all fundraising proposals but it was never clear why this was. Each new fundraising idea was developed and progressed as if the group had never done any fundraising work before. Although Deckard's individual members frequently protested their desire to attend to values and policy (i.e. their normative primary task) the group behaved again and again as if they could not make progress.

As a point of contrast, denominational patrons who face exactly the same competitive and resource environment do not have to manage such ambiguity because the schools operate a denominationally managed structure, a denominationally defined enrolment policy and denominational religious education programme. This is fully articulated in the opening pages of the CPSMA Handbook (2004; 6-7).

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126 This applies to all ET patrons who operate with limited company status - because it would not be good practice to have an employee (i.e. a teacher of the school) in the role of Director of the school's patron body

When Deckard was faced with an external threat, the members had no factual information about the competitive implications, no information about how the threat would be perceived or managed by the BOM, no strong links with the general parent body, with other patron groups or with the teaching staff, and no information or experience about how to enact its role as promoter and trustee of ET values.

Mansfield's BOM boundary was regulated and made permeable by a number of factors. First, Mansfield's BOM reflected all the key roles and responsibilities of principal, teacher, parent, and patron through Deckard's liaison member – i.e. unlike Deckard, the BOM represented all the educational, management and parental contributions that were necessary for Mansfield to achieve its primary task, making the BOM central to the running of the school and to the regulation of all the school's subgroups. The respective members of the BOM had considerable support in their roles – from Mansfield's teaching staff, the national teaching unions, from the PTA and from the BOMs of other schools. The principal was also a member of the Irish Primary Principals' Network and was directly supporting the work of the ET national office on various projects. Work groups are said to be healthy and will survive if their boundaries are managed and regulated with sufficient balance in terms of insulation and permeability (Miller, 1993: 11).

The second regulatory factor was the CPSMA guidelines. For example, Mansfield's BOM used the agenda template for its meetings as well as templates for procedures about many matters, including the recruitment of staff (see CPSMA Handbook, 2004).

6.2.3.4. Mansfield's basic assumptions.

The logic of the basic assumption concept is that individuals have a choice to either work with the actual reality of the group/situation or regress into other modes of behaviour. Regressing into other modes of behaviour suggests that the group is unwilling to face the work involved in developing, in growth and in change. In other words, the group would rather stay in the culture in which it is comfortable than engage with the conflicts of its role. The concept is extremely revealing if a group shows tangible indicators that are consistent with maladaptive behaviour.

Deckard's members talked as if they were capable of understanding their normative role but behaved as if they were incapable of doing the work involved. Yet, a number of individual members indicated a desire to actively represent

Mansfield's values in the context of ET. The BOM's individual teacher member articulated thecontradiction between the decision and ET's values, but the BOM, as a whole, behaved as if there was no contradiction.

Both groups showed a high tolerance for and preparedness to live with the ambiguities that are illustrated in this case. The key indicator of high tolerance was silence in the face of questions that identified inherent conflicts behind the decision. That is not to suggest that high tolerance meant low anxiety. In fact, in the group context, silence was nearly always accompanied by a palpable sense of tension and anxiety.

6.3.4. Strategic implications for Mansfield ETNS

The analysis indicates that ET values did not influence the strategic decision. Why did this happen?

The analysis provides a critical insight into the BOM's phenomenal task. First, the BOM appeared to hold responsibility for containing and managing the boundary between the parents and the professional teaching staff. This was for three reasons; To regulate and maintain the conflicting duality of parent members in splitting their parental interests from their professional role in the school; to protect the staff boundary from undue or inappropriate parental influence and to ensure both staff and parents that Mansfield's professional resources are protected for the future.

Second, the BOM also appeared to hold responsibility for managing the staff's values conflict – the desire to maintain their professional boundary from the parents against the conflicting desire to compensate parents for taking over the parent role as primary educator whilst acting in *loco-parentis*. By attending PTA meetings and indicating to the parent body their appreciation of the parental effort and the level of parental involvement, the teaching staff found ways to manage the anxiety related to this conflict. However, this may be accentuated by the fact that the teaching staff, in this case, chose to work in an ET school rooted in the democratic involvement of parents.

Third, the BOM appeared to be holding the responsibility for containing and the anxiety that resulted from the values conflict of parent-members of management groups; the desire to behave according to ET values, and, at the same time, support the principal and teaching staff to secure the future availability of professional

teaching resources of the school so that *their* child could avail of the school's resources.

Fourth, Deckard's inability to attend to what was important revealed that its own values conflict was not being approproiately managed – in the face of an external threat, the members made explicit their need to split their parental interest from their professional school role with no apparent benefit or strategic affect. The assumption is that the splitting was to reduce feelings of anxiety – in doing so, the group made an apparent threat explicit but did not have to examine what it meant. In the end Deckard handed the decision over to the BOM.

This analysis suggests that the decision resulted from the pivotal role of the BOM; In containing or perhaps, regulating, the effects of anxiety attached to conflicts about values and structures. The BOM responded to the start-up group's request as if it was a threat, and, in doing so, diluted artificial concerns about future enrolments, regulated levels of parental and teacher anxiety and successfully deflected attention away from the source of conflict. The critical point is that the BOM appeared to executed its role in this case, in the interests of containing and/or regulating conflict, rather than its adherence to ET values.

The next two cases build on this theme.

6.4. Case Two: Ford ETNS - a crisis of control for a newly established school

6.4.1. The context,

6.4.1.1. The sectoral context at the time of the case

Ford ETNS was one of the first schools to open under the centralised patronage of ET Ltd. This became possible at the start of the twenty-first century as a consequence of the Education Act (1998). The Act made redundant statutory recognition of the denominational character of National schools (*Rules for National School,* 1965; 8). The Education Act did not differentiate between denominational and other types of patrons,

> *'...the patron of a recognised school shall be the person*[127] *who requested recognition of the school of a nominee of such person*

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[127] "Person" includes a body of persons and "school" includes a proposed school (Section 8.7. Education Act 1998).

and the name of that person shall be entered in the register' *(*Section 8.2.*).*

As explained at the start of Chapter Six, the Education Act was very signficant for ET. It provided an opportunity to plan for strategic growth. The sector was no longer dependent on mimicking the denominational patron structure. Within six years of the Education Act, a growth strategy was developed, the national coordinating organisation was restructured with a board of directors, and private funding was sourced. By the end of the research period the sector had almost doubled in size.

The events of this case took place during a time when ET Ltd, and its staff, was learning how to be a patron. Up to this point all ET schools had local patron bodies constituted from a company limited by guarantee with an executive elected from the parent body (See Case One and Three). In the new structure, the loss of direct local patronage was a loss of local knowledge for ET. As a result it explored various structures that would bridge this gap. In 2002, ET's AGM passed the following motion;

> *'That the patronage function for schools opened under Educate Together patronage shall be exercised by the officers of Educate Together who will report in general terms to the National Executive on progress/matters arising in such member schools;;*

and

> *'That schools opened under Educate Together patronage shall be encouraged to set up their own patron companies within 3 years of {the school} opening;*

or

> *'To set up local associations which will have delegated to them (by The National Executive) the patron responsibilities of Educate Together';*

or

> *'To set up local associations which will advise Educate Together in respect of local patron issues'.*

The third option is the structure that most closely resembles the arrangement used with Ford ETNS and reflected in this Case.

6.4.1.2. The research context

I joined the BOM of Ford eight months after beginning the research and remained in that position for over two years. My entire experience and involvement with Ford ETNS is relevant to the case below.

My joining the BOM occurred because ET Ltd was exploring and examining the role of the centralised patron through a training group of volunteer patron nominees. I joined the group and attended the meetings as a researcher and as a potential volunteer. The purpose of the training was to position experienced volunteers onto boards of new schools operating within the new, patronage structure. When a position became vacant on Ford's BOM, I was approached by ET as a potential volunteer, patron-representative.

6.4.1.3. The local context – Ford ETNS's BOM and its local patron association - Weaver

This case is about the group of people who established Ford ETNS and their relationships with Ford's BOM. Like all ET schools, Ford ETNS was established through the efforts of a group of local parents who wanted to access the educational opportunity afforded by ET's values. This group worked tirelessly to get the school open within one year. Weaver was constituted as a local association for people who were interested in setting up an ET school. It provided a readymade platform for the third patron option above. In the course of the year, Weaver found suitable premises, recruited a principal and staff. Weaver also advised ET Ltd (who had to nominate two BOM members and appoint the BOM as a whole) on constituting a BOM. At the time of the case, all of Weaver's members were parents of children attending Ford ETNS.

When the case work began, Ford's BOM had been constituted a short time – just a few months. Over the course of the research, three BOM members resigned and three new members came on board (See research context above). The make up of Ford's BOM was slightly different from Mansfield. There were fewer parent-members. Neither of the two teacher representatives had children attending an ET school. A non-parent member was invited onto the BOM because of his experience working with other National schools. All the other members, bar the

principal, were parents of children attending Ford. A number of the BOM members had been active throughout the founding phase and were very familiar with circumstances and nature of Weaver's work.

Ford ETNS was situated on the edge of a large city and close to a medium sized town. The townland was undergoing rapid and extraordinary change. The population was expanding rapidly as the area became a satellite town serving a major population centre. This was consistent with many such areas in Ireland during a period of economic growth that began in the early 1990s.

6.4.2. Case Two – Ford ETNS

The case research began at a crucial point for the members of Weaver. The school had been open about six months and Weaver continued its routine of monthly meetings and focussed its efforts on routine fundraising activities, issues of policy and development that concerned ET values and plans for the school's future. Effectively, it was operating like a traditional ET patron.

However, Weaver's position as a local association rather than legal patron meant that ET Ltd. retained authority as patron of Ford. In theory, this meant that ET could veto Weaver's decisions and/or prevent it from acting.

The case begins at a point when the discrepancy between how Weavers' members understood their purpose and role, and what they were actually able to do, was becoming more and more apparent to everyone in the school. But, there was no obvious resolution. Technically, Weaver was in a flexible position in which it could reinvent itself, its objectives and its strategy. Because Weaver could influence local people and future enrolments it was also very important to Ford's BOM, future enrolments and the school's profile locally.

The members of Weaver were deeply concerned about, *and* wanted to influence, Ford's values and ethos. The members wanted their interpretation of ET's values to be reflected in Ford's day-to- day management and teaching practices.

6.4.2.1. A strategic opportunity

During the period of the research ET's CEO or national coordinator staff member attended Weaver's meetings in their role as Ford's patron and to provide support and advice. At the first of Weaver's meetings, in terms of this case, ET's

CEO encouraged Weaver to think about extending its patronage role to the local area,

> *'...to promote concepts of ET in this entire area – they extend beyond the single school. Patronage can be extended to new schools or by combining with another association. In the long term, this area will need six {ET} primary schools'*[128].

Based on the patterns of discussion in Weavers' meetings, the members (see direct quotes below) understood their role in Ford as supporting and enacting values and influencing the philosophy of education and the interpretation of ethical issues within the curriculum. This interpretation is almost identical to the patron in Case One. But Weaver's members were also frustrated that they were not able to do this work;

> *'...the guidelines {for patrons published by ET} and what we have actually turned into are two very different things. I thought that we would be concerned with education and ethos"*

and,

> *'...this is a new school, a new system and I can be involved...a year later and it is not happening".*

After the CEO spoke, a member of Weaver asked how it could influence policy at a national level. The CEO told the group that they had no vote at the ET AGM because they were not constituted as Ford's patron. He told the members that they were welcome to attend the AGM once company business had finished. The silence that followed this information suggested that most of the group were not aware of this technicality. The information did prompt one member to ask what the role of Weaver actually was.

One of Weaver's members asked how it was possible that the group could manage its values development work if it spent all its time fundraising. Another member asked if it was even Weaver's role to fundraise. ET's CEO responded that the fundraising task is most concentrated during the start-up phase when a lot of money is needed to get the school established. It was pointed out by another member that, while the BOM was not allowed legally, to fundraise the BOM had '*to*

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[128] Paul Rowe, CEO of ET Ltd attending the first Weaver meeting that I attended.

pass all fundraising ideas'. A member expressed concern about the quality of relationship between Weaver and the BOM and the group discussed problems of boundaries and communication. Some of the members who had been involved in the start-up group were keen to maintain what they called, an'*informal style'*.

The unusual sectoral context at that time provided Weaver with an opportunity to embrace the strategy proposed by the CEO, which became clearer at the second meeting (see below).

