Organisations as Sites of Hegemonic Struggle

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MICRO CULTURAL INTERACTIVE PROCESSES THAT BOTH PRODUCE AND PROTECT HEGEMONY IN A CONTEMPORARY ORGANISATION

PhD Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on empirical research material from a Public Sector Service Organisation and secondary literature, this thesis explores the processes that produce, protect and facilitate the migration of hegemony in organisations. The purpose of the thesis is to contribute to the body of theory that describes and explains hegemonic processes. This thesis draws in particular on the theory of hegemony developed by Gramsci (1971) who is a common source that researchers of hegemony use. Gramsci proposed a three-dimensional model of hegemony, which contrasts with much of the Organisation and Management Studies literature in which hegemony is sometimes understood as a one-dimensional concept; as a form of socio-ideological control. This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the Organisation and Management Studies literature by synthesising the broader Gramscian conception with aspects of other applicable theories (Opler, 1945; Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969, Spradley, 1980; Bourdieu, 1991; and Humphreys and Brown, 2002) and the constructs that emerge from empirical analysis, thereby developing a more encompassing explanatory model of the operation of hegemony in organisations.

The findings of this research concur with Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony as a three-dimensional phenomenon: (1) a form of power; (2) as a dimension of social construction processes; and (3) as a theory of social change. Whilst Gramsci's model is intended to operate at the macro level of societal processes; it is not itself sufficient to explain the micro processes of hegemony. The Gramscian model will be supplemented using concepts derived from grounded theorising, informed by a literature review, on the basis of empirical research at the micro level of interaction within an organisational setting. This thesis develops and illustrates the application of a composite model through an ethnographic study which traces hegemonic practices as they impact on identities and perceived realities in the workplace. The emergent model seeks to explain, at the micro level of analysis, how hegemony is produced, migrates, and is protected within organisations.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Whilst scholars who have investigated hegemony have produced valuable work, (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Schein, 1996; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004), current theory was found not to be able to fully explain the hegemonic processes revealed in the ethnography to be reported in this thesis. In order to have a fuller explanation, we can return to a common source that all these scholars use; Gramsci (1971). Whilst Gramsci's model explains hegemony conceptually as a grand theory, focusing mainly at the level of macro social change, it is clear that his model is not intended to, and does not, sufficiently explain the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony. In order to address this imbalance, this thesis will supplement his model at the micro level of analysis. This will involve research into the micro cultural interactive processes that produce and protect hegemony. This thesis develops a composite model of the processes that produce hegemony by means of an ethnographic study of an 'organising domain' (Spradley, 1980), which traces hegemonic practices as they impact on identities and perceived realities in the workplace. Most models of hegemony operate at a macro level, being concerned with societal dynamics (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986). More recently there has been a focus at a more micro level on 'narrative' (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003) and 'identity work' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). This thesis will seek to extend this line of theoretical development by exploring the processual dynamics of hegemony at a micro interactive level.

Within the Organisation and Management Studies literature, hegemony is generally conceptualised as a means of socio-ideological control (Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Boje, 1995; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Hegemony, as a control method, is understood as being primarily concerned with constraining the agency of actors to both author and express their own identity narrative, or to compose alternative organisational identity narratives that compete with identity impositions of senior managers (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). In addition to constraining narratives as a means of sense-making, behaviour in organisations is also regarded as being prescribed and constrained by hegemony, this perspective is not consistent with the broader concept developed in the foundational work of Gramsci (1971). Gramsci considered hegemony as both an emancipatory project and a theory of social change. If hegemony were

to be re-conceptualised in Gramscian terms it could potentially broaden its value, both to scholars and to practitioners, as a theory of social change. The thesis will produce an emergent theory that will provide both a conceptual model of the processes of hegemony, and a set of questions that can be used to understand the nature and impact of hegemonic struggle in organisations. Such an understanding, of both the processes and the empirical impact of hegemony, could sensitise both practitioners and scholars to the potential constraining and enabling effects of hegemony on organising at the micro, the meso and the macro of the organisation.

Throughout this thesis hegemony is to be understood as a dimension of power; as a theory of social change; and as a subset of social construction processes. Hegemony retains its distinctiveness as a form of power because it is based upon socio-ideological control rather than blunt coercive mechanisms. As a form of socio-ideological control, hegemony is effective because it aims to influence social construction processes. Therefore, hegemony at a primary level is concerned with both the social construction of reality on the part of actors to advance their sectional interests (Rosen, 1985; Schein, 1996; Humphreys and Brown, 2002), and to culturally reproduce existing power relations (Bourdieu, 1991; Maclean, *et al*, 2006). Critically, Gramsci sought to advance the sectional interests of the majority and not a minority ruling elite. However, Gramsci's articulation of hegemony still defines the concept as a form of power that is effective because it targets social construction processes to develop legitimacy for a proposed general world-view which would be based upon social democratic principles. This socially constructed world-view may have been based upon egalitarian motives, but it remains a hegemonic project, as the new order would be framed and supported by a system of hegemonic themes. Followers would then charge leaders with delivering upon the policies informed by this world-view, thus securing wide scale legitimacy for change. This is the basis of understanding hegemony as a theory of social change.

The thesis has drawn on a body of theory rooted within Organisational and Management Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, which has made a contribution to understanding hegemony both as a theory of social change and as a constraining device (Park, 1950; Goffman, 1959; Gramsci, 1971; Bourdieu, 1991; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The Gramscian conception of hegemony, this thesis will argue has been interpreted in terms of its common use as functioning as a unifying concept that is employed as a corporate power constraint (Rosen, 1985; Willmott, 1993; Schein, 1996;

Alvesson, 2002). As a consequence of this theoretical displacement, (Morey and Luthans, 1985), hegemony has been studied by organisational theorists under the heading of 'corporate culturism' (Parker, 2000; Chan and Clegg, 2002).

One strand of research under the broad heading of 'culture' is concerned with developing an understanding of the processes of hegemony. This research has specifically sought to understand the role of identity and narrative as hegemonic control mechanisms. There have been a series of studies into this phenomenon of interest (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The current interest in identity and narrative as hegemonic processes in organisations implies an orientation to understand the process of attaining legitimacy to lead within organisations and this research theme has been pursued by scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Dutton and Dukerich (1991); Brown (1994); and Suchman (1995).

Throughout this thesis, it will be argued that corporate culturism is fundamentally concerned with the management of subjectivity, through the promotion of systematic hegemonic practices, with the 'self' being the target of such endeavours. This assumption underpinned the work of scholars such as: Mumby (1993); Whetten (1993); Casey (1995); and Parker (2000). This point was made succinctly by Ray (1986: 287) who stated; "more than any other form of control...corporate culture elicits sentiment and emotion, and contains possibilities to ensnare workers in a hegemonic system, by providing an integrated set of corporate values and beliefs." It was this ongoing struggle over reality definition that has driven the organisational cultural theory debate (Parker, 2000; Chan and Clegg, 2002). At the centre of this struggle is the desire of capitalists to both govern the identity of the employee and shape their subjectivity, so as to craft an integrated work culture. This theme has been central to the work of scholars such as: Whyte (1959); Rosen (1985); Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); and Hatch and Schultz (2002). Corporate culturism is also concerned with engineering commitment or compliance with the promoted organisational identity narrative (Rosen, 1985; Alvesson, 1987, 1990, 1991; Schein, 1985, 1996; Kunda, 1992) and this more narrow focus has often been taken as hegemony. I will argue for a re-conceptualisation of hegemony directed away from the current narrow and negative focus and towards a broader and more general conception, which is more in line with Gramsci (1971).

The aim of this study is to develop a theory of the processes of hegemony that is both informed by existing theory and emergent from empirical research thus reflecting a grounded theorising approach as developed by Glaser and Strauss, (1967). This theory-building exercise has been mediated through an ethnographic approach to data collection, analysis and representation. This cultural representation (Geertz, 1973; Rosen, 1991b; Hammersley, 1992; Van Maanen, 1995) will demonstrate both the intended and unintended hegemonic outcomes (Alvesson, 2002) that manifest organically through the intermeshing of the corporate discourse, power relations, language games, performance and identity work, that managers engage in. What will now follow is a further discussion of the research problem.

The Research Problem

The research problem this thesis focuses upon is to understand the micro cultural interactive cultural processes that produce, protect and enable the migration of hegemony that subsequently effect organising throughout the organisation. Gramsci originally considered that hegemony should be based upon moral and philosophical leadership, in advance of, during and following social change (Bocock, 1986). From Gramsci's perspective, hegemony was concerned with the acquisition of legitimacy to lead. This source of legitimacy was based upon all ethnic and class identity groups agreeing to commit to a common agenda for social change. This commitment to a shared change agenda was to be mediated through the process of '*identity cohesion*' (Bocock, 1986).

Interestingly, Gramsci does not provide an explicit definition of the concept of hegemony; albeit he implies a definition in the way he employs the concept throughout his work. However, Bocock (1986:11), following Gramsci, defines hegemony as: "*it (hegemony) involves the attainment of moral and philosophical leadership, which is attained through the active consent of major groups in society*". Clegg (1989:160) claims that hegemony "*involves the successful mobilization and reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups*" (Cited in Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Gramsci advocated that shared identification throughout society with a national social change agenda provided the capacity for emancipatory change. Gramsci further asserted that competing hegemonies were to be encouraged to create discursive space for both critical reflection and constructive dialogue between leaders and followers.

The purpose of my study is to contribute to the development of a theory of the processes of hegemony. The primary research question is: '*What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?*' The units of analysis of the study are the symbolic interactions and constructs that are productive of hegemony. The research is concerned with understanding '*how*' the framing of a particular perspective on reality and the subsequent privileging of that perspective over alternative choices is accomplished/ maintained and/ or amended through hegemonic processes. This research theme is influenced by theories of hegemony developed by scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Bourdieu (1991); Willmott (1993); Humphreys and Brown (2002); Currie and Brown (2003); and Karreman and Alvesson (2004). A '*Symbolic Interactionist*' (Blumer, 1969) perspective is adopted to explore interaction within an '*organising domain*' (Spradley, 1980). This theoretical focus frames the study rather than critical management studies, which is the common base for researchers in this field (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). What will now follow is a discussion of the research gap to which this research project has responded.

The Research Gap

Within Organisation and Management Studies there is relatively little research from a Symbolic Interactionist perspective into the way in which hegemony is both produced and renewed as part of an overarching process of the cultural reproduction of dominant power relations within organisations, although some have addressed the issue from related theoretical bases, for example: Bourdieu (1991); Oakes, *et al* (1998); and Maclean, *et al* (2006). Further, the way in which hegemony travels and is protected in organisations is not fully explained by the existing literature. How hegemony constrains the agency of actors, with regard the selection and operation of modes of organising, at the micro, the meso and the macro level of organisational analysis, requires explanation. Finally, there is a need for research that produces a diagnostic model that aids both managers and researchers in understanding organisations as '*sites of hegemonic struggle*' (Bocock, 1986). This research project will seek to make a contribution relative to these gaps in existing knowledge with regard to hegemony.

The research study will also contribute to the current debate concerning hegemony by responding to the demand for micro intensive studies that illuminate actual hegemonic processes and practices (Hardy 1985; Czarniawska 1986; Alvesson and Willmott 2002). The methodological approach of this study contrasts with the existing studies of hegemony

because it explicitly examines the processes of hegemony through the analytical device of an organising domain (Spradley, 1980). For example, Karreman and Alvesson (2001: 60) claim that: *"Our understanding of specific processes of reality construction in, between, and around organisations is poor. As many authors have pointed out, there is a lack of in-depth studies of specific acts, events and processes."*

In summary, there is an absence within the literature of a composite model of the micro cultural processes that are productive of corporate hegemony. Such a model could assist in developing an understanding of the dynamic structure of hegemonic struggle in organisations. A comprehensive model of the processes of hegemony could function as a diagnostic device. Such a diagnostic device could be employed by both scholars and practitioners to critically and reflectively analyse hegemonic systems in advance of both the design and implementation of change programs; this point was made at the societal level by both Gramsci (1971) and Bocock (1986). This model will not offer prescriptive methods for influencing the outcomes of hegemonic struggle. Rather, it will provide a set of questions that both reflective practitioners and scholars could employ to understand the nature of the processes that constitute hegemonic struggle in organisations. A developed understanding of hegemonic processes could raise the awareness of the potential constraining and enabling effects of hegemony on organising at the micro, the meso and the macro fields of the organisation. What will now follow is a detail of the research questions that have guided this study.

Research Questions

As previously stated, the principle research question that frames this study is: '*What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?*' This primary question has a number of sub-questions. These questions have been selected for their '*theoretical and empirical relevance*' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The sub-questions are:

1. What function does an organising domain have with regard to the production of hegemony?

2. What activities are undertaken within the organising domain, from which hegemony is produced?

3. How does hegemony migrate throughout an organisation?

4. What function does cultural valence have in the process of producing and enabling the migration of hegemony?'

5. To what extent is it the case that hegemonic processes are un-intentional acts, not just intentional acts of managers or individuals?

6. What factors influence the outcome of hegemonic struggles throughout organisations?

The previouse research questions will be explained in more detail within the literature review.

Research Contribution

This thesis seeks to make four research contributions. First, it makes a contribution to the largely disparate theories of hegemony, by proposing a composite model of the production of hegemony. This model will illustrate how hegemony is produced, migrates and is protected at the micro level of analysis, through the dynamic interplay of hegemonic processes, within the context of an organising domain. Spradley (1980:106) defines an organising domain as: *"a cultural scene that appears to produce, maintain, amend and filter cultural themes that in turn permeate the cultural landscape of an organisation and constitute its meaning system"*. The thesis will argue that hegemonic themes originate from cultural themes and will employ Opler's (1945) theory of cultural theme dynamics to explain this process. The organising domain that has been selected is the daily coffee gathering of eight senior public sector managers, of a local authority service department, in their Director's office. This gathering takes place between 7.30am and 9.00am. The literature review identifies that six salient hegemonic processes are established within Organisation and Management Studies. My model identifies an additional five processes. All of these processes will be described in detail later in this thesis.

A second contribution is that the findings concur with Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony as a three-dimensional concept. This three-dimensional model can offer a broader conceptualisation and utilisation of the concept than the current one-dimensional

interpretation that is established in the organisational theory literature. Much of the Organisation and Management Studies literature refers back to Gramsci's (1971) foundational work. However, the way that Gramsci's work is interpreted ignores significant elements of his theory of hegemony and hence produces a one-sided oppressive view of hegemony. This one-dimensional view of hegemony, as a means of organisational control, has been examined in the work of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Willmott (1993); and Alvesson and Willmott (2002). As earlier stated Gramsci originally conceived of hegemony as a multi-dimensional concept: (1) as a means of social construction; (2) as a form of power and; (3) as a theory of social change. This is important because in the literature contained within Organisation and Management Studies hegemony is understood as a unitary concept primarily concerned with the exercise of oppressive power through socio-ideological means of control. A re-conceptualisation of hegemony as a three-dimensional concept still acknowledges the power of hegemony as a potential means of domination. However, it would also articulate hegemony both as a theory of social change and as a central concept in the process of '*organizational becoming*'(Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

A third contribution is to re-consider the production and distribution of hegemony in organisations. Hegemony in its final conception may be understood not as a sovereign power resource solely owned by senior management; but rather as an expression of complementary, or competing identification constructs, constituted by contrasting sectional groupings within organisations. In this way organisations could be considered as '*sites of hegemonic struggle*' (Bocock, 1986).

Finally, the fourth contribution is practitioner-focused. The emergent model of hegemonic processes will be supplemented by a set of general questions for managers, which may function as diagnostic tools to facilitate an understanding of the strength and presence of competing hegemonies that may impede or energise organisational change initiatives, a line of thinking developed by Currie and Brown (2003). I will now discuss why this research project should be considered important.

The Importance of the Research

This research project is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it responds to gaps in the literature relating to an explanation of the processes that are productive of hegemony (Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). A decade ago

Schein (1996) called attention to a related literature gap when he argued that scholars should study the processes underpining the goal of cultural management. The goal of corporate culturism can be understood as developing a *'strong culture'* (Parker, 2000) which can be regarded as the attainment of identity cohesion (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Willmott, 1993) throughout the work force (including management), typically represented through organisation-wide monolithic narratives (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Schein (1996) argued that scholars should develop an understanding of the processes that shaped occupational cultures and which enveloped many apparently disparate organisations. This point was also made by scholars such as: Barley (1983); Fitzgerald (1985); Frost *et al* (1991); and Martin (2002). It is argued here that part of an understanding of micro cultural processes should involve research into the nature of hegemonic processes. Subsequently, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) have asserted that there is still a lack of intensive studies that illuminate actual hegemonic processes

Another reason this research is important is the pragmatic benefit that the knowledge generated by exploring the processes of hegemony can be to organisations. The model developed by this research may help to expose unhealthy power relations subjugating organisational groups and impeding organisational change, a line of research that has been pursued by critical theorists such as: Boje (1995); Alvesson and Willmott (2002) and Alvesson (2002). The emergent theory and the resulting model could also provide a method of diagnosing the negative application of hegemony in organisations that privilege particular :*'linguistic habitus'*; *'linguistic markets'*; and *'symbolic capital'* that restrict the emergence of kinds of talk and identities that permit different ways to think about and to enact organising (Bourdieu, 1991). These phenomena may be understood as the *'cultural reproduction'* of established power relations (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991; Maclean, *et al*, 2006). I will now provide a summary description of the research design that has framed this investigation into the micro cultural interactive processes that are productive of hegemony.

Research Design

The research study is defined as an ethnographic longitudinal study. This longitudinal research took place over a two-year period. The methodology is drawn from the ethnographic school of research design (Spradley, 1980; Jorgensen, 1989; Van Maanen, 1988, 1995; Wolcott, 1995; Fetterman, 1998). In order to contextualise the research I considered that an ethnographic report would best serve this purpose. The representational

form of this ethnographic work is to be considered as a partial '*micro corporate ethnography*' (Van Maanen, 1995) in the style of Rosen (1985) and Karreman and Alvesson (2001). I was a member of staff in this organisation whilst I carried out the ethnographic research and this approach has previously been adopted by researchers such as: Spradley and Manne (1975); Johnson, (2000); and Humphreys and Brown (2002.)

As previously discussed, to orientate the empirical research with regard to my phenomena of interest, I selected a cultural organising domain for detailed study. This domain was the venue that was employed to stage the daily coffee gathering of the senior management team of the client organisation. The venue for this daily performance was the Director's office and occured between the hours of 7.30am and 9.00am. This methodological strategy enabled the study of the micro cultural hegemonic processes that manifests in a relatively mundane cultural scene. Young (1989:53) advanced this methodological stance when he stated that: "*The mundanity of the every-day is an illusion, for it is within these details that the dynamics of organisational culture come into being and use*". Through the medium of the micro study of the every-day occurrence of the coffee gathering, the organisation '*written in small*' emerges (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001).

Research methods involved both participant observation and ethnographic interviews. I carried out 35 ethnographic interviews with 15 senior and middle managers. These interviews were all tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Approximately 120 hours of observation of the coffee gathering were undertaken, and field notes were recorded. In addition, as a member of the organisation, I was observing and taking notes of more general interactions and specific change projects during the eighteen-month period of empirical research. The respondent transcripts and my fieldsnotes were analysed following an open coding approach compatible with '*grounded theory*' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The final ethnography will demonstrate the effectiveness of selecting a micro organisational event for intensive study through a particular cultural perspective, in this case the processes that are productive of hegemony. This research strategy, has been used by scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Alvesson (1994); Barley (1996); and Karreman and Alvesson, (2001). However, this ethnographic account will not be purely critical as it will attempt to combine both critical and non-critical (managerial) perspectives in the spirit of the work of Alvesson and Willmott (1992). I will now provide an overview of the structure of this thesis.

The Structure of the Thesis

Following this Chapter (Chapter One), Chapter Two of the thesis provides a comprehensive review of the literature. Thereafter, Chapter Three discusses the research methodology that has guided the study in more detail. Chapter Four presents the findings of the research in the form of a partial corporate ethnography. Chapter Five presents for consideration an analysis of the ethnographic findings. In this section, I develop for consideration, my model of hegemonic processes. Building on the analysis of emergent findings, I then present, in Chapter Six, the research contribution relative to the current knowledge on hegemony. In this section I provide, through a process of reflective engagement, explicit answers to my research questions and demonstrate, both theoretically and empirically, the contribution that my thesis makes towards the body of theory that is established regarding the processes of hegemony. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I provide a conclusion to my thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review is concerned with the literature that has informed the current debate regarding hegemony as a theory of socio-ideological control. Throughout this review I will unpack the central ideas of key authors who have contributed towards our knowledge of hegemony within the field of Organisation and Management Studies. Much of the current literature contained within Organisation and Management Studies has historically subsumed hegemony as a concept within the body of theory relating to organisational culture (Rosen, 1985; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Parker, 2000; Chan and Clegg, 2002; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). This review sets out to demonstrate that the current understanding of the processes of hegemony still have unanswered questions with regard to the production, migration and protection of hegemony in organisations. This research gap has been recognised by scholars such as: Schein (1996); Hardy and Phillips (1999) and Alvesson and Willmott (2002), albeit hegemony as a concept was not explicitly defined but was both theoretically and empirically implied throughout the work of these scholars.

I will argue that much of cultural management is concerned with hegemonic struggle. This struggle may be understood as a struggle over 'identification outcomes' (Elsbach, 1999), a claim that is supported by: Bocock (1986); Parker (2000); Humphreys and Brown (2002) and Currie and Brown (2003). Many of the problems of cultural management are closely related to the problematic of hegemonic struggle and such a theoretical position is well documented in the literature (Willmott, 1993; Chan and Clegg, 2002). Therefore this review will relate the contemporary study of hegemony with the literature concerning cultural management. It will also draw from literature contained within the respective fields of both Anthropology and Sociology that are theoretically relevant to the thesis. I acknowledge that there are other literatures for which hegemony is a pertinent concept, for example, Politics and International Relations. However, these literatures are outside the field of study for this thesis as the focus of attention here is hegemony as it is produced interactively in the workplace. However I acknowledge that I make an exception with Gramsci (1971).

I have structured this review into six sections. Section One considers the literature that discusses hegemony as a theoretical concept. In Section Two I review literature that conceptualises culture. I relate this literature to hegemony and discuss the background of the

current debate regarding corporate hegemony drawing from the literature on corporate culturism. In Section Three I consider literature that conceptualises hegemony as a means of cultural reproduction. In Section Four I review literature that considers the relationship between narrative, identity and hegemony. In Section Five I discuss the conceptualisation of power and in particular literature that considers hegemony as a form of power. Finally, Section Six comprises of a closing discussion with regard to the body of the literature review.

Section One

Hegemony as a Theoretical Concept

Throughout the literature, hegemony as a theoretical construct is rarely fully defined. References to the concept as: *'cultural strength'* (Schein, 1985); *'hegemonic practices'* (Willmott, (1993); *'integrated culture'* (Deal and Kennedy, (1992); *'hegemonic narrative'* (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) *'hegemonic discourse'* (Boje, 1999); or *'hegemonic dramaturgy'* (Rosen 1985; Boje, *et al*, 2004) are common place. Within the literature hegemony is broadly considered as a form of socio-ideological control (Willmott, 1993; Boje; 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). I would argue that whilst this is an important reading of hegemony, it remains a restrictive reading. This line of thought is predicated on assumptions of the earlier conceptualisation of hegemony by Gramsci (1971) which is the most commonly cited source of hegemony in the literature. However, Gramsci developed a far broader conceptualisation of hegemony than is typically in use within the Organisation and Management Studies literature.

Hegemony as a concept has been defined by Humphreys and Brown (2002) as deriving from its use by Gramsci (1971), as referring to an ideology that is so embedded in a culture that it is taken as natural. Hegemony in this sense is primarily understood as a means of cultural domination to privilege the interests of the ruling elite (Bourdieu, 1991; Boje *et al*, 2004). Humphreys and Brown (2002:423) cite Clegg's (1989) description of hegemony as follows: *"hegemony thus involves the successful mobilisation and reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups"*. Hegemony as a concept can also be understood in the definitional terms of Boje *et al* (2004) who claim that it is represented in narrative and is primarily concerned with class domination. The power of hegemony according to Boje *et al* (2004) is based on its ability to control the expressive capacity of actors to construct their own

interpretation of desired social realities. This perspective on hegemony is implicit in the work of: Bourdieu (1991); Kunda (1992); and Oakes *et al* (1998)

Hegemony can be considered as a form of power which privileges selected reality perspectives whilst simultaneously subjugating the expression of alternative modes of perceiving that may conflict with the dominant paradigm (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Beech, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Boje *et al*, (2001) place emphasis on the importance of narrative as the salient representative or expressive vehicle of hegemony. Narrative as a hegemonic process will be discussed at length in a section of this review dedicated to its full exposition.

It has been argued that hegemony as a power effect can be considered as the manifestation of the exercise of symbolic capital (Gramsci, 1971; Bourdieu, 1991). It is claimed that symbolic capital manifests as a symbolic web of significance within which actors can perceive of no other way of effecting the existing social order of their cultural environment (Rosen, 1985 and Bourdieu, 1991). This pervasive arrangement of power relations, it is argued, potentially renders the organisational self impotent with regard to its sense of agency (Whyte, 1959; Goffman, 1961; Kunda, 1992). Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998) also claim that power is to be understood as being embedded in the symbolic tapestry of the culture of an organisation. This interpretation of power, argue Hardy and O'Sullivan constrains the expressive capacity of actors at the level of thinking, talking and acting. Such an interpretation of power is comparable with the way hegemony is understood as a form of socio-ideological control by scholars in the literature (Hardy, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Boje *et al*, 1999; Schein, 1996; Alvesson, 2002). Therefore, hegemony may be understood as a form of power but not necessarily a form of power that is only to be understood in oppressive terms. Hegemony can also be understood as a form of power that is employed for emancipation purposes (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986).

A common theme concerning hegemony is the issue of legitimacy (Gramsci, 1971; Brown, 1997; Oakes, *et al*, 1998; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). It has been argued that hegemony, if it is to be effective, requires the active support or passive indifference of the population that it envelopes within its sphere of influence (Lenin; 1902; Gramsci, 1971; Rosen, 1985; Bocock, 1986). Central to the hegemonic model set forth by Humphreys and Brown (2002) is legitimacy of purpose that is to be achieved through the medium of both language use and identity work, an area of conceptual interest characteristic of the work of scholars such as:

Goffman (1959); Burawoy (1979); Bourdieu (1986, 1991); Alvesson (1994); Boje (2001); and Boje, *et al* (2004).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) cite three conditions of influence that are essential to the practice of ideological power which are stated as: (1) the supply/restriction of the availability of discourses; (2) the frequency or intensity of their presence; and (3) the specific linking of discourses subjectively to establish a monolithic worldview. Discourse has been considered as a dramaturgical device (Goffman, 1959, 1981; Rosen, 1985) that is mediated through the expression of verbal and non-verbal language use (Foucault, 1977; Clegg, 1987; Bourdieu, 1991). Some theorists argue that it is through the performance of language that reality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Spradley, 1980; Bourdieu, 1991; Ford, 1999; Oswick *et al*, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and therefore hegemony, which is concerned with privileging cultural reality, is mediated through the performance of language. The function of narrative in organisational settings to influence the outcome of hegemonic struggle, has therefore become established as the main focus of research into hegemony within the Organisational and Management literature (Boje, 1995; Boje *et al*, 1999; Boje *et al*, 2004; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003).

All three conditions required for the exercise of ideological power, as described by Alvesson and Willmott, are I believe, integral to the production of hegemony. The authors point towards processes such as drama, identity cohesion, and narrative as salient processes of hegemony. Identity cohesion can be understood to be a hegemonic process that produces the harmonization of self-meaning (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Ford, 1999; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) stress the linking of hegemonic narrative to identification processes A line of theorising previously developed by scholars such as: Bartunek (1984); Dutton and Dukerich (1991); and Dutton *et al* (1994). This process involves the cultural reproduction of linguistically crafted identities at the level of both the self and the organisation (Whyte, 1959; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Bourdieu, 1991). Identity cohesion can therefore be understood as a central hegemonic process (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). To aid an appreciation of the function of identity cohesion as a hegemonic process one can draw from existing knowledge of the processes that produce identity. It is now established in the literature that a developed sense of self-identity emerges as the outcome of identity work (Alvesson, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

Identity work can be considered from the actors perspective as the process of developing a sense of self; such a conceptualisation of identity work was implied by the work of scholars such as: Mead (1934); Goffman (1959) and Kondo (1990). It may also be considered as the process of sense making of and from which culture is produced, a theoretical position argued for by scholars such as: Geertz (1973); Kunda (1992); and Brissett and Edgley (2006). It has been argued that symbolic capital can function as the determinant that influences the signification processes that establish identity constructs such as 'the significant other' (Bourdieu, 1991). It is established in the literature that drama functions as the process that contributes towards the framing of what constitutes reality for both the observer and the observed (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985; Brisset and Edgley, 2006).

Humphreys and Brown (2002), situates 'identity cohesion' (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986) as a salient process of hegemony. Humphreys and Brown do not explicitly employ the term 'identity cohesion', however conceptually identity cohesion is central to their work. They orientate their study of an executive management team in their efforts to 'author' organisational identity narratives as the key hegemonic strategy around Elsbach's (1999) model of identification outcomes. This theoretical approach enables Humphreys and Brown to illustrate the function of identification outcomes in influencing the outcome of hegemonic struggle. Therefore, for my work to engage with the current Organisational and Management literature on hegemony I require a conceptual framework of identity construction processes to theoretically inform my emergent model of hegemony. Humphreys and Brown (2002) provide such a model.

Identity may be conceptualised as a narrative construction that is socially constructed and produced through a system of pre-existing power relations, a theoretical position argued for by scholars such as: Bourdieu (1991); Hatch and Schultz (2002); and Humphreys and Brown (2002). Identity is understood to be embedded in every day talk (Boden, 1994; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Cairns and Beech, 2003) and therefore has to be further considered as being constructed through intertextual practices (Beech, 2000). Identity as a concept is not perceived to be fixed or stable; on the contrary it is considered to be both a fragmented and a dynamic construct (Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Beech and Huxham, 2003; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). The driving force behind the dynamic and fragmented nature of identity is considered to be the phenomenon of the 'looking glass self' (Cooley, 1902) which in consort with the 'significant other' (Mead, 1934) are to be considered as significant inputs to the authoring of an identity (Ashworth and Mael, 1989; Dutton, et al, 1994). This theory of the

processes of identity constructions implies that once formed, identities are always 'on loan' from society (Goffman, 1959; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

Within the literature identity has been understood to be a 'cultural product' (Parker, 2000; Brissett and Edgley, 2006). Therefore, self-identities may be influenced by 'cultural themes' (Opler, 1945) which are embedded in the culture of society. This concept has been empirically demonstrated by scholars such as: Berger and Luckman (1966); Spradley and Manne (1975); Young (1989); Kondo (1990); and Johnson (2000). Identity is understood in the literature as being crucial to the sense of stability that the self requires to engage productively within society (Kunda, 1992; Dutton *et al* 1994; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). This observation illustrates the dependency of the actor on the dominant discourse to provide a strong sense of self that is socially desirable (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Identity cohesion which in the context of this thesis I define as the actor identifying with a particular hegemony therefore constitutes a process of hegemony. Identity cohesion may contribute towards the production of hegemony through the cultural constraining effect of language (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991) and the positioning of the self in time and in the space between significant others (Mead, 1934) mediated through the looking glass self (Cooley, 1902)

Hegemony has been considered as interplay of organic phenomena that evolve over time (Gramsci, 1971; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Scholars have argued that hegemony involves "*meaning management*" (Rosen, 1985; Kunda; 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and that actors engage in meaning management both instinctively and reflectively (Goffman, 1959; Brisset and Edgley, 2006). It has also been claimed that the hegemonic practices which actors employ to privilege a point of view, and by consequence subjugate the other, are often historically embedded in the symbolic fabric of their culture (Bourdieu, 1991). To develop a theoretical reorientation of hegemony we need to turn to a scholar whose work is specifically associated with these phenomena, this being Gramsci (1971) who is commonly cited as the reference point of contemporary writing on hegemony in the literature.

Gramscian Hegemony

Gramsci contested the singular importance of economic determinism in shaping society. He argued for the consideration of cultural forces to be brought into the consciousness of fellow Marxists to augment the theory of economic determinism (Bocock, 1986). There now

follows a summary of the central premises of Gramsci's conception of hegemony. I will argue that the concept of hegemony as considered in much of the literature is a narrow adaptation of Gramsci's conception of hegemony. Gramsci's work is important because as earlier stated; there are theoretical shortcomings in the normal use of the term *"hegemony"* in that it ignores the positive aspect of hegemony as a theory of social change. Gramsci intended that hegemony as a theory of social change should be understood as a multi dimensional theory. This multi dimensional view of hegemony does include the potential for hegemony to operate as a form of socio-ideological power to privilege the narrow agenda of ruling elite, a point made in the work of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Boje (1995); and Boje *et al,* (1999). However it also includes the potential to allow space for micro and macro projects of emancipation and work place reform. Hegemony can also be employed as an analytical device in advance of, during, and following organisational change efforts (Bocock, 1986). This new reading of hegemony starkly contrasts with the established use of the concept within Organisational and Management Studies.