6.4.2.2. How Weavers' role was interpreted by the BOM

The level of ambiguity expressed by the individual members of Weaver was not surprising. The BOM behaved as if Weaver was the actual patron and routinely passed patron-type issues to Weaver. Weaver's individual members referred to their own group as the school patron on numerous occasions.

At the second of Weaver's meetings, and in the presence of ET's national coordinator, there was a discussion with Ford's principal - who had been invited as a guest - about a number of practical issues. As was typical in newly established ET schools, the founding phase of intensive parent involvement was changing The members of the BOM were beginning to understand that it was fully and wholly accountable to the Department and to ET Ltd for the running and management of Ford. In a gentle way, the principal tried to explain that Weaver needed to hand over a number of tasks to the professional staff and the BOM.

The principal also tried to get across the idea that planning for the long term and for a new/permanent school building was now in her/the BOM's remit. The Principal suggested that the emphasis on fundraising and pressure on parents to give money had to be better managed. She said, *'the pressure to fundraise did not come from the BOM...too much energy is going into fundraising...we don't need the money but it is brilliant...but there is not enough emphasis on policy development'*.

The principal was implying that Weaver could use its energies by developing value-related policies. The principal then proposed that Weaver consider separating its *'patron'* and *'school-support'* functions. She argued that if Weaver took on too many school related support functions, *'it gets complicated'*. ET's national coordinator clarified that there was no easy way to deal with this, that it was *'always difficult in drawing lines of delineation because of extensive parent involvement in the day to day {running of the school}'*. She proposed that Ford should

either have a representative patron body or a parents' association, but not both. She stressed the importance of clear boundaries, *'but at its best'*, the patron body (i.e. Weaver) should be *'fairly removed from the school and not involved in day-to-day running'*. She stressed that the prospects for parent involvement in values and ethos were good. But, she placed emphasis on the fact that, *'there are many aspects of involvement in curriculum support but sensitivity is needed in terms of professional line of the {teaching} staff'*. She proposed that Weaver recommend to the parent body of Ford that there needed to be clear *'differentiation between patron roles and parent support'*. She suggested that the patron's roles could include, *'core curriculum {ethical and values influence}, advising ET on patron nominees, providing local knowledge about {building} sites'*.

The members were silent and did not respond in any depth. There was also considerable tension in the room as the realities of this strategy began to sink in.

This proposal was consistent with the strategy previously proposed by ET's CEO. It required that the members re-imagine their contribution to Ford and ET beyond the immediate needs of Ford. For example, by encouraging other parents living in the wider area to set up another ET school.

Later in the same meeting, the principal stressed *'that not enough work was being done on developing policy and resource material'* {for teachers to use in class}. He said the *'staff were concerned with teaching core values, getting across ideas about religious instruction – but were very reliant on each other'*.

The principal stressed that there was urgency to this issue. She said that the parent body had an apparent expectation that Ford was 'different'[129] from other national schools because it was an ET school. Based on various meetings, Weaver's members seemed to have a vague understanding that this would be represented

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[129] Steer's research on why parents choose an ET school is ambivalent. Over 80% describe their religious background as Roman Catholic. A majority of parents surveyed chose an ET school because of the multi-denominational enrolment system but, through the use of different methodologies, Steer found that the term 'multi-denominational' was actually used to describe the qualities that the parents were seeking in a multi-denominational school – the specific religious education programme used in ET schools was not important to parents, i.e. the term multi-denominational had many different meanings and interpretations. Parents said that what was important was the 'child-centred education' and that their children would be 'happy'. The inference is that ET schools can be differentiated (from other National schools) in their ability to deliver a child-centred education. But the national curriculum *is* described as child-centred and is standardised across the entire National school system. At the time of writing no research had been undertaken to establish what this might mean (Steer, Unpublished MA Thesis)

through a child-centred philosophy and an ethical education programme. At this stage Ford had not developed its own programme but the teachers were very keen to get started.

By the end of the meeting, and after minimal discussion about the problems and solutions of separating, Weaver's members made a decision, in principle, to separate the functions – to define a set of activities appropriate to a patron representative and another set appropriate to parental support. This would require Weaver to become redundant and for two autonomous groups to be established.

Weaver's members then decided to set up a sub-committee to examine these strategic options. It was decided that the sub-committee would have representation from Weaver, the staff and the parent body. Later in the meeting, one member put himself forward as the Weaver *'rep'*.

After these decisions were made, and within only one or two minutes, the group, in a relaxed way, began to plan, in detail, its fundraising events for the following year. They also talked through their success at raising money for Ford, apparently quite unconscious of the contradictions and ironies that were suddenly presented.

Although the group verbally agreed to the proposal and to forming a sub-committee, the sub-committee never met and the ambiguities were not resolved until the situation moved to crisis. Weaver never took up the mantle to act as a patron representative and a local ET association, to spread the ET message in the area and encourage other parents to set up a start-up group. In fact, throughout the period of the research, Weaver never extended its remit beyond Ford.

Observation revealed that Weaver's members did not understand or did not wish to understand the differentiation between the roles of BOM, patron and the proposed local remit. Neither did they seem able to address the ambiguities. Generally, if a member did ask a question or bring up a related issue, the rest of the group remained silent. As with Case One, this gave the impression that the members were able to tolerate a difference between what the group was meant to be doing, what they had agreed to do and what they were actually doing.

It is useful at this point to reflect on Weaver from the BOM's perspective.

6.4.2.3. How did Ford's BOM respond?

Members of the BOM had multiple concerns about Weaver's methods and assumptions. These included:

- The sign-off procedure that was used for Ford's school newsletter that was within the remit of Weaver. A BOM member was concerned that it would not be used '... to make any political statements';
- Weavers' use of handwritten envelopes instead of mail-merge/software produced envelopes, the extent and methods of Weaver's fundraising activities;
- The parent body receiving too many requests for money. One member of the BOM described being 'hassled' by a member of Weaver to get involved in a fundraising event;
- That all school funds should be held within or accounted for in the BOM bank account. Weaver's members disagreed and felt that its own bank account should be used and that it should retain funds for capital projects that it had raised;
- Who should sign-off on fundraising events – and, in fact, the whole raison d'etre for fundraising was unclear. The BOM described Weaver's effort at fundraising as 'brilliant' but unnecessary. At the same time, a BOM member identified the contradiction in this,

'I remember that we were concerned about needing money; we sent that message across to everyone'.

But the members of the BOM behaved *as if* the solutions to these problems lay elsewhere. The members did not propose methods or processes to resolve them. In fact, the BOM had produced a discussion document to clarify the distinctions between the roles of the BOM and Weaver. The content in terms of Weavers' duties was unclear and contradictory;

'...to produce policy in relation to the school's development...oversee the maintenance of "Educate Together" ethos in Ford ETNS...develop the core curriculum in consultation with the whole school community... fundraise on behalf of the school...assist with the planning process involved in obtaining lands and premises for the school'.

However, many of these tasks were also listed as being within the remit of the BOM.

Weaver had worked hard to seed and cultivate many individual and institutional connections that worked in Ford's favour. These included other schools in the area, local councillors and county council staff, private businesses and a range of public services. Weaver had also encountered and met resistance from many organisations including the Department of Education and Science and the diocesan Catholic Bishop. During my time as a BOM member, the Bishop of the county informed the BOM by letter that none of Ford's students would be given the opportunity to be confirmed in his dioceses. The reason, he said, was that the school's multi-denominational ethos could not provide sufficient preparation. To address this kind of resistance, Weaver and the BOM had been instrumental in forming a group of Catholic parents and securing commitment from another religious order so that the children could be confirmed in the county.

6.4.2.4. Moving towards crisis

By the time Ford closed for the Summer, relations between the two groups were intractable. At the first BOM meeting of the new-year, a number of difficulties became apparent. The first was a report by the principal that Weaver '*were not functioning as a group*' and were unable to hold their AGM. This meant that Weaver were not holding formal meetings and not communicating with the BOM.

Because Weaver was no longer holding formal meetings, I had no way of gathering additional information. I did not associate with or know Weavers' members outside of school meetings. According to some BOM members, the individual members of Weaver were operating informally. The Chair (Weaver) was dealing with the principal, the Chair of the BOM and with ET but most of these discussions were held informally, i.e. not recorded. My own informal conversations with ET and with members of the BOM led me to believe that Weaver's individual members were hurt and confused.

The second difficulty was the reported undermining of the principal during the previous three terms and the summer holidays. The third difficulty was that the BOM Chair had received two written but unfounded complaints about the principal. The interpretation of this by the other members of the BOM was that these issues were a result of anxiety and insecurity emanating from Weaver's members and from

the weakness of the group's position within the school. The complaints were regarded by the BOM as *'vexatious'*, and ignored.

By the third meeting of the year - by which time I was also a member - the BOM decided to adopt the CPSMA's guidelines in all its management work and in particular to its relations with other groups and in developing policies.

The crisis then focussed around a single issue - that Weaver had never transferred its funds into the BOM school accounts. ET's CEO addressed a subsequent BOM meeting. He affirmed the BOM's unambiguous authority in relation to funds and day-to-day management, policy and strategic decisions. The CEO outlined a larger, possible role for Weaver as an advocate for the local and for the wider area. At the same meeting the Chair of the BOM said the BOM had been '*effectively undermined by Weaver's perceived role'*.

Confirmation of the BOM's legitimacy, combined with the adoption of CPSMA's practical guidelines, had the effect of clarifying its role and establishing its authority as unambiguous. There was a great sense of relief amongst the BOM members because there was now a basis for making decisions.

The crisis had been resolved and Weaver's Chair eventually transferred the funds within a few months.

The BOM made no attempt to analyse what had happened. Weaver's individual members were told that they could continue to fundraise if all funds were centralised. A whole-school facilitated meeting took place shortly after the critical BOM meeting. At that meeting, it was agreed by parents, teachers and BOM members alike that weak communications from the BOM to the parent body was a central issue.

Very shortly after that, the principal resigned for personal reasons.

A new principal took over the following September and immediately set about developing processes for articulating Ford's values and for developing religious and ethical education programmes. This work was located almost exclusively with the professional teaching staff.

Weaver gradually ceased to be a part of the BOM meetings. The BOM adopted a procedure for identifying which appropriate BOM minutes/items of news to share with the parent body. The BOM committed to sharing this information with

the parent body within one or two days of each meeting. Given where the BOM had come from, this was a significant and strategic step in stabilising the school. My presence on the BOM influenced the group's ability to do this because I was perceived as an 'expert'. In fact, my advice tended to be towards encouraging the BOM members to relax about being open – they had nothing to be afraid of, after all. The presence of the new principal was critical. Highly experienced and very comfortable with the concepts of ET, she provided members with a sense of confidence and demonstrated her leadership abilities in terms of both staff and parents.

For the first time, the BOM began to run smoothly and predictably.

The main question that is addressed through this case is: as passionate and tireless supporters of ET's values, why did Weaver's members not pursue the strategy that ET and the principal offered to them? There was no doubt that Weaver's members were passionate about Ford and about ET. Most of them had given up a whole year of their lives to the process of opening up a new school – something none of them had ever done before. Why did Weaver not pursue the opportunity to continue to contribute not only to Ford's future but to the future of similar schools in the local area? Why did Weaver not do the work involved in separating the roles, in clarifying the tasks, the boundaries and developing the communication channels? Why did Weaver appear to have such a high tolerance for ambiguity – in their role, in their methods of working, in their relations with the BOM/school – and why did the BOM take so long to attend to the crisis between the two groups – why did it not pay attention to the obvious need for clarity in the groups' roles and responsibilities?

There was no shortage of willing parents to get involved; the school was new, there were no precedents, there were no prescriptions in terms of process or content – the BOM and Weaver's members could even invent processes and design new structures. There were few limits as to what they could achieve, together and separately. There *was* a need for more formality and much more explicitness but, in theory, both groups could rely on the same values and principles that had helped them establish the school in the first place and get it up and running.

6.4.3 Interpreting the case though Socio-technical Systems Analysis (STSA)

6.3.3.1. An analysis of the facts of the case.

Three facts are significant to the analysis below. First, how little was made explicit during meetings. At the second of Weaver's meetings, when the principal and ET staff member argued in favour of the separation of the roles of patron and parents, Weaver's members said almost nothing. One member asked what the role of the parent association/group could/would be. Beyond that, the only contribution was the members' general agreement with the proposal. Given what was at stake, it is striking how little was said, that almost no questions were asked and how little was made explicit in terms of details. It was striking how much silence permeated a meeting of such importance.