It can be argued that capitalist theorists such as: McGregor (1985); Schein (1985); and Deal and Kennedy (1992); the ideological opposites of Gramsci, have displaced his theory of hegemony (Morey and Luthans, 1985) and have re-branded hegemony as corporate culturism. This argument was made by Willmott (1993) and subsequently reinforced by Parker (2000). Crucially, capitalist organisations have subverted the theory to suit the capitalist agenda of controlling both the subjectivities and identities of employees to acquire compliance to their philosophy of the market, a point central to the thesis of Willmott, (1993). Hegemony under the guise of corporate culturism has been discussed from a critical perspective by scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Boje (1991, 1995); Kunda (1991); Willmott (1993); and Alvesson and Willmott (2002). Willmott (1993) scrutinised the underlying assumptions and prescriptive methods of the *'corporate culture'* literature to analyse the moral dimension of *'corporate culturism'*.

Willmott was an example of a critical theorist who subjected corporate culturism to critical scrutiny. He did this in an effort to draw attention to its dominant and totalitarian implications. It is my view that Willmott was presenting a thesis that argued that corporate culturism far from being merely *'pop management literature'* and not worthy of critical consideration that it should be taken seriously by critical theorists as a management theory. At the centre of corporate culturism lay a hegemonic project intent on controlling the expressive capacity of employees through methods of socio-ideological control. As Willmott

(1993:516) states: "*The guiding aim and abiding concern of corporate culturism, as I shall characterize it, is to win the "hearts and minds" of employees; to define their purposes by managing what they think and feel and not just how they behave*". Willmott, as with Alvesson (2002), openly supports projects of micro emancipation within organisations and argues that a study of corporate culturism was important to understand its implications as a means of domination and subjugation of the human spirit and as a means of extending managerial power and excess.

As earlier stated Gramsci (1971) does not offer a definition of the term hegemony. He implies its definition in the way in which he uses the concept throughout his writing. Bocock (1986:11), inspired by Gramsci, defines hegemony as meaning: "*moral and philosophical leadership, which is attained through the active consent of major groups in a society*". From Gramsci's perspective a complete state of hegemony was to be considered as a coherent world-view that was shared throughout a society. Hegemony was to be based on both moral and philosophical principles of how the social world should be constructed according to popular consensus. This did not mean that hegemony once established was to be a fixed orthodoxy. On the contrary, hegemony from the Gramscian conception by its very nature; creates space for both critical reflection and social change for emancipatory purposes, a project advocated by: Alvesson and Willmott (1992); and Alvesson (2002). Hegemony, thus, may be considered as a fluid and plastic phenomenon which may both constrain and facilitate social change.

Gramsci claimed that hegemony was only possible if power was diffused throughout society and was in effect somehow contained within relationships as a product of discourse, a perspective central to the work of: Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998); Lukes (2005); and Brisset and Edgley (2006). Wherever there was discourse Gramsci held the view that power was either being exercised or alternatively being reacted to. Gramsci stressed the self-determined agency of the actor as being a critical component in achieving hegemony. Gramsci considered that social change had to be achieved through acquiring national hegemony in advance of change efforts. This philosophy, argued Gramsci, was predicated upon the strategy of attaining cultural change from within society. Gramsci theorised that once a state of hegemony was in place the coercive power of the state would dissolve. This theory emphasises the interconnection between power and human relations (Alvesson, 2002; Lukes, 2005; Brissset and Edgley. 2006). The theory implicitly asserts that power is always only '*on loan*' as it is fundamentally a relationship-based construct. Hegemony, from a Gramscian

perspective, is primarily concerned with the pursuit of legitimacy to enable the acquisition of leadership in advance of, or during, social change.

Not withstanding Gramsci's theory, variouse other scholars have also argued that for a ruling elite to produce successful hegemony they have to have legitimacy of office (Rosen, 1985; Bourdieu, 1991; Boje, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Gramsci argued that legitimacy to rule is achieved by actors giving their full consent to the policies which political leaders aimed to achieve. This theoretical claim has subsequently been advanced in the work of scholars such as: Dutton and Dukerich (1991); Brown (1997); and Humphreys and Brown (2002). Gramsci did not conceive of hegemony necessarily as a totalitarian concept. In contrast he considered that hegemony should be employed as an egalitarian concept based on a mutually reciprocal relationship between both leaders and followers. This relationship was to be based on a shared philosophy or a shared worldview prior to, during, and following social change. In contrast with corporate culturism as portrayed by critical researchers such as: Willmott (1993) and Parker (2000), hegemonic leadership in the Gramscian version was not dictatorial. This version was predicated upon the idea that all classes gave, of their own free will, their consent to their leaders to lead.

Gramsci considered that the collective intellect of all classes, should emerge together to develop a social philosophy mediated through processes of agitation, politics, socialisation and education. Gramsci argued that hegemony should not occur as a result of manipulation and imposition by the dominant social group in a society. Gramsci theorises that hegemony is both mediated through identity narratives and realised through social drama. Gramsci cites organised religion with its rituals, ceremonies and narrative performances as an exemplar of the way in which processes such as identity cohesion, social drama and narrative are employed to produce hegemony. The role of social drama in the production of hegemony has also been noted in the work of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Boje (1995); Boje *et al,* (1999); Humphreys and Brown (2002); and Karreman and Alvesson, (2004).

The conceptual communion between identity and narrative, argues Gramsci, constitutes an important overarching process for producing hegemony. Scholars such as: Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); Humphreys and Brown (2002); and Karreman and Alvesson (2004) have acknowledged the relationship between narrative and identity as a critical dynamic in the production of hegemony. Gramsci also considered that the active support or the passive indifference of the population was required to achieve legitimacy to lead. Passive

indifference was understood by Gramsci as a latent subjectivity that could either support or contest the hegemony when critical reflection was triggered; this concept has been termed as 'cultural valence' by Alvesson and Willmott (2002).The trigger for this self-reflection, according to Gramsci, was rooted in ethnic identity issues.

Gramsci argued that the practice of empathising with the cultural identity constraints of contrasting social groupings increased the chances of identity cohesion between both leaders and their potential followers. Gramsci also understood that hegemony was not emotionally neutral, a point that constituted a central research theme in the work of Kunda (1992) and also Karreman and Alvesson (2004). The hegemony had to be emotionally meaningful to the actor if it were to be effective. The function of 'emotion' (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) and cultural valence in the hegemonic process is currently underplayed in the Organisation and Management Studies literature.

It is clear that hegemony in Gramsci's conception was not designed to benefit the powerful. Nor was hegemony to be achieved through the manipulation of the majority by the ruling elite. Hegemony was considered by Gramsci to function as a theory of social change which was based on public consultation to develop a moral framework to legitimise leadership claims. Through the active consent of followers, leaders were to be provided with the mandate to implement social change in the interests of the populace. Gramsci asserted that the leaders of social change were to emerge from within the population. Gramsci argued that the espoused culture of a nation could not be considered to be hegemonic unless it represented all of its constituent social groups regardless of ethnic or class identity. Bocock (1986:60) introduces the idea of conceptualising organisations as sites of hegemonic struggle. He asserts that: "*In addition, industrial organisations also influence the lives of their employees in ways which produce a set of beliefs, values and practices which are an incipient form of world outlook or even philosophy*". This is an argument that is central to the work of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Willmott, (1993); and Schein (1996). This statement demonstrates a probable link between hegemony and corporate culturism.

The Gramscian conceptualisation of hegemony allows the concept to be employed as either a theory of social change or as a source of power to facilitate the subjective cohesion or domination of the various identity groupings that constitute society. Gramsci hoped that a fuller understanding of the potential of hegemony to facilitate social change would lead to

national projects of social emancipation. In contrast, the agents of corporate culturism have sought to apply hegemony to maintain asymmetrical power relations and to accrue greater wealth from the capital generated by the collective efforts of their work force (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001).

Summary

Gramsci provides a model of hegemony at the macro and directs us towards what he regards as the salient processes of hegemony. However, we still lack a composite model of the processes of hegemony at a micro level within organisations. In Gramsci's work we have a well-developed theory of hegemony at a macro level. However, this theory does not explain the micro processes of hegemony. Gramsci identified several salient macro processes of hegemony. These were: narrative; identity cohesion; drama; and legitimacy. However, we need to develop a fuller understanding of these processes at the micro cultural interactive level with regard the production of hegemony and thus build upon the previouse research of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Humphreys and Brown (2002); and Karreman and Alvesson (2004). Whilst these concepts were not termed by Gramsci in such a specific way e.g. dramaturgy, identity cohesion and narrative, the concepts were implied as important hegemonic processes throughout his work. Gramsci also noted both empathy and emotion as being important inputs to the processes that produce hegemony.

It is my view that a theory of the processes of hegemony can be usefully located within a theory of culture. This is because hegemony, as Gramsci originally considered the phenomenon, was concerned with achieving identity cohesion within a nation state that was characterised by an integrated culture. Therefore, hegemony may be understood as being fundamentally concerned with achieving cultural change. In this sense hegemony may be understood as a theory of social change. For Gramsci legitimate hegemony was not concerned with cultural dominance. In contrast it was concerned with developing a hegemonic agenda based upon a number of fundamental meta hegemonic themes around which society would structure its philosophical/moral and pragmatic agendas for social renewal; this is a theory of culture proposed by scholars such as: Opler (1945); Berger and Luckman (1966); Geertz (1973); and Johnson (2000). Such a project requires a theoretical understanding of culture as a concept. Finally, the definition of hegemony in Organisation and Management Studies ought to, but does not, facilitate analysis of both positive and

negative aspects of hegemony. I will now discuss a conceptualisation of culture as posited in the Organisational and Management Studies literature.

Section Two: Culture and Hegemony

Introduction

In this section I argue that hegemony can be considered as integral to the processes of the social construction of reality which produces culture. My justification for this claim is that I believe that hegemony is both conceptually and empirically interlinked with the production and maintenance of cultural themes (Opler, 1945; Spradley, 1980) which, in some cases have hegemonic functions. I shall also discuss the view that the critical culture literature (Willmott, 1993; Alvesson, 1987; 2002; Czarniawska, 1986; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) has argued that the *'cultural management'* literature (Schein, 1985; Trice and Beyer, 1991; Deal and Kennedy, 1992) is fundamentally concerned with the study of the operation of hegemony. It is my assertion that both the critical cultural literature and the cultural management literature jointly emphasise the function of culture as means of social control, a theoretical position that I think has been displaced from anthropology (Opler, 1945; Park, 1950; Geertz, 1973) and argued for by organisational theorists such as Willmott (1993) Parker (2000); Alvesson (2002); Chann and Clegg (2002). The main argument of this section is that the potential of culture as a means of social control is rooted in its primary function as a *'sense-making device'* (Blumer, 1969; Geertz, 1973; Johnson, 2000). This section will develop a conceptual framework for understanding culture and will discuss how this knowledge relates to developing an understanding of the processes that produce hegemony.

My Understanding of Culture as a Concept

Culture may be usefully understood as being both *'produced by'*, and as the *'producer of'* meaning (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Spradley, 1980). This function occurs through *'symbolic interactive'* processes (Blumer, 1969). Such interpretative processes are mediated through socialy constructed media such as narrative, identity and drama (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002), which may be understood at a micro level of interaction through the theory of Symbolic Interaction as developed by scholars such as: Mead (1934); and Blumer (1969). Therefore culture may be understood to constitute the symbolically constructed empirical context of the social world (Berger and Luckman, 1966;

Cohen, 1985; Alvesson, 1987; Denzin, 1997, 2001). Culture, it has been argued, functions as a sense-making device that facilitates both social order and collective action (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Weick; 1979; Pettigrew, 1979).

Symbolic interactionists argue that meaning is to be understood as embedded in a complex web of inter-related symbols (Park, 1950; Geertz, 1973; Douglas; 1970; Johnson, 2000). This theory of culture argues that cultural meaning systems result from a symbolic interactive process between concepts such as mind, self and significant others (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Meyerson and Martin, 1987; Alvesson, 1991). In this sense all sociological phenomena can be considered as *'cultural productions'* (Parker, 2000). Symbolic interactionist theorists argue that cultural symbols do not have an ontological meaning separate from the symbolic interpretive process; therefore all meaning is a social construction. As Ford (1999:481) puts it: *"Constructed reality means that the world we know and understand is our invention"* and he adds *"In a constructivist perspective, there is no reality that can be known independent of being constructed. All reality is constructed reality."* Ford argues that all socially constructed reality is mediated through language and expressed in narrative. Therefore, language as an empirical phenomenon may be understood as constituting a system of linguistic and written symbols, which are culturally produced to define reality on the part of cultural groups. Symbols function as signifiers of meaning (Jackson and Carter, 2000) that derive their meaning from the process of Symbolic Interaction (Strauss, 1959; Blumer, 1969; Alvesson, 2002; Beech and Huxham, 2003). The meaning attributed to symbols is socially constructed; it is a *'cultural production'* (Parker, 2000). Hegemony as a form of power, as a theory of social change or as a means of social construction, I would argue, is concerned with the social construction and the privileging of meaning, which fundamentally is concerned with attempting to manage or influence, intentionally or unintentionally culture.

It has also been argued that it is through the process of Symbolic Interaction that actors obtain knowledge of what is considered to be real (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Ford, 1999) and therefore mediates reality construction and interpretation. Geertz (1973:15) defines culture as: *"the creation of meaning through which human beings interpret their experiences and guide their actions"*. I support this definition. As earlier stated, Jackson and Carter (2000) assert that signs have no inherent meaning and that all meaning is socially constructed. From the perspective of Symbolic Interaction all definitions of meaning are thus arbitrary and relative to the actors life experience (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Blumer,

1969; Ford, 1999; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). It is my argument that it is from the process of Symbolic Interaction that the awesome variety of cultural expression arises, a theory explored in the work of scholars such as: Berger and Luckman (1966); Blumer (1969); Geertz (1973); and Spradley (1980). Finally, in organisations and in all other cultural domains, culture can also be understood to be an: 'integrated'; 'differentiated'; or 'fragmented' phenomenon, each theoretical position being dependent on the focus of analysis (Meyerson, and Martin, 1987; Martin, 2002).

Whilst actors may have their own unique cultural perspective, they do share in cultural inter-subjectivities that are maintained by cultural themes. These cultural themes are: socially constructed; dispersed; taught; and enacted throughout the organisation. Cultural themes can function as hegemonic narratives. This point was implicit in the cultural theme theory of Opler (1945). It has also been argued that the concept of cultural themes supports a cultural system to enable collective action through establishing a degree of integration of meaning between actors (Allaire and Firsiroto, 1984; Bartunek, 1984; Cohen, 1985; Boland and Tenkasi, 1995; Johnson, 2000). Within the fields of Sociology and Anthropology there are established theories of how culture operates as a sense making device, and how narratives are constructed and privileged through the medium of cultural themes (Opler, 1945; Park, 1950; Berger and Lukman, 1966; Spradley, 1980; Boje, 2001).

Certain authors argue that integration of meaning supported by cultural themes does not imply a homogenous culture; which is defined as a fully integrated unequivocal meaning system (Meyerson and Martin, 1987; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). However, for organisations to function there must be a degree of cultural integration (Berger and Luckman, 1966). This empirical observation supports the theory that culture establishes the interpretative frame of reference (Barley, 1983; Bartunek, 1984; Isabella, 1990; Johnson, 2000) that provides both structure and meaningful orientation to a given group. This cultural structure facilitates a working consensus towards meanings to enable collective action, social stability and cohesiveness (Rosen, 1985; Weick, 1995). This sense making function of culture may provide the potential of hegemony. One of the main ways in which meaning is distinguished as part of the cultural process is through dramaturgy.

Dramaturgy has been defined as the process, which contributes towards the framing of a situational definition, i.e. what constitute reality for both the observer and the observed (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985; Brisset and Edgley, 2006). Dramaturgy can also be

understood as one of the processes that produce hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Rosen, 1985). This is because dramaturgy is one of the processes that influences which identities and narratives are to be privileged in a culture. Dramaturgy is to be understood as a process of framing and performing cultural expression though performance devices such as roles, scripts, settings, fronts, ceremonies, rituals and artefacts (Goffman, 1959).

There are many different theories of culture, however my view of culture is that whilst we might have slightly different 'takes' on meanings within a particular social or cultural context, these interpretations are essentially social in nature and are only compatible when there is an intersubjective context characterised by a shared cultural background. Further, Symbolic Interaction can be seen as the fundamental method that produces culture. This was Gramsci's view of culture and this theory motivated Gramsci to stress the importance of acknowledging the incompatibility of ethnic and class identities with regard to how they interpreted reality through a cultural lens. Legitimate hegemony was not possible, argued Gramsci, unless some form of overarching and shared cultural intersubjectivity that enabled shared understandings of cultural values was established between the contrasting class and ethnic identities that constituted society. Gramsci was not arguing for one homogenous culture, rather for an agreement to support a system of cultural themes that could be understood as being essentially 'hegemonic' if they worked towards the general development of society as a whole. I shall now discuss the way in which culture may function as a means of socio-ideological control, which I interpret as the operation of hegemony.