The second related feature was how little work was done. Unless it related to fundraising – the dominant and routine activity - Weaver's members rarely, if ever, attended to *any* of the agreed tasks. Yet the members complained frequently that they didn't just want to be fundraisers. This was also true of the BOM but, as time passed, the BOM was able to pay attention to what was important. By the time the BOM had adopted the CPSMA guidelines, its ability to deal with its workload had dramatically improved. This included the complex task of deciding what aspects of BOM work to communicate to parents; a task that would have been unthinkable at the beginning of the year.

The third feature of the case was how little values were actually talked through. The word *'values'* was mentioned constantly, and frequently in association with the word *'ethos'*; sometimes in conjunction with *'ET'* or sometimes just as *'ours'* or conjoined with the name of the school ('Ford's values' etc.). But during the crisis period neither the members of the BOM or Weaver *ever* discussed values in terms of their meaning, their substantive content or in what ways ET values could be practiced. The benefit of values was also never made explicit. Beyond the multi-denominational enrolment system, it was not clear why values were important or what impact practicing certain values would have on the students (see also Case One and Three). Once the crisis had passed and the BOM took control of the management of the school in a more direct way, the principal and teaching staff began to develop an ethical curriculum for the children.

6.3.3.2. Ford's primary tasks.

Table Three: Analysis of the primary tasks of Ford's BOM and Weaver based on the events of Case Two.

PrimaryTask	Normative	Existential	Phenomenal
Weaver	To dissolve Weaver and create two new groups – one concerned with Ford's patron issues and one to promote the values of ET locally and in the wider area.	To fundraise and act as Ford's patron values in accordance with ET values.	Fundraising for Ford.
Ford's BOM	To manage Ford on a day to day basis; running the school as per ET values and in a manner consistent with the existing national school structure and State expectations	To manage the school on a day-to-day basis.	Finding a way to establish its authority as the school's management system and achieving this with the adoption of the CPSMA guidelines as a basis for making decisions.

Because Weaver was not Ford's legal patron, the group's normative task is identified as the strategic option proposed by ET Ltd. Weaver's apparent lack of understanding and interest in the normative task may indicate that the members did not see the relationship between ET values, per se, and the proposed strategy. Whilst they were all parents with parental interests, they were also Ford's founding entrepreneurs.

The analysis shows that Weaver and the BOM may have been competing for control of the school. Weaver was operating from the assumption that their members were best positioned to demonstrate relevant ET values. The BOM, meanwhile, was struggling with the tension between a need to be accountable to Weaver and the absolute need to be recognised as the legitimate management of the school. It was not until the crisis peaked and the school's future was threatened that the BOM focussed on CPSMA Handbook as a basis, or symbolic authority for making decisions.

6.3.3.3 The groups' boundaries, task and sentient systems

The case illustrates that the values Weaver's members were operating with were located in an entirely different context from that of the values of

running a school on a day-to-day basis. It would have been difficult for new parents of Ford ETNS to empathise with the frustrations and anxieties of opening up a new school under parental patronage in a system dominated by denominational patronage. As a result, Weaver's members did not have a sentient system through which to channel anxieties and establish a reality for functioning and operating. Once the school opened and the conflict with BOM's functions became apparent, Weaver became more and more isolated.

Weaver's individual members only had knowledge of the entrepreneurial and fundraising activities required in opening a new school under difficult conditions. The group had no understanding or experience of working with a BOM or a professional staff. They had no knowledge, for instance, of what it would mean to communicate with Ford's new families as a patron representative. The strategy that was proposed to them by ET's CEO and the principal would have required the group to split itself in a number of ways and, in order to do that, the members would have had to separate their parental role from a whole-school role. The indicator that this was untenable to Weavers' members was the fact that the group continued its routine operations in the face of extreme ambiguity and even threat of dissolvement. The group's members appeared to lose the ability to become adaptive in the face of intense ambiguity about their role and their function. Trist and Bamforth (1951) might argue that individual members of Weaver suffered emotional deprivations that would have made it very difficult for them to ask the questions that would have led to adaptive behaviours.

Over the course of the case, the BOM, on the other hand, learnt to construct appropriately permeable boundaries with the professional staff and, finally with parents. The group secured its legitimacy in the values and operational guidelines of the CPSMA Handbook.

As with Mansfield's BOM, Ford's BOM represented a diverse set of roles that reflected the school's task as a whole *and* the wider community: parents, educators, managers, other national schools and the wider community. The BOM's sentient system was only beginning to form during the period of the case, but, it was clear that, once the BOM established its legitimacy, it was going to be relatively easy to manage the tasks of the school and access necessary sentient supports. For example, holding a whole school meeting and committing to sharing information with parents on a systematic basis. The BOM also supported the principal and

teaching staff to develop an ethical core curriculum and maintained clear boundaries between parents and staff. Once there was agreement to adopt the CPSMA guidelines, the individual members did not behave as if they were experiencing conflict – the attended to what was important and did not take contradictory positions.

6.3.3.4. Ford's basic assumptions.

Bion identified certain groups as connected/unconsciously deeply to the activities associated with fighting or fleeing. Any other method of work that is not connected to this assumption *'is either non-existent or directly opposed to the good of the group'* (Bion, 1961; 64). Weaver appeared to be bewildered and incapable of comprehending the role that ET's CEO described for them as their future. The group's reliance on entrepreneurial activity feeds this insight. But as the entrepreneurial behaviours became less relevant, the group displayed strong flight or fight tendencies in response to the strategic proposal by ET's CEO and in relation to addressing the increasing number of implicit and latent conflicts. The adherence to the flight or fight assumption prevented the group from attending to what was important – dissolving the original structure and re-imagining a structure and a role in support of ET's values and strategy.

The BOM operated under two different assumptions. As the events of the case grew towards crisis the BOM first behaved as if someone or something else was going to solve its problems - pairing. When the crisis actually threatened the future of the school, the BOM officially adopted a basis for its decisions, making it dependent upon an external authority. In many ways, towards the end of the research period, the BOM began to behave as if it had been designed in opposition to the assumptions of Weaver – transparent in its methods, using procedure to support its decisions, creating a rationale for actions and policies, talking through its decisions etc. Thus, it is possible to argue that there was a reality to which the BOM could adapt.

6.4.4. Strategy implications for Ford ETNS

Initially in denial about what was happening, the BOM eventually executed its role in the interests of its ability to regulate the crisis and manage the values conflict inherent to Weavers' position. The BOM adopted the CPSMA as a basis for its management and strategic decisions. This had the effect of providing the BOM with

legitimacy and authority, although it had nothing to do with ET's values.

Weaver's members favoured being neutralised over the opportunity to redefine itself in the interests of ET's values. The mis/behaviours of Weaver's members indicated a high tolerance for ambiguity when it came to explicating or translating into action ET's values and basic assumptions. When the members were told, explicitly, that their current behaviour was not appropriate and could not continue, the *'group expresses a sense of incapacity for understanding...'*(Bion, 1961).

But Weaver's relegated position also has consequences for Ford. The school was, to some extent, dependent upon having a local channel through which to direct its communications and its needs. The BOM frequently referred to future enrolments in the context of new denominational schools and the difficulty of getting across the ET message. What this meant was that the *BOM* had to build a stronger and improved basis for communicating with the existing parent body and focus its effort on the strategy most common to all ET schools – to be a good ET school.

In the short term, the BOM was faced with the problem of promoting the school internally and locally. Over the course of the two years that followed the crisis, the BOM pushed for the development of parent-based sub-committees to take up these roles. But this had mixed results – the BOM had to put a huge amount of effort into following up the groups and in sustaining their activities. This may have been because these groups fundamentally lacked the values to do this work.

ET's strategy in acting as a centralised patron solved the short-term nature of this crisis. The failure of its local-patron strategy was significant for the BOM in securing the essential boundary between the teachers and the parents. The problem as to how it would manage its local patron function was still unclear at the end of the research period.

6.5. Case Three: Scott ETNS - the role of values and school policy.

6.5.1. The Context – Case Three

6.4.1.1. The local context

Scott ETNS is an established, medium sized national school located in a mature suburb of Dublin.

This case concerns Ash Ltd – Scott's patron. Unlike Weaver that had a local patron status, Ash Ltd *was* Scott ETNS's patron. At the time, Ash had nine members, all of whom were parents of children attending Scott. When the case began this group of members, had been operating together, as a patron for about eight months. As with all ET schools with a separate patron body, the parent members elect the committee on an annual basis. And each year, as with most ET schools, a number of members were retained on the committee to provide continuity. At the time of the case, four of Ash's members had been members of the committee for less than a year.

Scott's BOM was identical to the make up of Mansfield ETNS, and similar to most ET schools.

6.5.2. Case Three – Scott ETNS

This case concerns Ash's fundraising activities and the desire by the group to provide a policy/decision basis for fundraising activities.

At the first of Ash's meetings, a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting was circulated. One of the minutes stated that the '*Board {BOM} feels the current school balance is very healthy and our committee* {i.e. the patron} *does not need to work very hard to raise funds this year'*. The implication was that Ash did not have a lot of fundraising to do. However, the group interpreted this ambiguously. Because the BOM didn't need Ash to fundraise, extensively, Ash did not know what else to do. But the group did not consider this explicitly – they did not talk about what it meant. The same minutes detailed an extensive schedule of fundraising activities.

The minutes also had to be amended. An item relating to a disagreement about methods of fundraising had been recorded as if the group were in agreement. The amended minute was read out loud, *'there was a division among the members as there was a difference of opinion'*. Immediately, the rest of the

group started laughing. One member said, *'it was more like a riot'*. The minute also noted that the Chair of Ash was going to consult with the principal on the matter.

These minutes illustrate the underlying issues that Ash would face in the months ahead; a lack of clarity about how the values of ET should/could/ought to influence fundraising methods and general ambiguity about Ash's role and function as patron to Scott ETNS. These are the themes of this case. The presentation of what happened is, basically, chronological. Other incidents are indicated when relevant to the case.

6.4.2.1. The relationship between ET's values and Ash's approaches to fundraising.

Ash spent at least half its time - meetings averaged two hours - discussing methods of fundraising – not the ideas for fundraising which appeared to be mainly routine, but the values and principles underlying the methods around which families were asked for money and how that money was to be collected. Because Ash and the BOM shared a common liaison-member who attended both meetings, the BOM was frequently consulted about *its* principles and values in regard to fundraising methods. This did not help Ash to find consensus.

For example, the *'...division among the members'*, referred to above was whether children attending Scott should fundraise by packing bags in a supermarket. Later, at the same meeting the BOM/liaison member said that the BOM operated *'a policy which inhibits children to be involved in the actual fundraising activities for their school. The school has encouraged the children to raise funds for charity organisations. In addition the Board felt we should not show our support for one supermarket against the other'*.

Aside from the fact that no BOMs engage in fundraising – they delegate the function - and the fact that the Education Act does give the BOM the responsibility of making policy, the question that was not asked, was, why would a BOM determine fundraising policy in isolation from its patron?

Ash's members held conflicting views about the purpose of fundraising – was it about money for the school, or, was it to encourage children about ways *'of learning about giving'* - *'learning good ways of helping and giving?'* A member pointed out that Ash had talked about this before but that it was still not clear. The BOM liaison member also pointed out that the BOM *'had a policy'* not

to use commercial ventures in fundraising. At which point another member pointed out the children were, in fact, collecting supermarket coupons towards school computers and had been doing so for some time. At a subsequent meeting, Ash undertook to draw up a document to resolve these issues for the future, *'We'll get it right, once and for all'*. This is examined below.

Scott's Envelope Day was an annual fundraising activity that had been achieving disappointing results, *'last year the Envelope Day was not supported very well'*. Ash had gone to the trouble to find out how another ET school managed its Envelope Day but they still could not secure agreement amongst themselves about appropriate methods. The Envelope Day is different from other fundraising activities in ET schools because a letter is sent to *every family* with a request for a voluntary donation. The ethics of direct requests to parents was a source of conflict for the group, e.g. the need to *'use a diplomatic letter'* – members were anxious that it was clear to parents the request was placed within the context of the school's needs and was a *'voluntary'* donation.

Fortunately for Ash, the previous Chair had spent years developing a letter that provided a template. With the letter, each family also received an Envelope addressed to the school. The family was asked to return the Envelope on a specific date/s, whether, there was money in it or not. The intention was to treat every family equally. The main difficulty for Ash was how to collect the Envelopes on the appointed day/s. The dichotomy was how to make the process visible in order to encourage giving without onerous pressure, whilst keeping the process equitable. Various options were discussed; members of Ash could stand at the front door of the school with baskets and collect the Envelopes from the children and parents; another option was '*children putting the Envelopes in a basket in the classroom. This reduces embarrassment, as all the children are asked to do the same thing'*. The first was a problem because it was too visible. The second was a problem because the teachers had to be involved - '*collecting the envelopes in classrooms means teachers have a role in fundraising'*. It was felt that the emphasis would not be on the children learning about giving, although it was not clear why this was bound with the school's need for resources. Finally, both options were considered to be problematic to the extent that the response from families always varied, i.e. some families either forgot or did not want to return the Envelope. Ash decided to '*stand in the hall'* to collect the envelopes as they felt it gave '*the parents the*

choice'. But one member disagreed with the approach and declined to be involved in collecting the Envelopes.

6.4.2.2. The difficulties of ambiguity

Individual members occasionally referred to the BOM's statement that there was no pressure to fundraise that year. But Ash did not change or review their routine fundraising activities. If, in the midst of a discussion about methods of fundraising, a member would say *'but the BOM are not putting pressure on {Ash} to raise funds'*, the rest of the group remained silent. Similar statements always received the same silent response.

Ash's discussions indicated ambiguity about the group's role and function with regard to supporting the school's resources and about the difficulties of devising fundraising methods appropriate to ET values. This meant there was an implicit values conflict in treating families equally, asking every family for money in the hope that those with money gave more than those without money. However, it was clear that this could not be made explicit. Ash's responsibility for allocating school funds was also ambiguous and this caused confusion. This issue arose at one meeting when Ash received a request from the BOM for funds to buy a piece of equipment for the school. The members of Ash were confused by the request because, when Ash asked the BOM to purchase a water fountain for the school, the BOM refused the request. The group did not understand why the BOM was asking them for money to pay for a specific item. The BOM made the request as if Ash had a role in the allocation of school resources, whereas in reality, Ash only had control over its own fundraising expenses. This substantive issue was bought back to the BOM for clarification. But the BOM simply reiterated the stance they had taken earlier on the request for the water fountain; that the quality of the water had been professionally tested and the finding was that the fountain was an unnecessary purchase, i.e. the BOM did not deal with the substantive issue and Ash did not pursue the discussion.

There were other indicators of this ambiguity around Ash's role and function. For instance, Ash traditionally used a student-designed Christmas card as a fundraising tool. When the teaching staff developed a post of responsibility for the arts, Ash's expectation was that someone from their group would be involved in the choice of card. As it turned out the teacher was the sole judge.

In another instance, during a discussion about a Spring Fair event, an Ash member asked what the Fair had to do with Ash's work, as it was not about fundraising, per se. The Chair responded that '*money is secondary but {the event} is about celebration and getting involved with the children'*. The member who raised the question said '*but the role of {Ash} is to raise money'*. Another member said, that Ash was *'not just a fundraising committee, it was the patron of the school'*. It transpired that the proposed Spring Fair would actually clash with the teachers' Midsummer Fair. The Midsummer Fair was used as a way of making the children aware of the wide range of traditions and cultures associated with the seasonal calendar - part of Scott's Ethical Core Curriculum and an example of how ET's values translate to the curriculum.

The members agreed that it was not clear what the purpose of the Spring Fair was, but that it should not clash with the efforts of the teaching staff. Another member pointed out that Scott's whole school meeting was coming up and that this issue could be bought up for discussion to improve coordination.

The general issue of Ash's lack of clarity about its role and function was regularly bought up at BOM meetings by the liaison-member. At one of these meetings, the Chair of the BOM said, '*protectors of ethos is the primary function and many {ET} schools have sub-committees who deal with fundraising'*.

At the whole-school meeting, one of the teachers suggested that Ash delegate its fundraising responsibilities to satellite committees or class-based groups of parents in line with another ET school, which had recently developed a new fundraising structure. If Ash had actually chosen such a route, the group would have had no phenomenal function in Scott.

6.4.2.3. A decisive decision to form a sub-committee and agree a fundraising policy

As the school term drew to a close, Ash continued in the same vein, getting through its fundraising commitments but not making any headway with the underlying issues. At the AGM, a very detailed account of Ash's work for the year was given to those families who were paid up members of Ash Ltd. Ash's Chair described its role as '*upholding ethos'* and '*fundraising'*, and referred to the new trend that the ethos of the school was now in the hands of the professional teaching staff. He described the outcome of this as *'happy children'*. The normal pattern for

rotating directors and attracting new members was repeated. One member resigned and two new members were elected, giving Ash eleven members. The CEO of ET Ltd attended the meeting. He spoke about the growth of the sector and the key issues of the day. He described the importance of ET values and the importance of recognising the difference between the personal agenda and the interests of the school – *'the characteristic spirit of a school which the values embody...we leave our personal agendas outside the door for the benefit of the children'.*

The principal thanked Ash for its fundraising work, *'As teachers we know we can come begging and you will be receptive'.* Other teachers who were present reiterated this. None of Ash's members bought up the contradictions and anomalies referred to above.

As the routine of fundraising activities continued, Ash were dealing with the same issues – a method to make the Envelope Day more effective, the need for more clarity about what funding was for, and, the desire for more clarity in relation to values and policy developments.

When one of the new members said that she had approached a number of commercial companies as possible sponsors of Scott's Christmas card, other members reacted strongly. One member felt that this should go to the BOM. Another member felt that the issue should go straight to one of ET's sectoral meetings. As a result a new and more urgent tension quickly developed. The group agreed that the issue was mainly about *'accountability'* rather than content – i.e. it was about whether an individual member of Ash had the right to meet with potential sponsor/s without talking to Ash and the BOM first. The group behaved as if one of their members had broken a fundamental rule, even though no such rule existed. Other inter-group tensions were also emerging at this time. For instance, latecomers were noted in the Minutes. This was queried but not dealt with.

At the next meeting, a member distributed a short written paper on the issue of Scott's fundraising activities and policies. The group had not previously agreed to this. The paper positioned the view that Scott had a wide range of fundraising relationships appropriate to ET values and proposed that commercial sponsorship should not be added to the list.

The group discussed two possibilities to advance the issue. One was a Scott-initiated policy discussion that could then feed into ET's sectoral discussions. The

second was a general discussion at national level using the grass roots and AGM structure (see Chapter Five). The member who proposed the sponsorship said that policy should be decided at a national level because there was likely to be '*very divergent views*'. Her view was that sponsorship could be arranged invisibly or in such a way that the sponsor's name could be discretely managed. She felt that it was critical to define the different aspects of fundraising including the role of commercial sponsorship. There was disagreement about whether the issue should be proposed at a sectoral level because two members felt that there should be no commercial sponsorship of any kind attached to ET. Ash voted - the only vote to take place during the case period - on whether the issue should go to ET's AGM – nine said 'Yes' and two said 'No'. The group agreed that the proposal should be given a workshop/group discussion and held at the next AGM with the purpose being to define and clarify the range of relationships possible in the context of ET fundraising.

Ash also decided to hold a workshop at the school level.

At this stage, I had been attending Ash's meetings for just over a year. In the role of ethnographic researcher and helpful outsider, I offered to facilitate a session so that a sub-group could come together in a dedicated meeting and draft a policy for circulation to the BOM. Six members of Ash agreed to form a sub-group. The meeting was set for early the following month. The member who proposed the sponsorship arrangement did not join the sub-committee.

My understanding at the time was based on the rational view that Ash could sort out the underlying issues if the members could clarify what the issues were, i.e. that both the nature of the problem and its solution was within Ash's remit to fix. I was aware that the boundaries with the BOM and Ash's role vis-à-vis Scott were both unclear. But I thought that if Ash had a clear understanding of what it wanted to do and why, it would be able to negotiate its boundaries and its role with the BOM and other work groups. Fundraising policy and accountability was, in that sense, a vehicle or a focus for Ash to attend to its role. As it turned out, I was wrong.

The meeting was designated as confidential and participants were encouraged to be open about their views. The agreed process was that I would write up a draft report after the meeting. Everyone who attended the meeting would receive this draft and amend it as they saw fit. Then the draft would go to all Ash's

members for discussion at the next meeting. There were to be two outcomes, a report of the meeting and a draft fundraising policy document. Only after everyone had a chance to review the meeting and both sets of outcomes, would the report be circulated to the BOM.

The purpose of the meeting was twofold – to clarify the role, responsibility and objectives of Ash in relation to fundraising and to write ethical guidelines to inform methods of fundraising within the school and as activities might relate to external organisations, both private and public.

6.4.2.4. The meeting

At the outset of the meeting, Ash's primary role was defined as promoting and defending Scott's values. But, as one member identified, '*it doesn't come up*'. The members used the opportunity to get related issues out into the open. For instance, the sub-group was concerned about the drop-off and pick-up behaviour of some of the parents creating potentially dangerous traffic situations outside the school, and the lack of disability/access facilities in and around the school. In effect, the sub-group identified that there were *issues* that Ash could work on that would make a contribution and would be connected to an expression of values.

However, the members also recognised that they were not as pro-active as they would like to be – they were *'aspirational'*. They described their overarching role as giving support to the principal and professional staff. They identified two problems. One related to coordination and communication between Ash and the BOM. And, the second was *'the need for a mechanism to review and develop policy and its relationship to ethos'*. The group also recognised that they needed to do more work with the parent body because *'it was not clear what the parents subscribe to when they send their children to Scott'*. The outcome was an agreement *'to protect the multi-denominational ethos and all the related and clustered values in school policy'*. These items of agreement provided some clarity but the sub-group did not discuss *how* they would progress these substantive issues.

However, it was a useful exercise because the issues were explicit. The discussion provided a basis for a fundraising policy, which was dealt with easily by the sub-group. The draft fundraising policy contained four clear sections; Ash's responsibility to the school as the sole fundraiser; clarity around what the money was for and also details about the amounts involved; the role of fundraising events

vis-à-vis the whole school, and the values that should inform exchange-based relationships (e.g. sponsors) and methods of fundraising including an item about respecting the anonymity of donations. It was agreed that future policy would not include standing at the school door collecting Envelopes on Envelope Day. A number of points were noted which were in need of further clarification. The main point was the need for clarity and balance regarding the amount of money the school actually needed and the number of fundraising events Ash organised. Two of the sub-group agreed to proof the draft policy against Scott's Ethical Core Curriculum to ensure that the proposed text was consistent with Scott's written values.

After the meeting was over, I quickly drew up a draft and circulated it to the members of the sub-group. The desired wording was agreed and within three weeks the text was circulated to the other members of Ash

Part of each of the next three meetings was spent discussing the draft documents – the report of the meetings and the fundraising policy. The two sub-group members proofed the text vis-à-vis Scott's ethical core curriculum that was described as '*an easy task*'. But, at the third meeting, a member reported that the principal was concerned that the staff would be undermined by Ash's need to be more pro-active with Scott's other parent groups. This aspect of the document had been communicated to the principal before the agreed procedure of redrafting was complete. The principal had, previously, been formally informed about the sub-group meeting. However, in defensive mode, the principal requested that Ash furnish the BOM with specific examples of coordination and communication lapses in order to address the issue at a practical level. This did not happen.

At the next meeting, which I didn't attend, one member felt that the report of the meeting '*did not convey exactly how {Ash} felt about communication within the school*'. One member proposed that '*we should formally apologise to the Principal for leakage of a document in process*'. At the next meeting, which I did attend, it turned out that the member who had initially proposed the commercial sponsorship initiative had resigned.

At the same meeting, another member pointed out that the letter, just gone out to families informing them about Envelope Day, contradicted fundraising policy. The letter stated that Envelopes would be collected at both of Scott's front doors over two consecutive days. There was no discussion about this amongst Ash's

members. The observation was met with the usual silence.

The minutes of the last meeting that I attended read '*the document {the report of the sub-group} triggered much discussion about communication and it was agreed that while communication between the staff and {Ash} was very good, more needs to be done to improve the line of communication from the parent body to Ash*'.

6.4.2.5. An analysis of the facts of the case

The first point to note was that the BOM was operating in a changed and changing funding context. It was clearly less reliant on Ash to deliver the local contribution. The BOM was also less reliant on discretionary money to shore the gap between school needs and Department resources.