Culture as a Means of Control

Parker (2000) asserts that culture is primarily concerned with social control, a theoretical position argued for in the work of scholars such as: Berger and Luckman (1966); Geertz (1973); Martin (2002); and Chan and Clegg (2002). This area of interest continues to develop as a debate around the theory that cultural control is mediated through 'identification processes' which are embedded in narrative (Beech, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Chan and Clegg (2002) argue that the discourse of 'corporate culturism' (Schein, 1996) relates to a hegemonic process of human development, a process which is articulated by Thompson (1990:124), as involving: "a general and progressive process of human development, in the mind, faculties, manner and comportment through education and training, and hence, becoming cultivated or civilised".This definition, I

believe, encapsulates the essence of hegemony. Thompson argues that the subjectivity of the self is targeted by a dominant group to craft a *'linguistic habitus'*, (Bourdieu, 1991).

Chan and Clegg (2002) cite the work of Bauman (1987) who defines culture as a process of socialisation for a given group, a cultural theory proposed by the work of scholars such as: Opler (1945); Berger and Luckman (1966); Blumer (1969); Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); and Willmott (1993). This process involves the cultivation of a cultural habitus and can, argue Chan and Clegg be employed for the crafting of a desired social order on the part a ruling elite, an argument that is central to the work of Bourdieu (1986, 1991). Bauman draws his ideas empirically from an analysis of the hegemony practiced by the ruling monarchy during the Age of the Enlightenment. During this time, Bauman argues, the establishment of the day, as represented by philosophers, legislators and the ruling aristocracy, manufactured a hegemonic discourse that controlled the identity of the masses. Bauman asserts that this form of hegemony circumscribed both the expressive capacity and sense of agency of the masses through constraining their scope for reality construction, a line of theorising central to the work of scholars such as: Bourdieu (1991); Foucault (1980); and Mauws and Phillips (1995). The target of this hegemonic endeavour was the *'subjective self'* (Burawoy, 1979; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992). This form of hegemony was commensurate with the narrow use of the concept that is characteristic of the way in which it is referred to in the Organisational and Management literature (Rosen, 1985; Kondo, 1990; Schein, 1996; Boje, 1995; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

Bauman claimed that the preferred control strategy of the establishment was to trap the population in a web of hegemonically inspired narratives. This process of hegemony was mediated through the control of language. The objective of this *'expressive'* hegemony claims Bauman was the subjugation of the weak by the powerful to culturally reproduce and sustain a socially constructed system of embedded power relations, status and privilege. Bauman demonstrated that during the Age of the Enlightenment culture was employed as a hegemonic control system on a national level. This national enactment of hegemony as a control mechanism has also been articulated in the work of scholars such as: Bourdieu (1986, and 1991); Chomsky (1992); and Maclean *et al* (2006). This cultural control system can be defined as the attainment, maintenance and reproduction of national hegemony. Bauman argues that this national hegemony was mediated though the cultivation of *'stratified cultural fields of power and influence'*, a theory that underpins the work of Bourdieu (1991). Maclean *et al* (2006) demonstrate how Bourdieu's theory of *'symbolic capital'* functions in

Bauman's terms to structure cultural fields of power throughout contemporary society so as to establish a hegemonic system of cultural reproduction that maintains the corporate class system in both the UK and France.

Maclean *et al* (2006) provide research that suggests there is a hegemonic system which may be understood in Gramscian terms, involving the State, Civic Society and the Corporate World, functioning efficiently in both countries to maintain stratified fields of power throughout the two societies. The authors argue that this hegemonic system is based on the cultural reproduction of a cultural habitus which signifies a particular form of symbolic capital. This culturally produced habitus is recognised by the architects of this hegemonic system as constituting a particular form of symbolic capital and therefore as being the signifier of legitimacy to take a seat at the table of the boardrooms that govern the corporate elite of both France and the UK. Therefore Maclean *et al* (2006) provide an illustration of hegemony functioning as a control system on a national and on a global scale to reproduce and maintain asymmetrical power relations as represented by the class system. In doing so the authors acknowledge the manifestation of a similar hegemonic system on a national and global system to that discussed by Bauman during the period of the Enlightenment. To consolidate their argument that culture is primarily concerned with control of the self, Chan and Clegg (2002:260) draw upon the cultivation metaphor from which the term originates when they state dramatically that: "*Culture as "human tending" conjures up the metaphor of a gardener weeding out the "unruly crop" or the gamekeeper ferreting out rats and rabbits from burrows in order to eliminate those rivals who might also reap or harvest the game*". I shall now discuss corporate culturism as a hegemonic endeavour.

Corporate Culturism as a Hegemonic Endeavour

The critical literature on corporate culturism has levelled the argument that the '*functionalist*' school of Cultural Management is basically pursuing a hegemonic agenda (Willmott, 1993; Parker, 2000; Alvesson, 2002; Chan and Clegg, 2002) often without always using the term. Culture has always contained the potential of hegemony, as was illustrated by Bauman (1987) and his references to hegemonic control during the Age of the Enlightenment and by the empirical study of Maclean *et al* (2006) into the cultural reproduction of the ruling elite in both France and the UK. The management of culture as a means of control through the attainment of hegemony was not articulated vividly in the cultural management literature. However the underlying theory, I think, underpins much of this literature.

The work of Willmott (1993) stimulated an interest in corporate hegemony under the banner of corporate culturism. Willmott claims that corporate culturism was not intended to replace traditional control mechanisms; rather it was to complement and strengthen these existing control methodologies. This point has also been made by scholars such as Ouchi and Johnson (1978) and Karreman and Alvesson (2004). Willmott (1993:521) emphasises the emergence of this phenomenon when he claims that: *"Within organisations, programmes of corporate culturism, human resource management and total quality management have sought to promote or strengthen a corporate ethos that demands loyalty from employees as it excludes, silences or punishes those who question its creed."* This view of the function of culture in organisations is characteristic of the view of corporate change gurus such as Peters and Waterman (1982); and Deal and Kennedy (1992). In this sense corporate culturism was and remains concerned with the attainment of corporate hegemony.

As with Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony, corporate culturism also desires to establish a coherent worldview throughout the organisation. The fundamental difference between corporate hegemony and Gramscian hegemony is that corporate hegemony is designed to serve the interests of the corporate ruling elite. For example, Peters and Waterman (1982:323) state that: *"The institution provides the guiding belief and creates a sense of excitement, a sense of being part of the best, a sense of producing something of quality that is generally valued"*. Note the important feature of the discourse of Peters and Waterman that it is the institution and not the organisational self that sets the identity of the employee. The organisation does this through attempting to define what the actor should value and therefore how they should perceive and think about themselves, the other, and their place in the world. The enactment of this strategy by organisations has been studied by scholars such as: Bartunek (1984); Rosen (1985); Kunda (1992); and Oakes *et al*, (1998). Once again this authored imposition of a corporate hegemonic narrative is in sharp contrast to Gramsci's ideal that it is through intellectual engagement with the workers based upon democratic principles that a model of hegemony should emerge.

Willmott (1993) calls for the critical analysis of how corporate culturism as a medium for hegemonic domination extends management control. Willmott's call for critical analysis could be interpreted as a need for research into the nature of hegemonic processes. Willmott cites Miller and Rose (1990:26) who assert that: *"the "autonomous" subjectivity of the productive individual has become a central economic resource"*. Willmott's thesis is that corporate hegemony may be achieved by the attempt of management to author the self-

identities of their staff, an idea that is well documented in the literature (Young, 1989; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). It has been argued that to manage inter subjectivity requires attention to the processes of identification (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Brown, 1997; Elsbach, 1999; Beech and Huxham, 2003).

Finally, not withstanding the distinctions previously discussed, Gramscian hegemony, could be employed as a theory of social change in that it could be used to diagnose the hegemonic mix of a society before, during, and after social change had occurred. Willmott (1993) builds on the moral issues concerning the adaptation of hegemony on the part of corporate culturism. He argues that the empirical application of hegemonic techniques (cultural management) require serious study of both their ethical status and of their practical effectiveness (Schein, 1996). Hegemony, I will argue, is essentially concerned with privileging a particular cultural narrative at the expense of alternatives. This is also the case whether hegemony is being employed in negative or positive ways.

Summary

This review has argued thus far that the primary activity of corporate culturism is to re-engineer the organisational culture (cultural management) through meaning management, a corporate hegemonic strategy that is well documented in the literature (Stablein and Nord, 1985; Alvesson, 1990; Mangham, 1990; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). The objective is to construct organisational consensus with what is perceived as just, valued and therefore considered as real (Rosen, 1985; Schein, 1985; Ray, 1986; Deal and Kennedy, 1992). I have argued that corporate hegemony is concerned with creating monolithic cultures where the availability of alternative value positions or organisational perspectives are systematically cleansed. This approach to corporate hegemony has been documented by corporate gurus and by scholars such as: Peters and Waterman (1982); Rosen, (1985); Schein (1985); Deal and Kennedy (1992); and Kunda (1992). This cultural cleansing occurs through the domination of corporate discourse and the censorship and subjugation of alternative discourses that do not fit the dominant narrative (Boje, 1995; Knights and Willmott, 1987; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson, 2000). Willmott (1993) acknowledges that this methodology and its objective render the organisation as having the status of being fundamentally totalitarian in character. This is in sharp contrast to the ideal of hegemony as espoused by Gramsci.

There is a further step to take in developing this critical perspective on corporate culturism in that this perspective only considers part of the broader Gramscian model of hegemony. The interesting point to emerge from this discussion is that the managerial writing on corporate culture is implicitly seeking to reinforce the elite interests and the critical literatures identify this as a hegemonic process. In doing this, critical theorists such as: Willmott (1993); Alvesson (2002); and Chan and Clegg (2002) have made a valuable theoretical step. However, there is another step to take that is inspired by a fuller understanding of Gramsci. That is to develop an understanding of hegemony functioning as a three-dimensional model: (1) as a form of power; (2) as a means of social construction processes; and (3) as a theory of social change.

Corporate culturism may not have articulated its agenda as hegemony. However the techniques, applications and guiding theory of cultural management are concerned with managing the definition of reality on the part of the workforce. This may be understood as an oppressive hegemonic endeavour in Gramscian terms. Corporate culturism was and remains fundamentally concerned with the socio-ideological control of the interpretative and expressive capacity of the organisational self (Rosen, 1985; Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Alvesson, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). How actors processually undertake their inter-subjective sense making activities is worthy of scholarly endeavour. I will now consider hegemony from the perspective of Bourdieu (1991) and in particular his theory of cultural reproduction.

Section 3: Hegemony Considered as a Form of Cultural Reproduction

Maclean *et al* (2006) present an interesting twist to the established paradigm of corporate culturism. The authors argue that corporate hegemony is not necessarily primarily concerned with bringing about cultural change. In contrast they argue that corporate hegemony may be perceived as a form of '*cultural reproduction*' (Bourdieu, 1991). This conceptualisation of corporate hegemony is interesting because it enables scholars to define the corporate elite in organisations not as agents for change, but rather as agents who employ the dramaturgy of change rhetoric whilst simultaneously engaging in a process of cultural reproduction to maintain the status quos regarding established power relations and social systems. This view of hegemony has been discussed by scholars such as Chomsky (1992); and Chan and Clegg (2002). Hegemony within the context of corporate culturism may therefore also be understood as a process of cultural reproduction.

Schein (1996) argued that in order to understand why corporate cultures are so robust and difficult to change it is necessary to understand the processes involved in cultural reproduction. It is my view that Schein was calling for study into the processual dynamics of hegemony. Studies of cultural reproduction of the hegemony that serves the interest of the ruling elite to maintain the status quo in corporations are rare in the literature. This is interesting because the dominant paradigm in the literature is that senior management are defined as change leaders whilst all other employees are defined as potential barriers to change. The idea of cultural reproduction is useful in developing an understanding of conditions that influence the longevity of a particular hegemony, a point of view supported by scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Bourdieu (1986, 1991); and Maclean, *et al* (2006). To develop a detailed understanding of the theoretical categories that constitute the theory of cultural reproduction I will now further consider elements of the work of Bourdieu (1991) which, I think can be understood as being concerned with cultural reproduction as a model of hegemony.

Bourdieu's (1991) Theory of Cultural Reproduction

Bourdieu's concepts of linguistic habitus, symbolic capital and linguistic markets are important to understanding the processes of hegemony. This is because these concepts function as devices that both stratify cultures and reproduce power relations that favour the cultural model of the corporate elite. Bourdieu (1991) also provides a stimulating model of cultural reproduction. His model presents a theoretical route to understanding the processes of the social stratification of culture within culture. I will now discuss this model.

Symbolic capital, I will argue throughout this thesis, constitutes a hegemonic process that provides both a source of legitimacy to declare reality assertions and a source of power through its ability to constrain identity expressions. Bourdieu's model of symbolic capital includes economic, social and cultural capital. The acquisition of economic capital involves the gaining of wealth, social capital involves the gaining of high status positions in society, and cultural capital involves the appropriation of a desired cultural habitus. Bourdieu claims that the ratio of ownership between economic, social and cultural capital merges to produce the fourth dimension of his model; that of symbolic capital, which Bourdieu claims generates a particular form of cultural habitus. Bourdieu argued that the uneven distribution of symbolic capital in society gives rise not only to inherent conflict between the stratified groupings e.g. working, middle and ruling class but also to the class system and its cultural

form (Turner, 2003). It facilitates, and is an expression of, the processes that underpin cultural reproduction.

Bourdieu (1991) argues that actors have access to an uneven distribution of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital evolves from the combination of cultural equity that determines the social identity of the actor. Therefore the distribution of symbolic capital when supported by the linguistic habitus of a given group manifest as powerful constraining devices on the range of identity constructions and expressive capacities available to the actor. Finally, we can consider Bourdieu's theory of linguistic markets and the role that language plays in creating the hegemony of ruling elite through the '*cultural cleansing*' of discourse; this phenomenon has been reported in the Organisation and Management Studies literature (Oakes, *et al*, 1998; Chan and Clegg, 2002).

Linguistic Markets

Bourdieu's concept of linguistic markets is predicated on the theory that reality constructions are formed discursively and asserts that social reality is achieved through the medium of every day talk. This theoretical position is well established in the literature (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Boden, 1994; Ford and Ford, 1995; Ford, 1999; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998). The premise of Bourdieu's theory of linguistic markets is that cultural groups produce their own kind of linguistic models that he terms as '*linguistic habitus*' to strengthen and preserve the power relations of the group and their reality constructions, a theoretical position supported in the work of both Ford (1999); and Tsoukas and Chia (2002). The theory is also concerned with explaining the way in which identities are regulated through the medium of linguistic habitus.

Bourdieu argues that social groupings derive linguistic distinction from the linguistic habitus that is unique to the social group; for example, the style of talking and writing that defines the linguistic habitus of a member of the academic community. Bourdieu asserts that the linguistic market structure of each cultural group acts as a form of identity censorship. This theory forms the basis of the cultural theory presented by Spradley (1980). An established linguistic market serves as a censoring device which is mediated through peer censorship and which functions to regulate the identities of actors through the medium of language competence. Bourdieu makes the point that the linguistic demands of the market self regulate the kind of actors or identities that are permitted legitimate participation in any given cultural

field. This self-regulation is supported by linguistic themes, which could be described as hegemonic language rules for a given kind of linguistic habitus, a concept reported upon in the Organisation and Management Studies literature by Mauws, and Phillips (1995).