The second point of note was that the teacher's remit was changing, probably as part of an emergent school strategy. The teaching group was, gradually, taking professional ownership of ET values. Translating the apsirational values for students within a broad educational and ethical context. This involved a lot of additional work on the part of the teaching staff – time that was not available to the voluntary parent-members of the school's work groups. As a result, the teaching staff was far more confident in developing rationales for events like Midsummer Fair and other values-related activities. It was simply not possible for Ash's members to develop that level of detail in terms of operational understanding and application.

Third, the BOM appeared to be in control of and determining Scott's values, methods, structures and Ash, in turn, appeared incapable of directly addressing its needs.

But why did neither of the groups discuss the inherent conflict at the heart of these ambiguities? Both groups were given opportunities to clarify their roles vis-à-vis one another and the whole school. Both groups experienced the consequence of the inherent conflict but neither seemed able to make the substantive issues explicit. The proactive outcomes of the sub-group process were later denied or nullified by the group as a whole.

6.5.3. Interpreting the case through socio-technical systems analysis (STSA)

6.4.3.1. Analysing the primary tasks of Scott's management groups with reference to the case

Table Four: The primary tasks of Scott's management groups

Primary Task	Normative	Existential	Phenomenal
Ash	To hold in trust, and protect and promote Scott's values in accordance with ET values.	To hold in trust and protect and promote Scott's values and to fundraise in accordance with ET values	To fundraise for Scott's BOM.
Scott's BOM	To manage Scott on a day-to-day basis in a manner consistent with ET values, the national school structure and the State's expectations.	To manage Scott on a day-to-day basis in a manner consistent with ET values and to be accountable to Scott's patron – Ash.	To regulate and contain the inherent and structural conflicts within the school management system.

This analysis is developed below.

6.4.3.2. An analysis of the group's boundaries and task and sentient systems

As with Deckard and Weaver, Ash's members were not representative of Scott's entire task system (educators, managers and parents), consisting as the group did, only of parent-members. Its boundary with the BOM was confused and ambiguous with no clear accountability, responsibilities or system for receiving feedback. It was not possible for Ash to generate activities founded on ET values or to explore and examine ET's values as they applied to its normative and existential tasks. An analysis of Scott's BOM with respect to its boundary and its task and sentient systems produces an understanding that is a near replica of both Mansfield and Ford. Scott's functions were clear and its members reflected the whole school task of management, educating and parenting. Unlike Ford's BOM, however, Scott's BOM showed no desire to solve the conflict and ambiguity in its working relationship with Ash.

Like Deckard and Weaver, Ash's individual members were isolated and aloof from the rest of the parent body. The lack of clear boundaries meant Ash's members

were unsupported by the BOM and by the management system,

- The BOM continued to insist that Ash's normative role was as protector of Scott's values and 'ethos', even though the BOM behaved as if Ash did not have the authority or skills to hold or manage this role;
- The BOM said that Ash's existential fundraising task was of value to the school but behaved as if Ash's fundraising work was not of value;
- The BOM did not address the inherent and underlying conflict that Ash was the promoter and protector of values when in fact this was becoming the role of the professional staff.

The use of ambiguous information and the display of contradictory behaviour (e.g. the Chair of the BOM affirming Ash's normative task; the request for money, the denial of the sub-group's process etc.) had the affect of making impermeable the boundary between the BOM and Ash. Ash received no useful information that would help the group to clarify its role. Further Ash's members were unable to provide any useful information that could alert the members of the other groups to the fact that Ash *had a contribution to make.* The whole system was effectively complicit in maintaining this level of conflict. The impermeable boundary between the BOM and Ash, effectively sealed Ash from the teaching and the parent body groups.

6.6.4. An analysis of the basic assumptions of Scott's Management groups

The effort to translate Ash's basic assumptions into action through the sub-group process and via my facilitation was dangerous and potentially destabilising to the whole school system. This process revealed two factors, 1. Ash displayed an incapacity to address the ambiguous and inherent conflicts within its role (e.g. using fundraising methods that were contradictory to stated policy) and 2. The BOM operated on the tacit assumption that the inherent source of conflict should not be revealed or made explicit, e.g. the principal denying the sub-group process and its outcomes.

In the end, Ash's individual members appeared to tolerate the ambiguity of knowing that they were Scott's patron, without having to *act like the patron.* Other indicators of this included,

- The fact that Ash's members behaved as if they wanted to preserve and protect the teacher's role in professionalising the translation of values (downplaying the Spring Fair in favour of the teachers' Midsummer Fair and the use of the ECC when value-proofing the draft fundraising policy);
- Ash's sub-group found it relatively easy to proof the text of the fundraising policy against Scott's written values despite the fact that Ash referred to the task of translating values as confusing, obtuse and difficult.

The only time the *whole group* displayed obvious distress was when they had upset the principal. Knowing for a fact that they had caused distress to the principal was sufficiently alarming for the members to encourage an immediate return to defensive postures, i.e. knowing they were patron was better than finding out that they had no effective patron functions.

6.5.4. Strategy implications for Scott ETNS

In this case, the BOM function mirrors that of the analysis in Cases One and Two; that the BOM's phenomenal task was to regulate and contain the inherent values and structural conflicts within the school system.

This case shows that Ash's members felt deeply threatened by the possibility that the true nature of the inherent values and structural conflict would be revealed. This led the group to adopt a defensive, benign position despite obvious contradictions; the desire by the group to maintain the status quo. The clearest indicator of this was the desire by all of Ash's individual members to disown their own sub-group process in which they began, collectively, to talk about the systemic conflict in the group's role. A further indicator is that Ash ignored its own fundraising policy with respect to Envelope Day.

6.6. Cross-case findings

Table Five: Cross Case Findings

General Findings	Evidence base across three Cases
Underlying or latent conflict is, paradoxically, manifest in a desire to behave in accordance with aspirational values:	....the desire to support a start-up group of parents who want to open ET school and the failure to do so... .... the desire to "work" with ET values – to act strategically to enhance the profile of ET values for a school and surrounding area and the failure to do so.... ....the desire to have a fundraising policy that fits with ET values - the success in agreeing a policy and the failure in implementing it.... ....the desire to have unambiguous roles, responsibilities and accountable lines of management vis-à-vis national school management and ET values and the failure to secure clarity along with a sustained tolerance for high levels of ambiguity...
Different types of conflict – e.g. Inherent and Structural - have different affects on management's ability to "work" with aspirational values:	Inherent conflicts are attached to the roles of teachers and parents in school management positions.... parents in management roles cannot adequately acknowledge or disclose their parental interest in the school and, are unable to make value-related decisions in case school resources are destabilised/weakened/threatened....one result is that the principal becomes an object of dependency... teachers, who act in *loco parentis* as primary educator of child actively desire a professionally based relationship with parents who hold management roles but their professional position is threatened by the lack of clarity around the ET assumption that parents have a fundamental role in management of schools.... Related Structural conflicts are present in the unclear, ambiguous roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability across the management system illustrated throughout all three case studies. This is acerbated for the patron groups in Case One and Three, because these ET schools operate the same structure as the denominational patron (the Bishop).

Basic (operating) Assumptions can be observed in groups that are unable to attend to what is important;	....BOMs behave as if the group is dependent upon one member – usually the Principal....this helps ameliorate the parental concern of upsetting essential school resources and balances the teachers' desire to work professionally with the parent representatives whilst not upsetting the tension required to maintain their professional status... ...Principals play a key role in regulating and containing levels of anxiety (See below) and are positioned on the boundaries of the parent and teacher sentient groups. The principal offsets one set of anxieties against another in order to secure essential, centralised school resources...thus basic assumptions of dependency are understandable.... .... When one school is threatened by the behaviour of its patron group, the BOM alters its assumption from fight or flee to one of dependence to the newly appointed principal... ...patron groups routinely assume a fight or flee stance as they oscillate between conflicts related to their parental interest, the Structural conflict described above and varying levels of bearable and unbearable anxiety - referred to below....
Underlying conflicts cause considerable anxiety at the individual and group levels. Essential defense mechanisms are used to protect individuals and groups from unmanageable anxiety, to conceal the nature of the conflict and to deflect attention away from incidents that may reveal the nature of the conflict *or* force it to the surface:	Examples of defense mechanisms: ....patron groups claim a strong desire to "work" with ET's aspirational values although as a matter of course the groups' structures/skills/abilities and experiences are unsuited to this work.... ....all groups, apparently unconsciously, consistently disregard/undo/undermine/neglect their own value-related decisions and actions.... ...groups spend almost no time considering the potentially serious issues related to values in the cases whilst spending inordinate amounts of time on issues of lesser relevance, or on constant reinvention of tasks... ....all groups ignore the occasional contribution of individuals who point out contradictory behaviours... this is the case even when the group has made explicit the desire to work within ET's valued aspirations.... ....all groups express preferences to work in a manner that reflects ET values but unless the school's stability is threatened the groups appear unable to pursue desires.... .....all groups display exceptionally high tolerance for ambiguity and lack of clarity about management roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability....

Differences between Normative Task (what management should be doing) versus Phenomenal Task (what management is actually attending to) reveal that management systems expend a lot of energy containing and regulating the effects of anxiety caused by Inherent and Structural Conflict. Containing, in the sense that levels of anxiety are bearable, and regulating, in the sense that the nature of the inherent and structural conflict is not revealed:	....the BOM contains *and* regulates levels of anxiety by asserting its role of accountability to the patron but actually behaving *as if* the patron is accountable to the BOM....for instance, the BOM contains an effect of anxiety by providing management clarity in *one* instance out of multiple instances of ambiguity (e.g. Case Three - requesting permission from the patron to buy a camera)...the patron desire for clarity is temporarily satiated so that it continues to attend to its fundraising work despite a deep desire to "work with" ET values.... ....the BOM contains the effects of *and* regulates anxiety by holding Whole School Meetings in which representatives of all management functions assert their loyalty to ET values and temporarily provide clear explanations for roles and responsibilities without surfacing underlying conflicts.... ....the BOM contains the effects of anxiety by asserting its authoritative role when patron threatens the stability of the whole school....patron groups then act in ways that will encourage the BOM to regulate or contain effects of anxieties, e.g. by transferring responsibility for a strategic and values-related decision to the BOM....

Each aspect of these findings is developed below and interwoven with the theoretical themes that have been developed through this study.

6.6.1. The desire to "work" with aspirational values may be symptomatic of conflict

The strategic incidents reported in the three cases were connected to a genuine desire to behave in accordance with ET's aspirational values. These incidents were caught up with individual and group interpretations of these values - how people should be treated, particularly, parents associated with ET; how general and parental democracy should be practiced in school management; how decision making should happen in an organisation that values diversity; the role of the private sector in an ET national school; the behaviours involved in asking parents for money etc. These are difficult and complex issues that require time and hard work to resolve and answer satisfactorily. In all these cases there was a tacit assumption that, if the preferred method of working was actually used, there would be benefits for all the groups and the school-as-a-whole.

However, the groups either decided not to give these issues the time required or, as is shown below, the structure/system was such that the group was unable to attend to the work. The analysis reveals that individual and group responses to these values "issues" may have been defensive mechanisms to help

individuals manage anxiety about management roles – roles that were fundamentally conflicted.

6.6.2. The nature of conflict and its relationship with values "work"

The analysis points to two different types of conflict, present in all three Cases. It is arguable that the two principle types of conflict, identified in these cases, are present in all national schools with BOM structures. There are three additional and particular aspects that are exclusive to ET schools, however. These are discussed below.

Inherent Conflict is associated with the management role of the individual teacher and the parent who take on positions in any national school. The conflict for the parent is reflected in the desire to assert a professional interest in the running of the school and in denying a parental interest. Even though the parent has a child/ren attending the school. At the same time, the parent wants to protect essential teaching and professional education resources for his/her child/ren. However, the parent has to manage this role vis-à-vis the teacher's professional role. To make it more difficult, the parent does not possess a full understanding of the centralised resource system that national schools are dependent upon. Therefore, when it comes to values related decisions, parents are reluctant to make decisions that might disturb the normal allocation of essential resources.