Bourdieu's theory of linguistic market and linguistic habitus support the theory that identity is to be considered as a narrative construction that is socially produced and constructed through intertextual practices that are embedded in every-day talk, a theory that is established in the literature (Alvesson, 1994; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Social identity theory (Ashworth and Mael, 1989) argues that an actors sense of self is derived in relation to the significant other (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) and its stability and confidence is dependent on its relationship with the dominant discourse that the organisational self wishes to relate to (Alvesson, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Bourdieu claims that linguistic habitus is to be considered as a cultural production (Parker, 2000). In conclusion, it is my assertion that relations between discourses mediate identity control (Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

The work of Maclean *et al* (2006) into the cultural reproduction of business elites and corporate governance in France and the UK provides an excellent theoretical and empirical illustration of Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory. The theory of cultural reproduction as posited by Bourdieu holds much explanatory promise with regard to understanding the relationship between organisational culture and the manifestation of hegemony. In my partial corporate ethnography I shall demonstrate empirically the way in which Bourdieu's model of cultural reproduction mediated through symbolic capital, linguistic markets and linguistic habitus operates as controlling/structuring phenomenon and contributes towards the production and protection of hegemony. The cultural scope for both the expression and development of the organisational self may be constrained by: the structure of linguistic markets; the competence of the linguistic habitus of the actor; the amount and kind of symbolic capital the actor has access to; and, finally, by the occupational or class habitus that the actor may enact. All of these observations illustrate the hegemonic restrictions embedded in the symbolic fabric of a culture that constrain the expressive agency of the self. Changing linguistic or occupational/class habitus is not an easy thing to do as this suggests freedom of choice. It is my contention that the performance of both identity and narrative are to be considered as salient processual dynamics in the operation of hegemony. The following diagram, which is my analysis of the applicability of Bourdieu with regard the study of the processes that both protect and produce hegemony in organisations, draws together

Bourdieu's concepts of capital, linguistic habitus and linguistic markets under the heading of a general model of cultural reproduction, which I consider represents a process of hegemony:

Figure 2.1
Cultural Reproduction

Identity Regulator

Symbolic capital	→ Contributes towards determining the significant other
Linguistic Markets	→ Mediates reality construction
Linguistic Habitus	→ Constrains linguistic expression
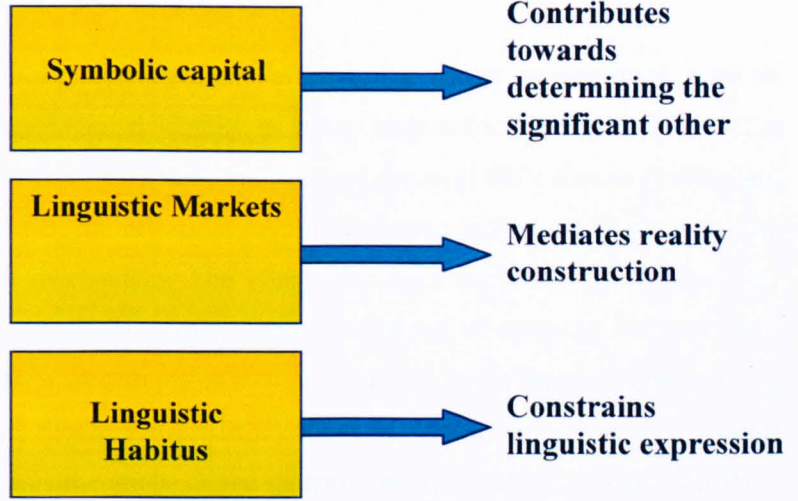
These concepts have rarely been employed in the study of the processes of corporate hegemony. Exceptions to this claim are to be found in the work of Ranson *et al* (1980) into the way symbolic structures are created and amended to facilitate the development of interpretive schemes and that of Oakes *et al* (1998) into the central functions of both language and power in the struggle for hegemonic control in organisational settings. The former research is non-empirical and works towards a synthesis of theory and the latter is an empirical investigation into the pedagogical function of business plans within the museum sector of a Canadian state.

Summary

In summary, corporate culturism can be analysed as a form of (more or less successful) hegemony. However, previous studies have been incomplete because they have presented a one-dimensional view of hegemony as a sociological concept. In doing so, they have

restricted critical examination of the philosophy that underpins corporate culturism; that being a *fully integrated culture*' (Willmott, 1993). Drawing upon the Gramscian perspective and the conceptual mechanisms of Bourdieu, we can analyse not only those examples in more depth but from different or broader perspectives. We can also analyse empirical examples to develop a deeper understanding of the processes that produce hegemony. At this juncture in my review I will consider the relationship between narrative and identity as hegemonic processes in more detail.

Section Four: Narrative and Identity as Processes of Hegemony

Humphreys and Brown (2002) researched the efforts of a senior management team to establish a monological organisational identity as a key hegemonic strategy. Prior to the work of Humphreys and Brown (2002), scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Kondo (1990); and Kunda (1992) have also studied the efforts of organisations to craft a monological identity for employees as a control mechanism. The client, that was the focus for the study of Humphreys and Brown, mediated this strategy through the use of narrative constructions. Such an approach to developing hegemony is well documented in the literature (Boje, 1995, 2001; Boje *et al*, 2004). The research site was a college of further education. At a general level their unit of analysis was the study of the dynamic interplay of discourse. At a focal level the authors investigated how the senior management team attempted to secure employee acquiescence through the authorship of organisational identity narratives in the pursuit of legitimisation of their hegemonic strategies. Central to their model is '*language use*' (Clegg, 1987; Foucault, 1980; Bourdieu, 1991; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005) and '*identity work*' (Feldman, 1984; Kondo, 1990; Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). The authors argue that for a hegemonic strategy to be successful, legitimacy is required as a key corporate resource. Legitimacy of narrative is important, claim the authors, so that alternative narratives that may dilute the effectiveness of the corporat narrative may be subjugated and written out of the intertexuality of the organisation.

The authors conceptualise both individual and collective identities as power effects. This conceptualisation of identity as a constituting a power effect was also made by scholars such as: Foucault (1980); Brown (2001); Alvesson and Willmott (2002); and Kareman and Alvesson (2004). Humphreys and Brown argue for longitudinal interpretive research into the process of both narrative construction and identity authorship to understand these phenomena both theoretically and empirically. Such approaches are now established in the

literature (Czarniawska, 1998; Boje, 2001; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). The authors theorise that organisations are social constructions and as such are created by '*networks of conversations*' (Boden, 1994; Boje, 1995; Ford, 1999), which serve to objectify reality for the organisational self. This line of theorising has been advanced by the work of scholars such as: Potter and Wetherell (1987); Kunda (1992); and Ford (1999).

Humphreys and Brown provide both an excellent theoretical and empirical illustration of hegemonic processes. Central to their thesis is the theory that the ruling elite employ centripetal forces (discursive forces in support of their hegemony) to manufacture both shared meanings and understandings, which they employ to privilege their own reality perspective over all others. This strategy has been reported in the work of scholars such as: Spradley (1980); Kunda (1992); Boje (1995); and Dawson and Buchanan (2005).

Reducing identity conflict, the authors argue, is important to achieving identity synergy. Identity synergy may be considered as contributing towards the construction of a unified world view of both the identity and purpose of the organisation, a theoretical perspective that is supported by the work of scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Oakes *et al* (1998); Boland and Tenksai (1995); and Karreman and Alvesson (2001). The function of the promotion of crafted organisational stories that support the legitimisation of the ruling elite and of their hegemonic strategies is cited as important in the production of hegemony by the authors and in this they make a similar point to: Boje (1995); Mumby (1993); and Whetten (1993). The authors illuminate the strategy of crafting an illusion of reciprocal interdependence which involves the actor desiring the identity approbation of the organisation and the organisation requiring the actor to positively identify with the organisational identity. This strategy is enacted through the dramaturgy of perceived salient values and norms that create a strong sense of '*we*' as opposed to '*us*' and '*them*' for consideration (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1992; Kobjoll, 2000). Finally, Humphreys and Brown theorise that the manipulation of the need of the organisational self to draw self-esteem from identification with the organisation aids hegemony (Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). They claim that in order to protect their idealised identity from which they draw much of their self-esteem, actors develop defensive discursive practices (centrifugal powers) that counter the hegemonic narrative of senior management (Goffman, 1959; Alvesson, 1990; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Dutton *et al*, 1994; Brown, 1997).

Humphreys and Brown (2002) claim the salient strategy for hegemonic success is that of acquiring legitimacy (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986). The authors argue that the importance of struggles over the phenomenon of identity and legitimacy require further research. Actors, they assert, can, if allowed '*author*' their own realities (Barker and Galasinski, 2001; Currie and Brown, 2003). The authors perceive the organisational actor as an author of his own reality or as a '*storytelling animal*' (Boje, 1995). The organisation may thus be conceptualised as being constituted by the complex intermeshing of such stories (Mumby, 1993; Boje, 1995, 2001; Pentland, 1999). Central to the work of Humphreys and Brown is the aim to illuminate for study the substantial language differences between individuals. They do this so that they may illustrate the dynamics of individual and collective identity construction (Fiol, 2002). Narratives, according to the authors, serve to locate identities in ongoing organisational discourse; a theoretical perspective on identity asserted in the work of scholars such as: Alvesson (1994); Antaki and Widdicombe (1998); Alvesson and Willmott (2002); Currie and Brown (2003) and to aid the self in developing a mature identity. Humphreys and Brown argue that identities are processually constructed through intertextual discursive practices an argument supported in the work of scholars such as: Boland and Tenksai (1995); Biddle and Rau (1997); Beech (2000); and Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003). Crucially, Humphreys and Brown assert that both individual and collective identity narratives are not the exclusive concern of the individual self but are governed by existing cultural conventions in the cultural scene that the organisational self occupies at any given point in time (Bourdieu, 1991).

The concept of identity work, which I understand as being grounded upon ongoing narratives and of considering identities as power effects, leads the authors to the view that the proper analysis of this phenomenon (Clegg, 1987) demands that the researcher is aware of hegemonic strategies discursive in style. This approach is well documented in the literature (Young, 1989; Oakes, *et al*, 1998; Boje, 2001; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005). Humphreys and Brown (2002) subsequently focus upon the processes of identification to develop their understanding of hegemony in practice. They employ Elsbach's (1999) model of identification categories to analyse the impact of narrative on the organisational self and the way in which the production of anti-narratives are influenced by the domain of identification the actor occupies at a given point in time. The following diagram illustrates Elsbach's (1999) tool for considering identification outcomes that may impact upon an actors reaction to a particular hegemony.

Figure 2.2: A Tool of Analysing Identification Outcomes Elsbach, (1999)

Identification	Dis - identification
Schizo -identification	Neutral-identification
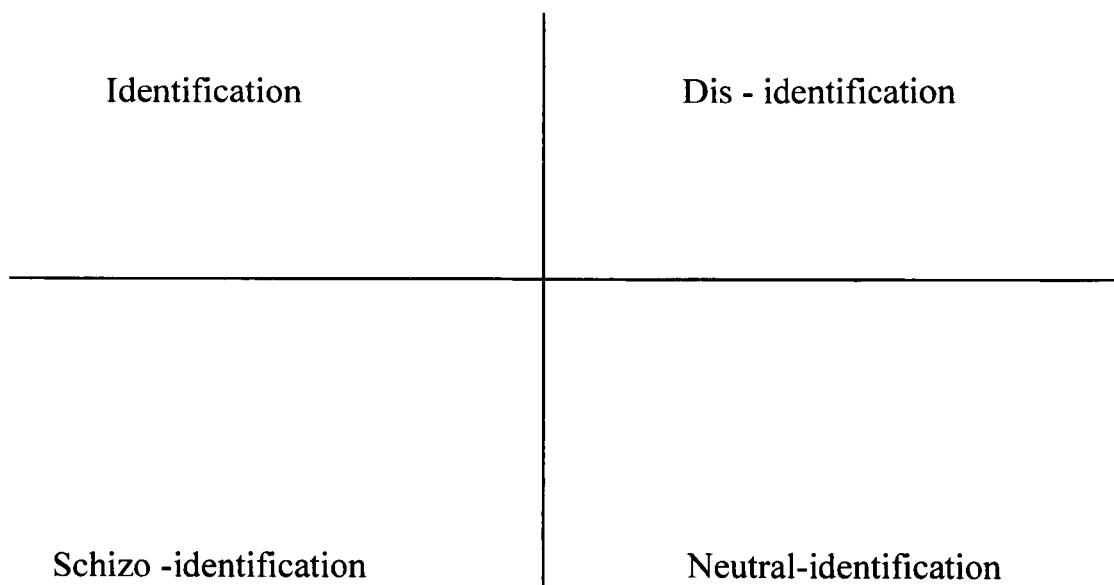
Identification involves the actor positively identifying with the hegemony. Dis-identification involves the actor not being able to identify with the hegemony. Schizo-identification involves both identification and dis-identification with the hegemony and, finally, Neutral-identification implies that the actor is indifferent to the meaning of the hegemony. The usefulness of this model is that through both the scenario planning and empirical analysis of identification outcomes both practitioners and managers can develop a 'feel' for the nature of potential resistance towards, and support for, a particular hegemony.

Another example of empirical research that explores identity control through the medium of hegemony is the work of Karreman and Alvesson (2004). These authors study the combined effect of technocratic control and socio-ideological control on employees in a knowledge intensive firm. In this context the authors acknowledge the prominence of the cultural debate which emphasises the idea that corporate culture can be controlled through the regulation of social identities as a means of achieving an integrated culture, a theory proposed by contributors to the debate surrounding corporate culturism such as: Feldman (1984); Schein (1985); Hatch and Schultz (1997); and Parker (2000).

The authors note the focus on organisations as socially constructed evolving entities (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) develops an empirical theme that perceives the resulting

organisational activities as increasingly occurring in the imaginary realm, a perspective of study that is growing in popularity in the literature (Linstead, 1999; Ford, 1999; Oswick *et al*, 2001; Phillips *et al*, 2004). The authors cite the development of studies into: '*organisational culture*' (Trice and Beyer, 1984, 91; Jackall, 1988; Schultz, 1994; Hatch and Schultz, 1997); '*identity, image and reputation*' (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Dutton *et al*, 1994; Brown, 1997; Hatch and Schultz, 1997); and '*organisational discourse*' (Boje, 1995; Boden, 1994; Phillips and Hardy, 1997; Currie and Brown, 2003) as evidence of this change in perspectives within the Organisation and Management Studies literature.

With the traditional industry of manufacturing declining and the industry sector of service/knowledge workers increasing in the West, Karreman and Alvesson assert that this shift in the constitution of industry has influenced managerial approaches to control from a traditional bureaucratic means of control to cultural/ideological or normative control. This is not a new argument and has been made earlier by scholars such as: Willmott (1993); Rosen (1985); and Rose (1989). The authors study the processes and relations between both bureaucratic means of control and cultural–ideological control. Central to the activity of managerial control the authors assert that management may be able to determine meaning and thus dominate alternative social groups through their executive authority within their organisational domain. This form of control is synonymous with the work of the pioneers of the 'management guru' such as: Taylor (1911); Barnard (1938); and Whyte (1959). Karreman and Alvesson (2004:149) develop a model they describe as: "*An Iron Cage of Subjectivity*". This concept manifests through the interweaving of control methods such as traditional HRM practices and methods of identity control which combine to grip the employee in a subjective prison of the mind (Rosen, 1985; Goffman, 1961; Morgan, 1997).

The authors define the two salient categories of control as '*socio–ideological control*' and '*technocratic control*'. The former is concerned with the way in which the self makes sense of its world (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001) and therefore focuses on the '*knowledge*' upon which it bases its belief system (Ranson *et al*, 1980; Alvesson, 1994; Oakes *et al*, 1998; Phillips *et al*, 2004). The latter is concerned with controlling the line of conduct the self selects following the symbolic interpretation that the self undergoes to create both its understanding of knowledge and the internalisation of its belief system. This form of control has been the focus of study by scholars such as: Goffman (1961); Kondo (1990); and Kunda (1992).

Karreman and Alvesson (2004) assert that organisational control should not be limited by a focus on behavioural methodologies synonymous with the work of early capitalist organisational gurus such as Taylor (1911); and Barnard (1938). The authors argue that the research gap that is apparent is the extent to which management both influence and control the production of consent or compliance of workers beyond standard bureaucratic mechanistic methods of control. The source of the effectiveness of managerial hegemony is argued to be the relationship between management control, social identity, and identification outcomes (Ashworth and Mael, 1989, 96; Alvesson, 2002). The authors claim that since both social identity and identification are socially constructed phenomena then it is also possible to influence and manage such symbolic and social constructions. Such a theoretical argument is well established in the literature (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson, 1994; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Their primary empirical and theoretical focus is on the self and its social identity, thus advancing earlier research into the phenomenon by scholars such as: Spradley and Manne (1975); Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); and Alvesson (1994).

Central to the idea of identity control attained through managerial hegemony, the two authors assert that the self has a psychological need for self-advancement, ontological stability and security (Mumby, 1993). The theory that underpins their work is that through a process of social categorisation actors construct a sense of both self and the other which determines culturally valued identities (Mead, 1934; Strauss, 1959; Mumby, 1993; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

Processes of identification are a key theme in the work of Karreman and Alvesson (2004) reflecting a trend in organisational studies demonstrated in the earlier work of scholars such as: Elsbach (1999); Alvesson and Willmott (2002); Humphreys and Brown (2002); Tsoukas and Chia (2002); and Beech and Huxham (2003).The premise of their theory is explained as actors having a need for acceptance by the other; homogeneity of perspective and of defining their social identity and that of the other through dimensions of symbolic contrast in social categories already in existence. If actors socially construct their identities from social categories that either exist, are being modified, or are in the making via a process of identification, then this identification process should, the authors argue, be open to managerial intervention to operate as a hegemonic device.

The units of analysis that was the focus of the work of Karreman and Alvesson are both the micro human interaction of actors and their experience of organisational ideational pressures

towards corporate uniformity and conformity. By means of an ethnographic study of the two themes of structural control and ideological control, the authors develop their theory of managerial control through the metaphor of the *'iron cage of subjectivity'* which is fundamentally concerned with corporate hegemony. Central to the theory that the authors develop is the relationship between cultural context and structural arrangements such as: job evaluation; career prospects; feed back mechanisms; performance reviews; disciplinary; and conduct monitoring procedures etc.

The emergent theory the authors generate is that what may result from a process of producing or maintaining hegemony mediated through identity control is a homogeneous collective mind-set, a theoretical position asserted in the work of: Boje (1995); Schein (1996); and Johnson (2000) which is based on definitional compliance of the self (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Brown, 1994; Ezzamel *et al*, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). The outcome of this hegemony, if successful, is that the organisational self becomes a prisoner of the organisational *'theatre of the mind'* (Mangham and Overington, 1987).

Regulation of identity as a means of control is further examined by the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002). The authors define identity regulation as follows: *"identity regulation encompasses the more or less intentional affects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction."*(2002:5).What is particularly interesting in the previous definition is the idea of identity being controlled not only intentionally but sometimes unintentionally (Alvesson, 2002). The unintentional aspect of identity regulation and indeed the unintended production of hegemony is an area that empirically has not as yet received much attention, a claim that has been asserted in the work of Alvesson (2002); and Alvesson and Willmott (2002).

Alvesson and Willmott study how managers employ techniques to manufacture subjectivity for consumption as a particular form of organisational experience. This approach to organisational control has been documented in the literature previously by scholars such as: Goffman (1959); Kunda (1992); and Willmott (1993). This pursuit of hegemony mediated through attempts to manipulate the subjectivity of the self is intended to function as a constraining force, which potentially may control the expressive capacity of the organisational self (Goffman, 1961; Rosen, 1985). The authors note that many of the studies into identity control neglect the discursive and reflexive processes of identity regulation dynamics within the context of organisations. The authors introduce the concept of *'identity*

work' as a significant medium and outcome of organisational control. They argue that notably induction, training, and promotion procedures, which may be considered as hegemonic narratives, are developed in ways that have implications for the shaping of identity and thus reality constructions.

The authors point out that traditional conceptualisations of organisational control have orientated towards behaviourist orthodoxy rather than from a Symbolic Interactionist perspective, whereby the unit of analysis is meaning construction, its production and dissemination. Their research takes a contrasting perspective to behaviourism and is driven by the question: *"How is organisational control accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organisation with which they may become more or less identified and committed?"*(Alvesson and Willmott, 2002:2). The authors assert that identity is an important, yet still insufficiently researched aspect of organisational control. Their research question is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between the discursively constituted self (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Brissett and Edgley, 2006) and organisational narrative and control (Mumby, 1993; Whetten, 1993; Humphreys and Brown, 2002).

One of the techniques for identity work that Alvesson and Willmott (2002) cite is the totalising practice of concertative control via the medium of work teams, an empirical observation which has been made previously by theorists such as: Whyte (1959); Bartunek (1984); Young (1989); and Alvesson (1994). The dramaturgical expression of evangelistic scripts that promise liberation and self-actualisation to the organisational self (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Deal and Kennedy, 1992) are employed by the corporate elite, argue the authors, to secure compliance with corporate wisdom and commitment to organisational goals and synergy between the organisational self and the organisational identity. Central to this strategy is the illusion of empowerment (Hardy, 1985). They claim that the link between organisational identity and self-identity is crucial with regard to identity control (Whetten, 1993; Boje, 1995; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Alvesson, 2000; Doolin, 2002). The authors assert that when the organisation becomes the significant other (Mead, 1934) for the organisational self, then corporate identity work may shape the identity construction of the self (Dutton *et al*, 1994; Gioia, and Thomas, 1996; Hatch and Schultz, 1997, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Beech and Huxham, 2003).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) explicitly introduced hegemony into their discussion when they argued that in stable situations the organisational self as a narrative is a fairly constant and familiar entity to the actor. During stable times the organisational self-identity of the actor is in the main assumed and not consciously articulated. This stability of self-conception is dependent, argue the authors, upon the dominant position of a hegemonic discourse within which the self-identity is both conceptualised and discursively constituted. A coherent set of social identities, they argue, is fundamental to actors functioning in the post-modern world. They claim that the need for identity coherency, or cohesion, is a key determinant in the production of hegemony. This was also the theoretical position of Gramsci, (1971). As with Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), the authors focus empirically on the role of discourse with regard to the processes of identity work. They claim that identities are formed, embedded, amended and communicated through the medium of discourse. In this sense identity can be considered as an 'ongoing narrative construction' (Mumby, 1993; Barry and Elmes, 1997; Czarniawska, 1998; Beech, 2000; Fiol, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003).

The authors argue that hegemony as a controlling device affects identity constructions through the management and filtering of available discourses and subjectivities. This argument is now established in the literature (Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986; Clegg, 1987, 1989; Bourdieu, 1991; Currie and Brown, 2003). This form of hegemony is concerned with privileging identification outcomes (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). It is concerned with producing authored impositions of corporately prescribed self-identities. Authored identity impositions on the part of the significant other, argue the authors, suppress the expressive capacity for actors to construct and enact self-identities and/or reality interpretations that dis-identify with the hegemony. Self-identities that are not compatible with the hegemonic discursive narratives of what constitutes both the organisational identity and the identity of the organisational self are rejected simply by not being recognised as legitimate. Scholars such as: Kunda (1992); Boje (1995); Doolin (2002); and Dawson and Buchanan (2005) have also made this point.

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) argue that the construction of alternative realities in organisational context is empirically problematic. This is due to the actors restricted access to symbolic resources such as material conditions, linguistic or occupational/class habitus, cultural norms and existing power relations. Hegemony thus is not considered as a unilateral phenomenon. For a particular hegemony to dominate it must involve conflict over the meaning of objects, the membership of the self to a social category and numerous contested

reality claims. Organisations are regarded by the authors as symbolic battlegrounds, where the prize is the privileging of reality and identity claims (Clegg, 1989; Parker, 2000) over alternatives, or as sites of hegemonic struggle (Bocock, 1986)

Alvesson and Willmott, cliam that is not necessarily the accessibility or frequency of discourses that are salient for attaining hegemony mediated through identity control but rather the craft of connecting discourse to identity constructions and processes. This requires access to relationship power. The contribution that Alvesson and Willmott make to the debate concerning hegemony is to explicate the methods through which the regulation of identity is achieved. The authors provide an overview of how identity is influenced, regulated and changed within organisations. They state that their work aims to create a research agenda that concentrates upon the phenomenon of identity regulation. For the regulation of identity to be effective, the authors argue, the regulatory methods applied must have *'cultural valence'*. The authors claim that for a identity control method to influence the self-identity of the actor it must be culturally and emotionally meaningful to them, otherwise the self-reflexive process will not be activated and the identity control intervention will not work. This perspective of self-awareness draws upon Mead's (1934) social identity theory.

Summary

In summary it is established within the literature that through a process of narrative or the *'mobilization of language'*, meaning is constructed (Schattschneider, 1960; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bourdieu, 1991; Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips *et al*, 2004). This assertion places narrative central to social construction theory and thus central to any theory of hegemony. The literature reviewed thus far denies organisations the status of being discursively monolithic (Boje, 1991; Ford, 1999; Oswick and Richards, 2004) and asserts in contrast that organisations are discursively pluralistic and polyphonic, (Hazen, 1993; Boje, 1995; Cairns and Beech, 2003).

The role that *'centrifugal forces'* (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) performed in impeding managerially inspired hegemony are illustrated as being critical to its success (Kondo, 1990; Parker, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The objective of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the nature of such hegemonic practices by focusing on the research question: *'What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?'* By drawing mainly upon the work of: Goffman (1959); Gramsci

(1971); Bourdieu (1991); and Humphreys and Brown (2002) supported by empirical research I will develop a theory that is based upon conceptualising the processes of hegemony as being mediated through narrative which is both privileged and enacted within a dramaturgical setting which constitutes an organising domain (Spradley, 1980).

From the perspective of Humphreys and Brown (2002) hegemony is concerned with the efforts of a senior management team to engage in the authorship of a particular organisational identity narrative. The authors study the research participants attempts to neutralise the emergence of politically viable alternative dialogues that may challenge their narrative. Humphreys and Brown also argue that reality is shaped by the discourses that are available to organisational actors (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bourdieu, 1991). Essentially Humphreys and Brown's thesis is that managers may control employees through the manufacturing and enactment of organisational realities that serve as hegemonic devices, a control strategy that is well documented in the literature (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Kunda, 1992; Clark and Mangham, 2004). Employees may become compliant because there is no definable reality they feel they can construct that stands in opposition to a managerial inspired hegemony (Boje, 1995).

Finally, identity and identification outcomes are placed central to current theorising with regard hegemony in organisations. The review demonstrated that the emerging view in the literature is that identity may be considered as a socially constructed, dynamic and discursive entity; that the power to author identities is a form of hegemony; and that the process of identity authorship is mediated through both linguistic and written narrative. It can be argued that identification outcomes, (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) influence the nature and vigour of centripetal or centrifugal forces, which stand either for or against a particular hegemony in organisations. I will now consider the conceptualisation of power in the literature and in particular I will present a discussion that aims to develop an understanding of the concept of hegemony as a form of power.

Section Five: Hegemony as a Form of Power

How should we conceptualise power? Is it as Dahl (1961) stated that A has power over B to do something that B would not otherwise do? Is power a socially constructed phenomenon (Clegg, 1987, 1989; Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998), which by its symbolic character implies that power can be defined as follows? A sometimes has power over B to do something that B

would not otherwise do if *B* recognises the power of *A*. But what if power may be exercised and reacted to without formal recognition of its presence between actors? Lukes (2005) recognises that hegemony as a power effect may manifest in a way that actors are subject to, but do not recognise its empirical effects. For example, hegemony can operate in such a way that people believe they are acting under free will, but unbeknown to them, there are influences on how they act (Chomsky, 1992). This is what Lukes terms as his '*third dimension of power*'. This formulation of power requires that power be perceived not as an objective entity that is owned by the powerful but rather as being embedded between the inter-subjective relationships of actors. In this conceptualisation power is understood as constituting a socially constructed meaning that develops through interaction. Power therefore is always "*on loan*" to those who are permitted access to it (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998).

This social relationship view of power is contrary to the classic conceptions of its character as proposed by Dahl (1961). In his research Dahl (1961) plotted assumed causal relations between decisions made in public sector agencies. These causal relations were determined by an analysis of the winners and losers in decision-making contests. Put simply, the winners were credited with having power and the losers without. This view of power has become known as '*the one dimensional view*' (Lukes, 2005) and places the analytical emphasis on observable behaviour (Polsby 1963; Wolfinger, 1971a). According to the one-dimensional view of power the existence of conflict is a prerequisite for its operation (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970; Hardy, 1985; Clegg, 1989; Lukes 2005). Lukes observes that latent conflict is not written in to this theory of power (Alvesson, 2002).

Bachrach and Baratz (1970) introduced a competing paradigm to explain the concept of power that has become known as the '*two dimensional view*'. The authors do not deny the validity of the one dimensional view that defines power as being observable in decision making events when *A* wins the outcomes of decisions over *B*. They argue, however, that this is too restrictive a view of power. According to Bachrach and Baratz, power is also employed when *A* is able to decide which issues enter the decision making process and which do not, an observation further developed in the work of Lukes (1975, 2005). This strategic use of power is more sophisticated and arguably more effective than the one-dimensional view because it allows for a ruling elite to prevent any issues being brought in to a decision making forum that may be decided upon against the sectional interests of dominant groups. In so far as *A* can establish the social conditions that provide barriers to *B*

from having his grievance or wants aired in a decision making forum then *A* has power over *B*. Also *A* has, for the time being, relegated conflict to the status of being both latent and unobservable in a concrete sense (Pettigrew, 1979; Pfeffer, 1992; Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998). This concept of power has been defined by Schattschneider (1960:71) as *"The Mobilization of Bias"*, who claims that: *"All forms of political organizations have a bias in favour of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others, because organisation is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out."*

Bachrach and Baratz broke with the realist tradition in positing their two - dimensional view of power and provided a discursive space for considering the symbolic face of power as a socially constructed phenomenon that could be conceptualised in cultural terms, a concept of power argued for in the work of scholars such as: Pettigrew (1979); Bourdieu (1991); and Alvesson (2002). This perspective on power, as a symbolic construct, and therefore as a cultural production, is made explicit in their argument that the concept of the '*mobilization of bias*' is constituted by: *"a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures ("rules of the game") that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others"* (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 43-4). The authors note that contrary to the one - dimensional view of power, the decision of *B* not to act because he/she has assessed the probable reaction of *A* is itself a decision and an observable one at that. In summary, a two - dimensional view of power would necessitate the study of both kinds of decision-making, the primary focus for empirical enquiry being the identification of 'potential issues' (Lukes, 2005).

Lukes (2005) observes that the work of Dahl and scholars such as Bachrach and Baratz, have one distinctive thing in common that being their emphasis on observable conflict, be it overt or covert in form. These scholars assume, argues Lukes, that if there is no evidence of conflict, either overt or covert, then one must assume that harmony and consensus exist in the organisation. To offer a counter balance to this theory of power as developed in both the one and two-dimensional views so far discussed Lukes presents '*the three-dimensional view*'. Alvesson (2002:121), in support of Lukes third dimension of power, states that:*"Power does not only produce visible effects, but it is also vital to an understanding of inaction; why grievances do not exist, why demands are not made, why conflict does not arise and why certain actors appear as authorities whom people voluntarily obey."* Lukes third dimension of power argues that power is legitimised through cultural and normative

assumptions concerning the nature of reality. In this context power is exercised through the management of subjectivities and this involves the management of meaning (Gramsci, 1971; Ranson *et al*, 1980; Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Lukes third dimension of power, is therefore empirically and theoretically grounded in the idea that power may be employed to manipulate actors into a regime of political inactivity (Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998). Therefore this dimension is predicated on the idea that the role of power may be to prevent conflict from arising in the first place, thus maintaining the status quo through the medium of meaning management (Ranson *et al*, 1980; Alvesson, 2002).

Through the production of beliefs and norms for public consumption, Lukes argues that power can be used to secure the appearance of legitimacy to lead on the part of the ruling elite and thus visible coercive means of control are replaced by covert cultural means of control. This perspective on the use of culture as a form of social control has been the focus of studies such as: Rosen (1985); Young (1989); Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); Willmott (1993); and Alvesson and Willmott (2002). The strategy of legitimisation employed by powerful actors to secure dominance over other groups involves the dramaturgy of making any challenge to their claimed authority appear illegitimate (Rosen, 1985; Bourdieu, 1991; Pfeffer, 1992). The ruling elite seeks to make their right to rule as the inevitable consequence of the existing order of daily experience and political challenge is thwarted by a process of counter politics that results in emerging issues being presented as irrelevant and non-consequential (Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998). In summary, Lukes third dimension of power can be understood as being concerned with establishing a form of oppressive hegemony.

Power, when considered within a cultural dynamic perspective, states Alvesson (2002), is at its most potent when actors are involved in *'cultural becoming'*. This concept involves a battle for the development of particular ideas, employment of alternative discourses, and negotiation of accepted norms between organisational actors (Young, 1989; Willmott, 1993; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). Alvesson (2002:125) quotes Deetz and Mumby (1986:376) to illustrate the previous point: *"Generally, dominance is manifested not in significant political acts but rather in the day-to-day, taken for granted nature of organisational life. As such, the exercise of power and domination exists at a routine level, further protecting certain interests and allowing the order of organisational life to go largely unquestioned by its members."* This is the essence of the operation of hegemony as a form of domination. Hegemonic dominance, argues Alvesson, is achieved through the symbolic use

of power and ideology in a cultural context an argument advanced previous in the work of scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Bocock (1986); and Bourdieu (1991).

Alvesson (2002) asserts that the focus of research into power should not be on defining power or of establishing its limitations. In contrast, Alvesson argues that the researcher should focus on what the notion of power sensitises them towards. This alternative way of thinking about power, he argues, provides the scholar with a tight focus and a clear benchmark for both reason and interpretation when considering empirical observations and their theoretical consequences. He argues that attention should be paid to issues involving both agency and knowledge ownership when considering hegemony. With regard to the latter, Alvesson cites Foucault (1980) who emphasises access to knowledge as a resource being employed to facilitate the definition of a particular view of reality, which in turn acts as a constraining device in relation to both choice and behaviour of actors (Bourdieu, 1991).

This alternative conception of power posited by Foucault (1980) rejects the idea of a 'sovereign power' which asserts the idea that the actor can both own and mobilise power as a resource, an understanding of power advanced by scholars such as: Dahl (1961); Polsby (1963); and Bachrach and Baratz (1970). Alternatively, Foucault conceives of power as being embedded in the web of relations and discourses that constitute society, a theoretical argument supported by the work of scholars such as: Bourdieu, (1986, 1991); Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998); Johnson (2000); and Lukes (2005). Foucault argues that all actors are constrained in a web of inter subjectivity and power relations. Within the 'cultural paradigm' (Johnson, 2000) the actor has no certainty that her desired outcomes will be realised even if she has access to the activation of resources or engages in 'meaning management' (Lukes, 2005). In this perspective power is not considered as a resource variable that can be employed by actors to achieve an end, a resource that is both dominated and controlled by an elite ruling group. Power from Foucault's perspective traps all actors within its sphere of control and influence, and therefore all actors are constrained to act within the boundaries of this power and relational construct.