The conflict for teachers is indelibly connected to the conflict within the parent role. Conflict for the teacher in a management position is reflected in the desire to work professionally with parents in similar and equal positions and to protect his/her professional boundary from undue or inappropriate parental influence. At the same time, the teacher wants to compensate the parent for holding a loco *parentis* role and in acting as the child's primary educator. This sense of conflict is deepened for those teachers who choose to work in ET schools because they are explicitly structured to incorporate parents into the patron structures (this includes all ET schools up to 2000. Thereafter, ET schools have been patroned under ET Ltd., and use a variety of patron/parent structures to support the school). On the one hand, the teacher wants to applaud and welcome the parental role in management and, on the other, he/she wants to deny it, in order to protect the teacher's professional status and boundary. Another aspect, particular to ET schools, is the assumption that parents and teachers hold the same values. This assumption is attached to various behaviours that indicate values are the

reason why these particular parents and teachers have become attached to the sector/school. As identified in earlier Chapters, the appeal of this assumption is the utilitarian view that satisfaction of the individual's needs is the same as satisfaction for all.

A final aspect that has particular repercussions for parents in patron roles is the legacy of inheriting the patron structure from the denominational Bishop/Diocesan system. As explained in earlier Chapters, the majority of patrons in Irish national schools are Bishops. Bishops operate within a sealed system that is its own proof of authority. The patron groups in the case studies struggled continuously to find an authoritative source from which to work with and legitimise their interpretation of values. The case analyses suggest that individuals working at the school level, in fact, hold a widely diverse set of values. This is consistent with ET's founders, who actively sought out differences in values and traditions and used diversity as an advantage in determining, elaborating and choosing appropriate strategies. In the individual school context, however, differences in the values of individuals were received as disappointing and provoked anxiety at both an individual and group level – it was as if the single individual who held 'different' values was capable of undermining the efforts of all. The assumption of homogeneity would appear to be far more fragile and potentially destructive than the assumption of heterogeneity. In practical terms, it meant that patrons operating without an inherent source of authority struggled to find a clear voice to express their values.

The second principle type of Conflict is Structural. This was manifest in the endemic lack of clarity about roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability right across the management system. The three cases provide solid illustrations of Structural Conflict at the school level. Perhaps, best exemplified in the reluctance of each BOM to reduce ambiguity and to specify the roles and responsibilities of both the parent and patron groups in relation to values and other areas. In particular, there was an insufficient exchange of information about the patron group's accountabilities, responsibilities and performance with their respective BOM and with the other school groups. The patron group members did not reflect the whole task system of the school and individual members did not receive sufficient support from the BOM, parents or staff – as a result, in each case, each patron group became increasingly isolated as the particulars of the incident progressed.

Both types of Conflict appear to impact on the ability of the entire system to pay attention to the values that are important. A number of additional findings drawn from the cases provide insight into why this is.

6.6.3. Basic operating assumptions provide critical insights

The case analyses indicate that each group was operating a basic assumption that prevented it from attending to the important work of values and strategy. This helps to explain why a group claims to be so passionate about promoting values yet seems unable to the work involved. This puzzle is deepened by the implicit assumption that values embody a utilitarian promise of benefit for all.

Basic assumptions are diagnostic tools to explain why a group might be behaving in a certain way. The most common operating assumption within the BOM structure was dependency. The BOM group behaved as if someone or something else was going to solve their problem or do the work they were unable to do. Indeed, in Case Two after the appointment of the second principal, this assumption was played out because the principal in question actually did start the values work of the school. The patron groups, on the other hand, oscillated between the fight or flee assumption. This was clearly illustrated when the patron group was faced with a difficult values-related decision – the groups either fought with the perceived enemy, ignored it or, passed the decision over to the BOM.

One of the insights from all three cases is the enormous, at times, unbearable, burden placed on the principal who holds a key boundary position. The principal, it appears, must at all times, pay attention to the quality of permeability at the boundaries of all the management and identity groups (parents, teachers, children) to prevent anxiety spilling over into the general parent body. Naturally, the principal becomes an object of dependency in this situation. As a result the parents, in management positions and the parents that made up the patron groups, were more likely to defer to the principal on key decisions. In turn, the principal was more likely to respond to the decision in terms of protecting essential school resources (See Case One).

Bion identified three generic assumptions in his theoretical framework of group behaviour. The third was harder to observe in the three cases – the pairing or hopeful assumption. This is observable when a group operates as if something or someone outside the organsation or an object in the future will solve the problem or

do the hard work. In Case Two, there was an assumption operating temporarily within the patron and the BOM groups that ET Ltd. would solve the structural issues facing the school. When ET proferred a solution, however, the patron were unable to progress it and the BOM behaved ambiguously until the new Principal was appointed.

The basic assumption framework is a useful tool not only in understanding the behaviour of the groups but also in making sense of the defense mechanisms groups revert to when they are unable or will not attend to the work they should be attending to.

6.6.4, The use of defense mechanisms in managing levels of anxiety

In order to manage the anxiety resulting from the Inherent and Structural conflicts, the management groups appeared to develop elaborate defensive mechanisms that were unconsciously designed to deflect, displace or disassociate anxiety and the cause of the anxiety. These defense mechanisms operated successfully in that the conflicts felt by the parents and teachers was *never* addressed or made explicit. The consequence of this success, however, meant that attention was also deflected away from the hard work involved in attending to strategic actions in direct support of aspirational values. In each case this was because of a fear that the effort involved in managing the real work of values *would reveal the true nature of Inherent and Structural conflict.* Thus, it was safer, from an anxiety point of view, for the groups to focus on defensive rather than creative strategies.

Patron and BOM groups indicated a low tolerance for the individual who was perceived as holding 'different' values – in practice this was observable when one individual contributed something that was untenable to the rest of the group. But, rather than focus on what the 'different' values actually might mean in practice, the group tended to reacted from a fight or flee assumption, as if the group and what it represented was under threat. By focussing on the threat, the individual and/or group successfully deflected attention away from the Structural and Inherent conflicts that the group appeared unable to make explicit or solve.

This analysis suggests that defensive responses, as illustrated consistently through the case studies, are mechanisms designed to manage levels of anxiety and deflect attention away from the true nature of Structural and Inherent conflicts.

6.6.5. An analysis of the Primary Task of the schools

The analyses provide insights into the Primary Task of the three schools reflected in the cases. Distinctions were drawn between three categories of task: the Normative Task – what the management groups should have been attending to; the Existential Task – what the groups thought they were attending to, and the Phenomenal Task – what the groups were actually attending to.

The analyses suggest the Phenomenal task of each BOM, in the context of the case material, was to manage the effects of latent anxiety caused by Inherent and Structural Conflicts. The cases repeatedly identified that serious issues framed directly around ET's aspirational values received almost no consideration, discussion or reflection. Meanwhile, a widely disproportionate amount of management time was devoted to creating elaborate defense mechanisms; Hours discussing simple tasks that were never completed; Developing short term or reactive solutions to problems, only to reinvent the solution again each time the problem arose; and/or Finding agreement on essential policies, only to contradict or ignore the policy at a later date.

The analyses indicate two different approaches to the management of anxiety - Containing and Regulating. Containment of anxiety occurred when, for instance, the BOM acted to temporarily reduce the level of anxiety being experienced by the parent or patron group or one of the other groupings in the management spectrum. The Whole School Meeting was an excellent example of temporary anxiety reduction. Or, when a BOM solved one problem as if the mode of operating was the BOM's standard method of behaving. When, in practice, the BOM did not routinely respond in this way.

Regulating, on the other hand, appeared to be about maintaining optimum levels of anxiety. For example, when BOM made a decision with reference to an established procedure, a policy, a rule. The reference was made as if it was a well-known method of making a decision in the school, even though the reference was completely unfamiliar to the BOM/patron group. The effect was to silence the group making the request and and to increase anxiety levels. The increase in anxiety was palpable on such occasions.

6.6.6. Summary

The analyses indicate that the desire by school management to assert/support or "work" with aspirational ET values, operates within the same dynamic that may prevent management from taking action in support of values. Paradoxically, the very values that are the object of management's aspirations may be symptomatic or representative of the underlying conflicts that use up disproportionate amounts of management energy.

6.7. Theoretical conclusions arising from the case studies.

Drawing on the conclusions of Chapters Four, Five, three distinct theoretical themes emerge:

Values embody the utilitarian assumption that if the individual's need is satisfied, there will be benefits for all. Values that are propelled forward or developed into something concrete (e.g. an organisation) because an individual or group of individuals want something or want something to change, literally embody the promise that everyone will benefit from the outcomes. This is what makes the promise of values so potentially seductive and so central to the making and doing of strategy – it provides an imperative to shape and direct a whole organisation. As described in Chapter Five, this is the starting point in understanding the evolution of ET.

However, the case studies illustrate that values may also become the objects of division and deep anxiety because,

1.Individuals and groups do not necessarily hold to the same values or, the same common interests and goals even though they may be attached to or associated with the same organisation – it follows that organisations as a whole may aspire to values but that does not mean that organisation 'has' values;

2. Organisations are structured around conflicting and contradictory roles that affect how individuals behave and determine the extent to which defensive mechanisms are required to help people manage levels of anxiety – the extent to which anxiety is a target of management energy may disinhibit the management system from attending to what is important – i.e. aspirational values and supportive strategies;

3, Whilst ET values are objects of desire, they also represent, or in some way

manifest, the Structural and Inherent conflicts that are the cause of anxiety. As a result individuals and groups use elaborate defensive mechanims to deflect, forestall, delay, dissociate and displace the true nature of conflict that they have to manage. Therefore, individuals and groups have great difficulty in paying attention to the hard values "work" that the organisation needs to do in order to be clear that it is attending to the correct Primary Task. Paradoxically, the assumption that individuals share the same values may make it even more difficult for the true source of conflict to be revealed because the risks attached to revealing 'difference' may be too great.

The next and final Chapter (Seven) will consider these theoretical implications, present the consequences of these findings for ET strategy as a whole, and will abstract from these findings with reference to the theory and to organisations in general.

Chapter Seven: Summary and conclusions.

This study was prompted by a series of questions that arose through observation of individual and groups behaviour in organisations; How has the history and development of the strategy concept reflected values? How has the field of strategy and values been ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically examined in relevent research? What methodology could be used to study values in the context of an organisation's strategy? What is the role of values in the founding and development of an organisation, and what role do values play in strategic incidents and in the response of individuals and groups who have a responsibility to the whole organisation? Finally, what are the consequences of values for the development of the organisation?

Having completed extensive, empirical work, this Chapter first presents a summary of the entire thesis in response to the questions above and then presents the major conclusions arising from the study. This is followed by the study's contributions to theoretical knowledge, which, in turn is followed by the implications arising for methodologies in this field. Finally, the implications for policy and practice are offered.

7.1. Summary of the thesis

An examination of the strategy literature reveals a confused relationship between the concepts of strategy and values. It is not clear whose values are important, or why. It is not clear how values influence the shaping and directing of the organisation and the assumption of implied benefit is not clear either. Traditionally, research conducted through the general strategy concept has limited exploration by focussing on the values of elite groups, CEOs, manager groups and founders without identifying the benefit or the significance of this approach in terms of strategic behaviour and organisation outcomes.

A review of the values research indicates the dominance of the coherent perspective in methods used and in the assumption that organisations 'have' values. Incoherent, differentiated and ambiguous values, on the other hand, are assumed to form in subcultures and subsystems in organisations. The assumption is that structural properties of subsystems do not have to be the same just because they are all associated with the same organisation. Studies that 'see' the organisation through this lens tend adopt contextualised and qualitative

methodologies. This represents a significant departure for the field. These studies tend to focus on the behaviour of individuals rather than on the organisation as a whole. Because the perspective seeks out differentiated and ambiguous and/or conflicting values, the methods of exploration provide an opportunity to infer values from actual, rather than reported behaviour.

In this frame, the organisation is depicted as a dynamic whole made up of structurally different subsystems capable of exchanging appropriate information and maintaining and regulating levels of stability and change that affect the organisation as a whole. Dysfunctional subsystems are viewed systemically and related to the organisation as a whole. Thus, it is feasible for structural characteristics and values to be different in the same organisation. This perspective relies on the organisation seen through the open systems lens – a lens that is useful for developing research in the field, given the dominance of the assumption that the organisation is a hermetically sealed structure. This review revealed a number of assumptions that may have, heretofore, limited knowledge development in this field,

- That the expression of values by individuals in the organisation tend to be understood as coherent (consistent) rather than incoherent (differentiated & ambiguous, fragmented, elusive);
- It is not fully recognised that the individual expresses values in a social context and that it is the specific social context (e.g. a group) that contributes to the shaping and directing of the organisation;
- It is not recognised that individuals have emotional, psychological, technical and intellectual work-related needs that cannot be divorced from the organisation's overall task and direction;
- It is not always recognised that the expression of values is socially and technically embedded to the organisation's macro and micro contexts;
- It is rarely recognised that the relationships between values and strategy can be explained by dynamic (as in driving or energising) forces rather than rational factors alone;
- Methodologies rarely operate the assumption that the organisation operates in an open system in which values and behaviour are systemically related.