Foucault rejects the mechanistic model of power in favour of the inter-subjective discourse constituted account of power, a position favoured by contemporary scholars such as: Johnson (2000); Alvesson (2002); and Lukes (2005). From Foucault's perspective actors are not autonomous beings with fixed identities capable of independent action. In contrast he argues that they are socially constructed entities with multiple fragmented identities, which are

influential subject to being socially recognised as being so, with the latter being dependent on cultural settings. This theory of identity supports recent studies by scholars such as: Beech (2000); Alvesson and Karreman (2002); and Karreman and Alvesson (2004).

According to Foucault the cultural effects of interconnected knowledge constitute the identity of an actor in relation to other identities and power themes allready in existence. Knowledge of any kind, argues Foucault, is culturally produced. Knowledge is established as being the '*right kind of knowledge*' through historically embedded relationships that have been culturally produced and into which the actor is born (Bourdieu, 1991; Kuhn, 1996). Finally, critical to Foucault's conceptualisation of power is the idea that identities are also culturally produced. Hence power can be understood as the source of all meaning; it is arguably one of the central dynamics in cultural production and therefore the social construction of reality (Mead, 1934; Bourdieu, 1991; Pfeffer, 1992). This is, I believe, the key to understanding narrative and identity as a hegemonic process. The essence of Foucault's theoretical model is that prevailing discourses suspended in power relations constitute reality.

Building on Lukes three-dimensional view of power, Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998) develop a fourth dimension of power. The authors employ the concept of empowerment programs as a contrasting device to critique Lukes model of three-dimensions of power and to develop an argument for the credibility of their fourth-dimension. The research question that drives the argument of the authors is stated as follows: "*Why do empowerment programmes often fail?*" Their emerging hypothesis is that the failure of empowerment programmes may be explained if scholars study the use of power behind the rhetoric of empowerment. The empirical dynamics of power as a multi dimensional phenomenon can, they argue, be represented in a four dimensional model. Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998) assert that Lukes model did not go far enough with his conceptualisation of the concept of power. The authors employ their model to compare and contrast the dominant theoretical approaches to researching power in the literature. They also employ their model as a lens through which to view the empirical analysis of power in context. The authors regard power as a complex multidimensional concept.

Hardy and O'Sullivan dispute the emphasis that researchers have historically placed on conflict being a necessary condition for the manifestation and the study of power. They argue for a broader reconceptualisation of power to gain a deeper understanding of the

strategies that actors employ with regard to its mobilisation by powerful actors (Lukes, 2005). The authors provide a useful summary of Lukes three-dimensional model of power inclusive of their developed fourth dimension, which conceptualises power in a way that has implications for developing a theoretical understanding of hegemony;

The Four-Dimensional Model of Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998)

1ST **Dimension:** Actors use various resources to decide the outcome of decision-making processes.

2nd **Dimension:** Power is exercised by controlling access to decision making processes.

3rd **Dimension:** Power is legitimised through cultural and normative assumptions; therefore power is exercised by managing the meanings that shape socially constructed realities.

4th **Dimension:** Power is embedded in the very fabric of the system; it constrains how we see, what we see, and how we think, in ways that limits our capacity for resistance.

The authors derived their inspiration for the fourth dimension from the study on power reported by Foucault (1980). Power whilst dramaturgically presented, in the last analysis, according to both Bourdieu and Foucault, resides in relationships mediated through language use, a theory supported by the studies of Hardy (1985); and Pfeffer (1992). Symbolic power is socially constructed through the utterance of words as language (Blumer, 1969; Cohen, 1985; Jackson and Carter, 2000) and it is available only if the speaker is perceived by their audience to have legitimacy to speak with power (Gramsci, 1971). Therefore symbolic power is understood to be both embedded and mediated by discourse and exercised through identities (Bourdieu, 1991; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Language is considered as the symbolic medium by which culture and society and therefore reality, is constructed (Strauss, 1959; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Ford, 1999). Power in this sense is a subjective entity that is linked strategically for its mobilisation to the concept of legitimacy which is dependent on identity constructions (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Alvesson, 2002). In the absence of legitimacy, the ability to mobilise power disintegrates because power is fundamentally a relationship construct that derives its value from the socially constructed identities of actors (Gramsci, 1971, Bocock, 1986).

When discussing the third dimension of power, Lukes (2005:11) declared that power is often used to shape actors: *"perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things."* This understanding of the use of power underpins the studies conducted by: Hardy (1985); Deetz (1992); Mumby (1993); and Willmott, (1993). This conceptualisation of power does not draw away from the reference point of conflict, rather it should sensitise researchers to examining the dynamics of consensus, political inertia or apathy surrounding issues of power (Alvesson, 2000). This kind of power is employed to render actors politically inactive and by default supportive of the right of leaders to enact leadership claims and to develop policies that are perceived to be in their best interests. I believe that this is effectively what corporate hegemony as a power constraint is concerned with.

Summary

In summary, power is conceptually complicated. I have shown above for discussion purposes the main themes that constitute power as a body of theory. What is apparent from the literature is that power is understood to be a product and framing of symbolic interaction or sense making. A developed conceptualisation of power is, I believe, fundamental to developing a theory of hegemony. For example hegemony can be conceived of as a form of power . Hegemony constrains or enables the expressive capacity of actors to self-author and expresses their own identity narratives. Hegemony constrains/ enables the expressive agency of actors to construct and enact different reality perspectives.

Hegemony as a dimension of power can be considered as a means of socio-ideological control or, alternatively, it can be interpreted as a form of power employed to achieve emancipatory projects. All of the examples provided in this brief review of the literature on power have two things in common: (1) that power is somehow embedded in relationships; and (2) power is defined as being active through the inter-subjectivity of actors mediated through relationships. I think that this observation of commonality implies power is a symbolic construct that is embedded in the socially constructed meaning of cultural groups. This meaning is communicated through the medium of language. Finally, the review illustrates the theory that language mediates power through meaning construction and as such arguably all meaning is derived from power relations between the self and the other.

Section Six: Closing discussion

The key theoretical idea that has driven this literature review is that cultural productions such as: symbolic capital; identity cohesion; legitimacy; narrative; and dramaturgy should be considered as salient micro cultural processes that produce hegemony. Alvesson and Willmott (2002:621) call for research that investigates the processes of cultural-ideological modes of control, which make explicit the specific means, targets and media of control through which the regulation of identity is accomplished. Therefore identity is to be considered as fundamental to the debate on hegemony. Hardy and Phillips, (1999) also call for more research into the processes of socio-ideological control in organisations. The literature review has demonstrated that consideration of the processes that produce hegemony is currently an important field of research (Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986; Boje, *et al*, 1999; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

Both Czarniawska (1986), and Alvesson and Willmott (2002) call for micro intensive studies that illuminate actual hegemonic practices. The hegemonic practices that are of particular interest are those that may be so institutionalised that they remain broadly below the level of consciousness yet continue to be effective at the utilisation of identity processes as control mechanisms (Alvesson, 2002; Lukes, 2005). The review has demonstrated that cultural productions such as drama, linguistic habitus, linguistic markets and symbolic capital are examples of conceptual properties of culture that enable hegemony to function as both an enabling and constraining device in direct relation to identity. The work of scholars such as: Rosen (1985); Bourdieu (1986, 1991) and Alvesson (2002) provide evidence of these phenomena in operation. The combination of these conceptual elements potentially facilitate an '*iron grip*' on the subjectivity of the self (Willmott, 1993; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) and the range of identity constructions that are available to the actor (Bourdieu, 1991; Kunda, 1992). Identities are indeed, as Kondo (1990) argued, crafted. The review has also demonstrated that there are calls for grounded studies that situate drama, narrative and identity, central to the production of hegemony in corporate settings (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Alvesson, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

It has been argued that the self-identities of actors are socially crafted through the process of habitus (Bourdieu, 1991;), a process which is embedded and mediated in every day talk (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998). The literature also suggests that identities once crafted are objectified through the process of Symbolic Interaction (Blumer, 1969) and enacted via the processes of drama (Rosen, 1985). Bourdieu (1991) explains that the accumulation of

symbolic capital both constrains and enables new self-identities, which may emerge throughout the life experience of the actor. Hegemonic narrative (Boje, 1995; Boje *et al*, 1999; Boje, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003); linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1991; Turner, 2003); and language games (Mauws and Phillips, 1995 and Ford 1999) all function to both constrain and enable the expression of identity through linguistic habitus.

The review demonstrated that social constructivists consider that the power of the dominant group can, and does, influence the cultural construction and performance of attitudes, behaviours and discourses in organisations (Johnson, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Social constructivists argue that asymmetrical relations of power and ideologies which seek to preserve and privilege a particular cultural reality may "blind" the subordinated actors to alternative social realities (Hardy, 1985; Lukes, 2005). Actors may be aware of the alternative cultural possibilities but feel dis-empowered as a result of the constraining effect of corporate hegemony (Alvesson, 2002). As argued by Alvesson (2002), hegemony may be achieved through the symbolic use of power in a cultural scene (Spradley, 1980) by privileging particular expressive events. Alvesson argues that hegemony as a form of power is embedded in the symbolic fabric of the organisation and may be conceptualised as being culturally institutionalised. In this Alvesson makes a similar point to that of others such as Bourdieu (1991) and Maclean, *et al* (2006). Research into the processes of corporate hegemony as a form of intentional or unintentional cultural control is an area that is currently underdeveloped as a research theme (Hardy, 1985; Alvesson, 2002).

Alvesson (2002) calls for further study of the ways in which symbolic or ideological power can be realised unintentionally by powerful actors in the minds of less powerful actors beyond the intentions of the dominant ruling elite. The unintentional aspect of identity regulation and indeed the unintended production of hegemony is an area that empirically has not as yet received much attention in the literature. Actors may self-subordinate their choice of agency as a result of the symbolic construction and interpretation of signs without the conscious application of such power mechanisms by the powerful (Rosen, 1985; Hardy and O'Sullivan 1998). Another area of research that requires attention concerns the possibility that hegemony may be an organic phenomenon that develops over time without any real intent on the part of the ruling elite (Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

The review demonstrated that culture as a constraint mediated through identity control has the potential of *freezing* a particular perspective on social reality (Johnson, 2000; Alvesson, 2002). It does this by excluding alternative discourses that create the very possibility of cultural change by opening up for discussion a review of existing ideologies, practices, and social/political/strategic and technological orientations (Schein, 1996; Ford, 1999). However, as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) assert, we need to know more about the processes of linking discourse to processes of self-identity formation and reproduction.

The review of the literature has further demonstrated that identity processes and constructions are not based on an equal distribution of expression equipment (Rosen, 1985; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The uneven distribution of expressive equipment amounts to an uneven distribution of power with regard to the shaping of cultural reality (Mangham and Overington, 1987; Mumby, 1988). Alvesson (2002) asserts that the role of power in shaping cultural realities is crucial to understanding the cultural creation and development of modern society. This principle, I believe, also applies to understanding the function of hegemony in shaping organisational reality perspectives.

The work of scholars such as Humphreys and Brown (2002) and Currie and Brown (2003) demonstrate the existence of both centripetal and centrifugal forces in organisations, which may influence the outcome of hegemonic struggles. This perspective illustrates the plurivocal nature of organisations, which renders the functionalist perspective of an integrated culture that is based on the harmonious consensus of meaning (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Schein, 1985, 1996; Deal and Kennedy, 1992) highly problematic. The concept of organisations as sites of hegemonic struggle (Bocock, 1986) introduces a new paradigm with which to consider organisations. As I have argued, the corporate culturism literature is concerned with advancing an awareness of the production of corporate hegemony in organisations as a form of socio-ideological control. Whilst this literature does not define hegemony in specific terms my interpretation is that hegemony is the underlying concept that underpins much of this literature which presents hegemony, in the main, as a unitary concept. It implies that hegemony manifests only within the domain of senior management. This is too restrictive a view.

The review has further demonstrated that hegemony is portrayed in the literature as a form of power that is effective because of the privileging of managerial discourse over all other competing discourse (Rosen, 1985; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003).

Much of this literature refers back to Gramsci's (1971) foundational work. However, this review has argued that the prevailing way in which hegemony is interpreted underplays significant elements of Gramsci's original in producing a one-sided negative view of hegemony (Bocock, 1986). Gramsci conceived of hegemony as a multi-dimensional concept that provided a theory of social change. Gramsci developed his theory of hegemony as a practical theory for social change that offers a broader conception. It is argued that few empirical studies have employed Gramsci's holistic concept of hegemony as an analytical device. This study intends to adopt this line of thinking as a route to answering the call of Karreman and Alvesson (2004) to research micro cultural processes of normative practice.

The view that prevails in the literature is that hegemony is a form of power that is used to dominate on the part of the powerful. However, Gramsci offers a broader conceptualisation of hegemony, incorporating three dimensions: (1) as a theory of social change; (2) as a form of power; and (3) as a form of social construction. There is also a research gap into studying the hegemonic processes that facilitate cultural reproduction. There are few practitioner focused reflective models in the literature that enables managers to consider hegemony in advance of, during and after change. There is a need for research into the micro cultural processes that produce and protect hegemony in a corporate setting. There is also a requirement to pull together the current disparate theories of hegemony into a coherent synthesis that presents a composite model of the processes of hegemony.

Finally, Alvesson (2002) states that many of the studies concerning cultural management are essentially addressing issues surrounding power. He further asserts that in the main, these theorists make no explicit reference to this fact. Alvesson sums up the propensity for the integrationist and functionalist approach to cultural change which is popular in the literature and both consultancy and managerial practice when he argues that a reluctance to acknowledge how hegemonic practices culturally reproduce and protect asymmetrical relations of power in organisations renders functionalist research projects studies politically naïve. One can interpret this as a call for research into the processes of hegemony that facilitate the cultural reproduction of existing power relations and social systems within organisations (Bourdieu, 1991). Karreman and Alvesson (2001:60) argue: *"Our understanding of specific processes of reality construction in, between and around organisations is poor. As many authors have pointed out, there is a lack of in-depth studies of specific acts, events and of processes."* The organising domain as an analytical device facilitates the indepth study of a repeated single event through which narratives are organised

into hegemonic themes, a process that is mediated by the interactive interplay of micro cultural processes. What shall now follow are the research questions stimulated by this literature review.

Introducing the Research Questions

The following questions were employed in my study to guide the research project. Question one is the primary question and questions two through seven are sub-questions designed to focus the research:

1. What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?

2. What function does an organising domain have with regard to the production of hegemony?

3. What activities are undertaken within the organising domain, from which hegemony is produced?

4. How does hegemony migrate throughout an organisation?

5. What function does cultural valence have in the process of producing and enabling the migration of hegemony?'

6. To what extent is it the case that hegemonic processes are un-intentional acts, not just intentional acts of managers or individuals?

7. What factors influence the outcome of hegemonic struggles throughout organisations?

The first question frames the research problem and concerns the idea that the interplay of hegemonic processes both produces and protects hegemonic themes. The production of hegemony, it will be argued, takes place in organising domains. The question arising from this line of theorising is stated as: *'What function does an organising domain have with regard to the production of hegemony?'* An organising domain may be considered as a social place were a group of actors gather together on a regular basis and through which hegemonic

themes are affirmed, changed, amended and renewed mediated through a process of narrative construction and review (Spradley, 1980; Rosen, 1985). The organising domain also functions as an analytical device to facilitate the study of hegemonic processes. The next question: *'What activities are undertaken within the organising domain, from which hegemony is produced?'* is concerned with understanding the micro interactions, power plays, sense making and forms of talk that actors engage in within the organising domain that results in the production of hegemony.

The next line of enquiry concerns the mobility of hegemonic themes throughout the organisation once they have been developed in the organising domain. Humphreys and Brown (2002) consider narrative as constituting the fundamental vehicle for hegemony to travel throughout organisations. However, what is required is a more detailed understanding of how to conceptualise the migratory dynamics of hegemony once it is understood and developed in the organising domain and subsequently filters and spreads through the organisation at the micro, meso and macro to constrain the expressive agency of actors at those levels. The question which I believe is best suited to exploring this line of enquiry can be stated as: *'How does hegemony migrate throughout the organisation?'* This question concerns migration and considers the dynamic form of hegemony and how it is vulnerable to being altered. It also considers the dramaturgy of presenting hegemony in multiple organising domains and the role of the actor in this dramaturgical process.

With regard to the issue of valency it has been suggested that this phenomenon is important to both meaning construction and identification processes (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). It follows that the function of valency should be considered in an investigation of hegemonic processes. Therefore a question that could guide such an enquiry is stated as: *'What function does cultural valence have in the process of producing and enabling the migration of hegemony?'* This question discusses the way that cultural valence influences critical engagement in the hegemony on the part of actors. It also helps to explain why in some cases what appears to be acquiescence towards the hegemony on the part of actors may be passive indifference that disguises a latent counter hegemony that is yet to be triggered as the hegemony is not important to the actor.