This set of epistemological assumptions provided a clear basis for the

collection and the analysis of the empirical work that was conducted to support data for this study.

Educate Together was chosen as the empirical subject of this study because it describes itself and is governed as a values-driven organisation, i.e. the CEO and Board of Directors assume that action taken in the organisation's name is in support of its four corporate values; a multi-denominational, child-centred, co-educational and democratic approach to the delivery of national school education. The data was collected in Educate Together over three years. An ethnographic approach was adopted and all levels of the organisation were involved in the research. Methods of analysis varied according to the kind of data that was being collected.

The data presented in this study is of two types – Presentational Data on the historical and genealogical attributes of the national school system and the founding period of Educate Together. And, Operational Data collected in 'real time' about the sector of ET generally and the operation of management systems in three ET schools. This latter data set reflects a 'core' value of ET; the democratic involvement of parents alongside professional teachers as members of voluntary management groups in ET schools. This aspect of ET is connected to the organisation's most basic founding assumptions and the historical events that developed the national school system. This Data set also represents the most substantive and developed of the two Data types.

The cluster of concepts associated with socio-technical systems analysis (STSA) was considered appropriate to the analysis of Operational Data at the school level because it is rooted in the open systems framework and assumes that the whole individual is present in the organisation. The STSA comprises six analytical concepts that are appropriate to the epistemological assumptions above. The proposition was that the application of these concepts, when used in concert with specific instances of the data, would,

- Reveal the dynamic nature of the social and the work context in which values are expressed by individuals, and in which groups react in particular ways;
- Explain specific distortions and conflicts of values and provide an analytical basis for relating those distortions to the situation at school and organisation level;

- Provide a basis for explaining conscious and unconscious behaviours in which individuals and groups act in ways that are apparently contradictory or antithetical to values.
- Describe the relationship between the individual and group expression of values and events at school and organisation level;

The main conclusions arising from an analysis of the evidence are now presented.

7.2. Main conclusions from the findings.

7.2.1. Values and Strategy at the macro level

This study reveals that values embody highly potent, seductive assumptions of utilitarian benefit. Values can be used as powerful tools of change in the emergent processes of making strategy to shape and direct organising and organisation. A sensitive and appropriate use of values can create an imperative for change that will move beyond the individual and extend to wider circles of influence and support.

Utilitarian philosophy argued that the criterion for action should be the happiness of the greatest numbers of people and the pursuit of self-interest as a replacement for social responsibility would result in utopia for all. The idea of utilitarian benefit is historically and culturally associated with the Anglo Saxon traditions and Protestant religions promoting hard work, thrift, efforts at self-improvement, spiritual reward through changing one's circumstances and the promise of respectability.

The founders of ET appeared to be greatly influenced by these traditions when they were prepared to stand up and act in defence and protection of values they aspired to: the right to and the need for equality of access to education for all; the need for basic tolerance and respect for all traditions, cultures and religions in the education system; the need for authentic engagement with diverse/incoherent & coherent/ambiguous and peripheral values and, the need for a recognition of the educational, social, economic and cultural advantages of children being educated together in progressive educational and pedagogical environments. The founders negotiated these values in a culturally complex and values-rich environment. They successfully established the DSP and changed the Irish education system. This was because,

a. The founders were able to apply aspirational values to the construction and design of a multi-denominational national school structure within the existing denominational national school structure;

b. The founders fundamentally believed that the satisfaction of their individual needs would result in utilitarian benefits for all;

c. Although the founders engaged in a monumental struggle to achieve their aims, Ireland *was* experiencing social change at the time and there *was* an appetite for exploration and change that facilitated an airing of 'new' values;

d. Critically, the founders acted authentically in the belief that the values they individually and collectively represented were of equal status to oppositional and dialectical views and values;

e. The strategic actions that led to the establishment of DSP were not the result of the founders' value alone – the resulting actions and behaviours were dependent upon a wide range of conflicting, sympathetic, diverse and opposing values;

f. It was the ability of the protagonist founders - the individuals most personally affected by the values they claimed to represent – to negotiate values on a level playing field that, in part, led to the success of the strategy;

g. The founders collectively represented a complimentary and strategic set of skills, abilities and experiences that facilitated them to take an absolutely authentic approach to pragmatism and inclusivity in making decisions and in negotiating their claim – the founders were prepared to compromise at all times;

h. The founders never took action or held hard-line positions that would result in a schism of values or create opportunities for breakaway groups.

What these findings indicate is that values and strategy do not operate in a vacuum, rather, values represent potent symbols of social and cultural change for all {society} including those not directly connected to the intended aims of the protagonists. Actions and behaviours taken in support of or furtherance of aspirational values are inevitably and always negotiated with the values that have the greatest currency of support at the time.

7.2.2. Values and strategy at the micro level

This study found that values at the macro level influence values at the micro level and interact dynamically on a continuous basis. The broader,

social currency placed on certain values determines the extent of change at the organisation level and may determine the behaviours of people who hold significant roles in the organisation. These limitations and restrictions can be observed as reverberations and consequences for the practice of values and implementation of strategy at the organisation/business level.

Foremost in the limitations was the instruction given by The Department of Education and Science in 1978 to prevent the DSP (Ltd.) offering patronage to another multi-denominational school. The most significant immediate consequence was DSP Ltd's decision to encourage other schools to open with their own discrete patron structures and to support them in doing so. The strategic disadvantage was, as the number of patron structures increased beyond two schools, the extent to which the originating patron structure could provide active support greatly diminished. DSP Ltd. and its founders were instrumental in setting up a national support structure to provide a web of supporting links so that no single school became isolated in designing its own school. Today, thirty years later, this structure is a nationally coordinated organisation providing support to over 40 schools with formal staffing, governance and grass roots structures. However, structural and inherent conflict at the school level may disinhibit management from attending to the important work required to act strategically in support of aspirational values. The data indicates that values are not only central to the work of strategic management but, may, paradoxically, cause blind spots in behaviour. This has significant repercussions for practitioners of strategic management.

This study argues that the fact that each new school had to reinvent its patron structure was a values deficit for ET as a whole. It placed an impermeable boundary around the founders' experience because, as the sector grew, it became practically impossible for the founders to asisst new management systems in understanding how values and experience can translate into actual patron practice.

More critically, however, the act of each reinvention implied that each patron group was somehow imbued with the authority, knowledge, skills and abilities to progress the complex issues of developing school practice and strategy around what became known as 'ET's values'. The evidence indicates this assumption created considerable anxiety and confusion for the members of patron groups and for the ability of the BOM and patron to work effectively together. Given that, at the time the DSP was founded, the BOM system was just beginning to develop

and *was being provided with a clearer basis for operating,* it was almost inevitable that the boundaries between the two groups was going to be impermeable. The confusion was made worse by the historical association of patron bodies with denominational Churches and that most patrons in Ireland are actually individual Bishops operating with inherent authority.

The effect of these limitations was to create Systemic Conflicts at the school level.

7.2.3. Systemic (Structural and Inherent) Conflicts at the micro level

This study found that management structures in organisations reflect systemic conflicts that are significant for aspirational values the organisation claims to represent and the strategy the organisation wishes to pursue;

Systemic conflicts within management structures, may, to a greater or lesser extent, reflect the currency actually attached to the organisation's aspriational values at the broader social level; thus, the ability of the organisation to pursue aspirational values and supportive strategies is dynamically dependent upon wider social interpretations of those values;

Systemic conflicts provoke considerable levels of anxiety that require individual and group management. The defensive mechanisms employed to assist with levels of anxiety deflect, distract and dissociate individuals from paying attention to the important values and strategy-work of the organisation;

Systemic conflicts directly impact on management's ability to develop strategies in supports of aspirational values.

7.2.3.1. The consequences of Structural Conflicts

This study found that that management groups operating with boundaries that provide inappropriate/insufficient exchanges of information and feedback will use defensive mechanisms to manage anxiety and the effects of individual and group isolation. The employment of and reliance on defensive mechanisms will prevent the group from attending to the important values and strategy-work of the organisation.

Structural conflicts arise in a management system that does not have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities across its working groups and leaders/figureheads. Boundaries of groups are either too open or too closed in terms of exchanging important information about the precise role of groups,

why the group is important to the organisation and in providing feedback to ensure that the groups can continue to perform appropriately. The study found that the burden of this conflict lay almost solely with the Principals/CEO of the schools.

Patron groups, largely made up of parents with children attending ET schools, operate in an extremely difficult working environment because the structure as a whole lacks clarity about the role, responsibility and accountability of the patron. Essentially, the patron operates in a traditional, denominationally defined role as a trustee and protector of ET values. It carries with it the empty promise of inherent authority and utilitarian benefit for the school as a whole (and, indeed neighbouring ET schools – see Case One) but cannot deliver on this promise due to the fact that there is the structural basis for working with values is unsound.

BOMs that operate with a patron group or patron structure as described in the three cases also conduct their work in an extremely difficult structural environment. It is not clear which group holds line responsibility and it is not clear who has the responsibility of doing the essential values work described in Chapter Six. The teaching group is the scapegoat in this scenario as the only group that has the professional time and training to actually do the work that is required.

7.2.3.2. The consequences of Inherent Conflicts

If the broader, social values that actually influence the behaviours of individuals in significant management roles vary greatly or contradict/conflict with the organisation's aspirational values, then individuals will experience considerable inner conflict about their behaviour in the organisation. Inner conflicts about behaviour provoke varying levels of anxiety at both the individual and group level. Individuals and groups employ defensive mechanisms to deflect feelings of conflict and to avoid having to reveal its true source. The use of defensive mechanisms inhibits individuals and groups from paying attention to the important values-strategy work of the organisation.

Parents in education management roles are meant to behave as if they are acting in the interests of the school as a whole whilst denying/concealing the personal interest they have in securing educational resources for their child. The consequences of this is that the parent in management cannot behave or make decisions effectively because they are not given the opportunity to fully acknowledge and work through their personal interest in the school. It is proposed

that parents feel greater levels of conflict in ET schools because of the number of parents who hold management roles across the BOM-patron spectrum and because of the values emphasis placed on democratic involvement of parents in education. It is not clear from the study how the democratic involvement of parents provides benefit to the schools and this may be because of the conflict that parents have to deal with.

Teachers in educational management roles experience similar conflicting feelings that are also exacerbated in an ET context. Teachers behave as if they have a desire to work alongside the parent in the management roles but also behave as if they must protect their professional boundary from undue influence from parents. This is understandable given the classroom-based methods of teaching and the huge difference between parents and teachers in terms of professional training and position. This role conflict is made worse by the possibility that teachers in the study behaved as if they wanted to compensate parents for acting as the child's primary educator and in holding the child's interest *loco parentis* for such extended periods of time.

7.3. Contributions to theoretical knowledge in this field

This study presents evidence to support the following contributions to theory:

1. Values are potent, cultural, social symbols that embody assumptions about utilitarian benefit for all.

2. Values are central to the shaping of strategic decisions and to the shaping and directing of the organisation in the long term;

3. Organisations do not 'have' values in the coherent sense dominant in the literatures – it is more accurate to describe organisations as subscribing to aspirational or espoused values;

4. It is easier to derive explanations for and understand the relationship between values and strategic decision-making if values are assumed in-practice to be ambiguous, elusive, fragmented, differentiated, contradictory and conflicting, and, if it is assumed that values at the broader, social level interact dynamically with aspirational values;

5. Significant structural and/or values contradictions or differences between the organisation level and the broader, social level can cause systemic conflicts in

the organisation. Inherent conflicts occur if aspirational values encourage individuals and groups to perceive behaviours in a manner that differs from how those behaviours actually operate in practice. The sense of conflict is deepened if individuals and groups perceive each other as holding the *same* values and aims;

6. Systemic conflicts contribute to feelings of anxiety at the individual and group level – defensive mechanisms are used to help reduce, contain and manage anxieties. Defensive mechanisms are used to deflect, distract or dissociate individuals and groups from doing essential work in support of aspirational values. Denial is used to justify paying attention to issues that are not as important. The aim in all cases is to deflect attention away from the object that is causing anxiety and to ensure that the true nature of the felt conflict remains concealed. Such mechanisms prohibit, prevent or limit the ability of management groups to pay attention to the essential strategic work required to support aspirational values;

7. Structural conflicts (e.g. management - work - groups that are inappropriately bounded to each other) produce anxieties at the individual and group levels and are managed using defensive mechanisms. Structural conflicts if unaddressed will prohibit, prevent or limit the ability of management groups to pay attention to the essential strategic work required to support aspirational values;

8. In situations where there is Systemic Conflict, aspirational values can, in and of themselves, become objects of deep anxiety because individuals and groups perceive each other to hold the same values and aims, whereas, in practice, this may be a myth. The affect is that management groups will consistently deny, deflect, delay or distract themselves from the need to attend to essential values work because the anxiety provoked in revealing the true source of conflict is too great;

9. Basic operating assumptions (Bion, 1961) were diagnostic tools used in this study to explain apparently unconscious behaviour occurring at the group level. This study found that groups unconsciously adopt a basic operating assumption to prevent paying attention to critical values and strategy work. The observation and accurate identification of these different assumptions provide support for the apparently unconscious element that was observed throughout the collection of Operational Data at the school level.

7.4. Contributions to methodology in this field

1. Provision of a clear set of epistemological assumptions as a basis for a methodology for collecting data about values and strategy together in the organisation;

2. Illustrating effectively that research methods need to gather data in real time, actual operational situations in which strategic decisions are made and shaped as well as relying on reported data about aspirational values – i.e. there needs to be both Presentational and Operational components to the data;

3. Illustrating effectively that the research focus needs to be supplemented by a richly descriptive context that captures the historical, social, cultural, economic and religious factors and developments that influence the formation of aspirational values whilst also taking into account the currency placed on aspirational values in the wider social sphere;

4. Designing a research frame that holds the individual in the foreground and the organisation as a whole in the background or as a landscape. The advantage of this is that a deeper understanding of values can be revealed and that assumptions about coherent values can be challenged;

5. The application of socio-technical systems analysis to the Operational Data collected at school level represents a new chapter in the methodologies in this field as no reference to the use of STSA was found in the strategy literature. In particular, the application of the Primary Task concept and Bion's Basic Assumptions represent useful developments in researching and analysing strategic decision-making within management groups.

6. An overriding observation in the literature was the lack of precision in specifying the relationship between values as they concern 1. The Individual, 2. The Group, 3. The Organisation and, 4. Society. The analysis of the two types of data made a small amount of headway here – by distinguishing between the broadest, social and historical levels and the real life, day-to-day operational work in the organisation, this study made a small development in this field. This approach identified that there are differences between the reportage or presentation of values and actual values in operational practice. Further, the method revealed that differences between the four levels have significant consequences for values that shape strategic decisions. Future studies should develop this theme

further by making clearer distinctions between levels than was feasible in this study (e.g. See Wiley's 1988 macro levels framework) to deepen theoretical understanding about how values that have currency at the social level influence strategic behaviour in the organisation and vice versa.

7.5. Contributions to practice and policy

1. It may be of significant advantage to organisations to adapt thinking about coherent values towards aspirational or espoused values, and to assume that such values do not have a coherent quality, rather aspirational values could be understood as having coherent, incoherent, ambiguous, fragmented, elusive, peripheral, conflicting and contradictory components;

2. Systemic Conflict directly affects the ability of management groups to attend to important values and strategy work;

3. It may be of significant advantage to apply Basic operating Assumptions and the Primary Task concept to assessments of Systemic Conflict;

3. A high level of tolerance for ambiguity in roles, responsibilities and accountabilities within a management system may be an indicator that defensive mechanisms are in operation – maintaining high levels of ambiguity is an effective distraction from the painful process of dealing with more strategic issues and developing creative strategies to solve inherent problems;

4. Although these findings can be abstracted to all organsing structures, they may have particular significance for those organsiations that identify themselves as values-driven; (e.g. organisations that are explicitly described as non-profit, cause based, social change structures etc.);

5. The conclusions may have particular significance to all national schools as well as other management systems in education. This is because of the particular emphasis in the study on the nature and operation of parental involvement in management alongside the professional teacher. BOMs in national schools are responsible to the Minister of Education and Science for the effective running of schools. They are, therefore, the appropriate structure to identify and work through systemic conflicts operating in schools;

With regard to Educate Together, the findings offer a number of useful suggestions:

7.6. Recommendations for Educate Together Ltd.

-The evidence suggests that ET should become more aware of its emphasis on values and make clear distinctions between the values the sector aspires to, and, the values it actually demonstrates in practice (e.g. a multi-denominational enrolment systems, ethical programmes of education);

-Although at the founding and corporate levels, ET places an emphasis on the advantages of diversity in values, the evidence at school level indicates that individuals and groups behave as if schools operate under a shared interpretation of ET values. First, there is no evidence of this at school management level and, second, the existence of this assumption affects the ability of a school to develop creative strategies in support of desired values;

-Systemic Inherent conflicts (described in detail in Chapter Six) are operating within the roles of both the parent and teacher in management positions in ET schools – the conflict may be exacerbated in the ET school because of the pressurised assumption that everyone subscribes to and practices the same values. The conflict may also be exacerbated by the emphasis placed on the value of parental, democratic involvement in school management. It is not clear from the research how parental involvement benefits the ET school;

-Systemic Structural conflicts are operating between patron groups, patron representatives and BOMs. This is because the boundary between the patron group and the BOM is either too open or too closed, resulting in deep ambiguity and confusion about the precise role, responsibility and accountability of each group/body. Specifically, the patron group lacks clear direction about its precise values and strategy function, feedback about how it contributes to the school and about its performance in the context of school's Primary Task. The patron group/body is deeply associated with a values mantle but is not adequately structured or supported to do this work. As a result, the members of the patron group suffer a high level of anxiety;

- Because they are relatively isolated from the wider school community - and more so, in times of crisis, and;

- Because, as a group, the patron body does not represent all the interests of the school;

- Because of the assumption that the patron group is imbued with the authority, skills, abilities, attributes and experience to conduct complex values work and, finally;

- Because of the denominational associations attached to the concept and structure of school patron.

-Systemic Conflict directly affects the ability of the patron or BOM group to attend to essential values and strategy work because of levels of anxiety. Levels of anxiety are manifest in the operation of defensive mechanisms that work to reduce or manage anxiety and deflect and distract management groups from essential values work;

-The management burden, of this systemic conflict, lies almost solely with the Principal, who is in the largely unsupported position of managing the boundaries of the main management groups, the parent-teacher association, the general parent body, the body of teaching staff and the non-teaching staff. Based on the evidence, the Principal first and foremost acts to reduce and regulate levels of anxiety generated within the management system to prevent anxiety spilling over into the general parent body. The second and third priorities of the Principal are to protect the professional boundary of the teaching staff and the educational resources of the school;

-The evidence in this study provides a solid basis for conducting a thorough investigation and analysis of the working and effectiveness of patron structures on the assumption that systemic conflicts operate in ET schools. This includes those schools operating under centralised ET Ltd patronage. This would be to the advantage of ET Ltd in developing a much deeper and more accurate understanding of how creative strategies at the sector and school level can support the organisation's aspirational values. In particular, it would clarify the benefit of democratic involvement by parents in school management.

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- Appendix One: Educate Together Charter

Recalling Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children"

and Article 42.4 of the Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland):

"The state shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation",

and recognising:

1.1 That many parents have a valid preference for schools in which boys and girls of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds can be educated together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect,

1.2 That the multi-denominational schools established under the banner of Educate Together are a distinctive response to the growing demand for such an option within the Irish educational system,

Educate Together affirms that:

2.1 Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live,

2.2 Parents are entitled to participate actively in decisions that affect the education of their children. In particular, they have the right to decide what kind of school reflects their conscience and lawful preference,

2.3 Multi-denominational schools have the right to be treated no less favourably than other schools within the Irish educational system, in accordance with their needs and their identity,

2.4 The state has a duty to take the identity of the multi-denominational sector fully into account when deciding on policy that affects the establishment and development of schools,

and Commits itself to:

3.1 Support the establishment of schools which are,

Multi-denominational i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected, **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities, **Child centred** in their approach to education, **Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming professional role of the teachers, in any area where the demand for such a school exists,

3.2 Promote fuller awareness and recognition of the identity of the multi-denominational sector at all levels in Irish society and abroad,

3.3 Participate in appropriate structures and activities concerned with the future development of education in Ireland and abroad,

3.4 Promote a future where multi-denominational education will be as freely available to parents as any other educational option they may choose.

Formally launched on 12th May 1990 at the Aula Maxima, University College Galway, Ireland. Amended on April 17th 1999 at the first Annual General Meeting of Educate Together, Bray Co. Wicklow. © Educate Together, 2004

Vision Statement -We are working towards an Ireland in which all people have access to an excellent education that is inclusive of all, irrespective of belief system, race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, language, lifestyle and ability.

Mission Statement -Educate Together will be an agent for change in the Irish State Education system seeking to ensure that parents have the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. In Educate Together schools, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society."

Values and Commitments-Educate Together is committed to:

- *Placing the child at the centre of the educational process*
- *Respecting and celebrating the different and unique identities of all.*
- *An educational philosophy that promotes the values of justice, equality and human rights for all children and challenges injustice and unfair discrimination.*
- *Providing children with the knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes that they need, enabling them to make informed moral decisions and*

preparing them to become caring members of society.

- *Empowering children to take an active role in society and in the stewardship of the environment.*
- *Working in a democratic way that embraces the input from children, parents, teachers, and supporters to enable the highest level of partnership and participation*
- *Working together and with other educational partners in a consultative and collaborative way.*
- *Building school communities which engage with, and work meaningfully with the local community*
- *Ensuring that this type of education is provided by the State and available to all families who wish to access it.*
- These commitments are reflected in the following mottoes:-

"Learn Together to Live Together" – "No Child an Outsider"

Appendix Two – overview of Educate Together from 1966 to 2006

Overview of Educate Together 1966 - 2006

1966 – 1981	**1981-2000**	**2001 – 2006.**
Grass roots movement starts in 1966 in St Patrick's Church of Ireland, Dalkey. Dalkey School Project (DSP) opens in 1978. Department of Education will not allow DSP to act as patron to other schools. The DSP committee assists parents of Bray to open the second school in 1981.	Sixteen schools open around the country (Cork, Sligo, Kilkenny, Galway & Limerick). Efforts are mainly voluntary and heavily reliant on grass roots movement. Publication of Education Act 1998 extends concept of patron to non-denominational bodies and gives more direct management power to BOM structure.	Educate Together expands its role as centralized patron to new schools. Develops a strategic plan to double the sector within five years. Restructures governance and administrative system and creates new corporate Board structure. Changes in the attitude of the state have massive impact on ET. Department of Education takes responsibility for funding the cost of new schools. Huge improvements in teaching resources. Greater transparency between Department and partners in education.

Grass roots movement and formal committee structure used to coordinate the opening of DSP are replicated for Bray. Both schools operate a dual structure – a patron (a company Ltd by Guarantee made up of parents, educationalists and community members.) and a Board of Management. Sets administrative and structural precedent for all ET schools until 2000.	In 1984, the first three schools form a coordinating committee to support new schools and represent the sector at a national level. In 1990, National Executive (NE). formed. Each school pays membership subscription equal to number of children in the school. Two members from each school (one patron representative, one BOM) are entitled to attend meetings and vote. In 1995, private donations sufficient to employ part time co-ordinator. In 1998, ET becomes a Company Ltd by Guarantee. Existing voting structure is assimiliated into AGM. Atlantic Philanthropies gives money/resources to develop a national office with paid professional staff. ET establishes a national education conference in Spring of each year. Numerous sectoral events for parents, teachers and children operate throughout the school year.	ET doubles in size and twenty-three schools open around the country – ET centralized patron to most new schools. New schools' structure is simplified to a Board of Management with a patron representative as a member of the Board. New schools have less voting power at AGM than schools operating with original dual structure In 2000 Department of Education gives first annual grant (£27,500) to ET Ltd to assist with school openings. In 2000 ET Ltd. acts as centralized patron to new schools. In 2001 PhD research begins in two areas – values in education and values in management (see Also Mulcahy, 2006) New Board of Directors start in 2003 to provide national leadership and develop strategy. Grass roots now called National Forum meets five or six times per year to input into and respond to Board strategy.