The idea that hegemony should be considered as both a deliberate outcome of management intent and simultaneously as an unintended outcome of managerial activity should be considered as pertinent to understanding the processes of hegemony (Alvesson, 2002;

Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). The question that emerges from this line of thought is stated as: '*To what extent is it the case that hegemonic processes are un-intentional acts, not just intentional acts of managers or individuals?*' By exploring this question through empirical study, it will be demonstrated how hegemonic outcomes can be both intended and unintended. Further, the organic nature of hegemony as a manifestation of the unpredictability of Symbolic Interaction and the way in which senior managers take advantage of such unintended hegemonic outcomes will emerge from the study.

It is well established in the literature that hegemonic struggle is characterised by the conflict between competing narratives (Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). What we do not fully understand are the hegemonic processes that facilitate the dominance and longevity outcomes of hegemonic struggle. The question I have elected to develop a theoretical understanding towards this part of the process of hegemony is stated as: '*What factors influence the outcome of hegemonic struggles throughout organisations?*' This is, I believe, an important question because there is a need to understand how some narratives emerge as dominant hegemonic devices whilst others do not. This question essentially strikes at the centre of the nature of the processes of hegemonic struggles (Bocock, 1986). Finally, I return once again to the primary research question: '*What are the micro cultural processes that produce hegemony?*' Answering this question will pull together the ideas generated by the application of the sub-questions to build a composite model of the processes of hegemony.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS CHAPTER

Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological considerations that have informed my research project. In section one I present my general methodological position in relation to my research problem. In section two I reflect on the topics of epistemology and ontology with regard my research task. In section three I discuss the methodological principles that underpin ethnography as a qualitative research methodology and provide a review of some of the general criticism of ethnography that is to be found in the literature. This review will consider the dual question of what defining characteristics actually constitutes ethnographic research and differentiate it from competing qualitative methodologies such as case studies (Yin, 1994). In this section I will also discuss the issues of representation that are associated with ethnographic studies (Biddle and Lock, 1993; Van Maanen, 1995; Agar, 1995), with particular emphasis placed upon on the relationship between language and the representation of ethnography. Then, in section four I consider the ethnographic quest. This section will present a detailed account of my general method and its implementation. Throughout this section I discuss the detail of my research method inclusive of data collection, analysis and representation. Finally in section five I present an account of the reflective learning that I have benefited from throughout the research process.

Section One

General Methodological Position

Blumer (1969) asserts that the methodological challenge that faces all researchers of cultural phenomena is how to study meaning. Blumer argues that to study cultural meaning researchers require a theory of meaning and a specific methodology designed for its investigation. He advocates that the theory should be Symbolic Interactionisim and that the methodology should be drawn from within the ethnographic school of research. Throughout this section I will set out for discussion a methodology that I consider complements the methodological treatment of Symbolic Interaction as posited by Blumer (1969:32) who defines 'methodology' as follows: "*Methodology refers to, or covers, the principles that underlie and guide the full process of studying the obdurate character of the given empirical world*". In keeping with Blumer's methodological stance my methodology of choice is to be

drawn from the ethnographic school of research, noted for its suitability for managing qualitative data with regards its collection, analysis and representation of findings, particularly within the context of cultural research as practiced by scholars such as: Whyte (1943); Spradley and Manne (1975); Van Maanen (1979); Spradley (1979, 1980); Moreman (1988); and Fetterman, (1998).

Ethnography Defined

Ethnography can be defined as the task of describing selected aspects of a culture (Wolcott, 1973; Rosen, 1991b; Hammersley, 1992; Van Maanen, 1995). Ethnography is a qualitative research methodology that has its origins in anthropology (Sanday, 1979; Van Maanen, 1979). Ethnography is a term that fuses two words together to achieve its meaning. Ethno translates as '*folk*' and Graphy as '*map*' and together the term signifies the study of culture usually via participant observation (Jorgensen, 1989) supplemented by ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979), resulting in a written ethnography (Spradley, 1980; Van Maanen, 1995; Fetterman, 1998).

The final written ethnography has been described as a: '*thick cultural description*' (Geertz, 1973). The goal of ethnography, as Malinowski (1922:25) put it, is: "*to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world*". Ethnography strives to unravel the meaning of the fabric of a culture from the "*native's*" perspective (Morey and Luthans, 1985; Rosen, 1991b; Fetterman, 1998). Its methodological orientation is concerned with the meaning that influences the actions of the actors one seeks to understand; in this way ethnography describes the sense making of social groups (Geertz, 1973). I will now discuss the task of actually practicing ethnography (Spradley, 1980).

Locating a Client and Accessing the Field

The first step in my research journey was two-fold and consisted of: (1) '*locating a client*' (Spradley, 1980); and (2) '*securing access to a research field*' (Eden and Huxham, 1996) if I were to move forward with my research project. The client that I selected was an organisation called '*Excel Services*' (a pseudonym) for whom I worked. I prepared a brief (500 word) research proposal (Jankowicz, 2000; Phillips and Pugh, 2001) for both the Head of Personnel and the Assistant Director of Excel Services. This proposal, presented an outline of my research problem, a description of how it impacted on the organisation, details

of what the content of the research methodology would consist of and an explanation of how as both a researcher and a full participant in the working culture of the organisation I would manage the two identities i.e. that of researcher and that of a member of the management team. Following a brief discussion with both client contacts I agreed terms and secured access.

The terms were simply to respect client confidentiality and to produce two reports at the end of the research process: (1) the thesis; and (2) a management report with proposals for intervention in existing cultural activities that were perceived to be restricting the effectiveness of the organisation. The research process was planned to take 18 months and therefore constituted longitudinal research (Rosen, 1991b; Kunda, 1992; Van Maanen, 1995). The next stage in gaining access was to introduce myself to my colleagues as a researcher and explain to those managers that I selected for participation in the research my theoretical and empirical interests (Schultz, 1991; Wolcott, 1973). All of those approached readily agreed to participate in the research. The client did not demand that they would have editorial control over the thesis or any subsequent journal publications but does expect that the organisation's identity and those of the research participants be disguised.

The study takes place within the context of a Scottish Local Authority Service Department. The research participants were the senior and middle management team who were charged with managing the department. The activities observed and participated in were aspects of their daily management lives (Whyte, 1959; Young, 1989; Jackall, 1998; Watson, 2001). A major focal point of my research was to declare the tacit knowledge, activities, power plays and sense making that these actors enacted which reinforced, mended, and further developed hegemony, (Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

Summary

As earlier discussed, in order to contextualise the research, I considered that an ethnographic methodology would best serve the application of my research question to the empirical world of organisational culture. I have drawn from the methodological treatment of cultural studies predicated on the art of ethnography suggested by: Spradley (1980); Jackall (1988); Hammersley (1992); Van Maanen (1979, 1995); Fetterman (1998); and Denzin (2001). It has been argued that ethnography is useful to both contextualise a social phenomenon within its substantive location and to provide a cultural framework as a prelude for detailed analysis to

generate substantive theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Whetten, 1993; Silverman, 2001). Such ethnographies have been well documented (Whyte, 1943; Spradley and Manne, 1975; Kunda, 1992). My approach involved developing a thick cultural description (Geertz, 1973) of the research context with a view to developing a theory of the processes of hegemony that accounts for selected behaviour described within the ethnographic findings (Rosen, 1985; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992). The next section will present both the epistemological and ontological considerations that have influenced my research design.

Section Two

Epistemological and Ontological Considerations

There are a number of different philosophical perspectives through which one can understand reality, namely, our ontological perspective. Ontology is concerned with defining the nature of reality. Ontology is a way of thinking about what constitutes reality. One's ontological position has enormous implications for research because how one defines reality has a critical influence on how one defines knowledge or One's epistemology, which is concerned with a theory of knowledge.

My stance in this research project is as a Symbolic Interactionist. I believe that actors interpret both the social and the natural world symbolically (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). This symbolic interpretative process is the basis of all human interaction with the empirical world (Mead, 1934; Strauss; 1959; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Blumer 1969). I support the view that the natural world exists independent of the mind (Blumer, 1969; Rosen, 1991b). Scientists can study this independent natural world as if it were an objective entity, albeit an objectified construct that is presented as '*reality*' in the scientific discourse of the day (Kuhn, 1996; Ford, 1999).

From a position of Symbolic Interactionism there can be no unified perspective on what constitutes knowledge and therefore truth claims. From a Symbolic Interactionists perspective there can only be an interpretation of the truth. The discipline that deals with the theory of knowledge is called '*Epistemology*' which is defined by Hatch (1997:47) as: "*The branch of philosophy that concerns itself with understanding how we can know the world*". This branch of philosophy involves the study of theories that form knowledge to develop an understanding of certain observable phenomena. Essentially one's epistemological beliefs reflect one's philosophy towards every day life i.e. one's paradigms. Our epistemological

choice dictates how we explain ourselves as knowers and the method by which we arrive at our beliefs (Suddaby, 2006). Another way to look at one's epistemological choice is to consider it as a lens through which we view the world. Our ontology thus influences what we define as knowledge and the way in which we can obtain knowledge is influenced by our epistemology.

As we make sense of the empirical world symbolically, we also construct our understanding of the reality of the empirical world symbolically (Garfinkel, 1967; Cohen, 1985; Frost, 1985; Alvesson, 1991). This process of symbolic construction is only possible due to the capacity of symbols to act as signifiers of meaning (Jackson and Carter, 2000; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Importantly from a social constructivists perspective, the meaning of the symbol i.e. the signified, is absent from the symbol and is only to be arrived at subjectively by the individual perceiver (Mead 1934; Blumer, 1969; Jackson and Carter, 2000). It follows, from the theory of Symbolic Interaction, that there can be no unified knowledge of what constitutes the nature of the '*real*' world (Jorgensen, 1989; Rosen, 1991b.) I will now provide an account of my own epistemological and ontological position relative to my research project.

I would argue that all one can really strive for in the pursuit of cultural theory is a general consensus of what represents the truth born out of logical argument supported by theory informed by circumstantial evidence (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Rosen, 1991b; Hatch, 1997; Suddaby, 2006). From an ethnographic perspective this evidence should come from the research subject's perspective (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1997; Rosen, 1991b; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Denzin, cited in Rosen (1991:6) stated: "because *man is caught in webs of significance, feeling, influence, and power that he has woven, then the interpretive task is one of unravelling and revealing the meanings persons give to their webs*". This involves micro fieldwork (Spradley, 1980; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Rosen, 1991b; Van Maanen, 1995; Suddaby, 2006). Ethnography is ideally suited for such a research project. Rosen (1991b:6) states: "*from this perspective (symbolic interpretative) we may understand the "truth" of organisational research also as a social construct.*" This does not mean that there is no such thing as a reality independent of mind, rather that the scientific quest for an absolute truth of social reality is, perhaps, untenable, due to the way in which we socially construct the sociology of knowledge that characterises any scientific discourse (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Rosen, 1991b; Kuhn, 1996).

With regard to the social world, this I consider to be a socially constructed phenomenon that can only exist within the mind, as it is a construct of the mind (Mead, 1934). In the absence of mind, i.e. the collective mind of humanity, there would be no social world, as opposed to the natural world, which I believe would continue to exist in the absence of mind. As with scholars such as: Rosen (1991); Van Maanen (1995); Ford (1999); Tsoukas and Chia (2002); and Cairns and Beech (2003), I believe that our interpretations and subsequent representations of both the natural and the social world are socially constructed, however the ontological distinction that I make between both constructs is that I consider that the natural world is a product of environmental forces independent of mind and that the social world is a product of the intellectual properties of mind (albeit our definition and understanding of the natural world is itself a social construction). Therefore, if one is to study organisational culture then one should adopt a methodology from the Symbolic Interactionist School (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Strauss, 1959; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Blumer, 1969). Ethnography is not without it critics. The main area of critique is to do with the issue of representation and the relationship between language and representations of reality, which I will now discuss.

Section Three

Critique of Ethnography

Van Maanen (1988:1) defines ethnography as follows: *"ethnography is a written representation of a culture or selected aspects of a culture."* Ethnography has to have, as its primary focus the study of cultures or selected aspects of culture, in this case hegemonic processes. Ethnography enjoys its distinctive status because it is regarded as a specialised research method for studying culture and constructing cultural interpretations (Geertz, 1973; Rosen, 1991b; Wolcott, 1995). Wolcott (1995:80) raises questions concerning: (1) how studies justify the title of ethnography; and (2) how studies become more ethnographic, and he asks the questions: *"how does qualitative, descriptive, or naturalistic research, broadly conceived, become "ethnographic", and how do qualitative researchers become ethnographers?"* These questions are important because many research projects that present themselves as ethnographies may in actual fact be case studies or other kinds of qualitative research methods and therefore there is the danger that what could be excellent qualitative research is discredited because it is not ethnographic although the researcher claims it to be so (Wolcott, 1995).

One of the confusing characteristics of ethnography is that the term implies three distinct functions (Spradley, 1980; Van Maanen, 1995; Agar, 1986, 1995): (1) that ethnography is a process of data collection; (2) that it is a process of data analysis; and (3) that ethnography is an outcome of that process or the final product of that process, i.e. the written description of the culture under study with or without generated theory (Geertz, 1973; Van Maanen, 1995). Wolcott (1995:83) presents a simple but effective standard for establishing whether an ethnographic study is what it claims to be. He asserts that: "*the research process deserves the label ethnography only when the intended product is ethnography. Therefore, a claim to be "doing ethnography" is also a proclamation of intent*". Ethnography is concerned with mapping out or describing the symbolic order (or selected aspects of) that human beings socially construct for themselves that manifests in cultural productions (Parker, 2000).

Wolcott (1995:84) cites Frake (1964) who argues that the ethnographer's task is: "*one of rendering a theory of cultural behaviour*". This view of cultural research is comparable with Berger and Luckman's (1966) idea of '*sociology of knowledge*'. In this sense, as with my research, ethnography argues Wolcott, is primarily concerned with addressing the sense making of actors within a particular '*cultural scene*' (Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1980). A process that constitutes cultural interpretation. Culture is the guiding concept of the ethnographer; it is the ethnographer's research field, it is his discipline (Geertz, 1973).

Wolcott (1995) suggests that one way of justifying ethnography as both a process and as a product is to describe in detail the methodological scheme that one selects for application and to relate it to exemplars in the field of ethnographic research. In my case, I have modelled my ethnographic approach on exemplars of ethnographic work such as: Spradley and Manne (1975); Rosen (1985); Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992); Humphreys and Brown (2002). Wolcott also suggests that a sign of authentic ethnographic research is the production of '*micro ethnography*' i.e. the intensive study of a cultural domain or cultural scene (Frake, 1964; Spradley, 1980; Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Van Maanen, 1995). Micro ethnography examines the ways in which a cultural ethos is enacted at the '*microcosm*' of the micro level of analysis (Isabella, 1990; Alvesson, 1994; Barley, 1996.) Again this is exactly the approach that I have taken with regard to my research task. Another topic of scholarly debate concerning ethnography is the issue of representation, which I will now discuss.

On the Question of Representation

Ethnography as a producer of thick cultural description (Geertz, 1973; Wolcott, 1973) can be usefully considered as an abstraction of empirical observations of human conduct within a particular cultural-setting (Whyte, 1943; Becker, 1982; Barley; 1996). The task of the ethnographer is to attribute culture to a group (Goodenough, 1981) through the written representation of the ethnography (Spradley, 1980; Rosen, 1990). Therefore it can be argued that any ethnography is a cultural interpretation and not a mirror of an objective cultural reality that is 'out there'. Culture, as Wolcott (1995:86) asserts, gets into the ethnography because the ethnographer "puts it there". This 'social fact' has both profound ontological and epistemological considerations for the ethnographer, considerations that are succinctly described by Clifford and Marcus (1986) cited in Van Maanen (1988:1) as follows: "*If ethnography produces cultural interpretations through intense research experience, how is such unruly experience transformed into an authorative written account? How, precisely, is a garrulous, over-determined, cross-cultural encounter, shot through with power relations and personal cross purposes circumscribed as an adequate version of more-or-less discrete "otherworld" composed by an individual author?*" This quotation, although written more than two decades ago, draws our attention to an important challenge still facing Ethnographers in the current moment; that is the question of representation. Van Maanen (1988) makes the point that culture is not visible rather that it is made visible through the written representation of the ethnographer and further that culture is a narrated phenomenon in terms of its scientific representation.

Whilst the researcher describes their interpretation of a cultural scene (Spradley, 1980), which may be informed by native accounts (Spradley, 1980; Moray and Luthans, 1985) of the meaning they place on field observations, in the final act of representation it is the ethnographer's written report that is presented for consumption as an 'objective' representation of the culture under examination (Van Maanen, 1988, 1995; Biddle and Locke, 1993; Jeffcutt, 1994). One could argue that ethnographies provide a rhetorical link between both culture and fieldwork. The written report brings together the 'emic' (native view) and the 'etic' (researcher's view) of what constitutes cultural reality for the culture under study (Morey and Luthans, 1985; Van Maanen, 1988). Ethnographic study, argues Van Maanen, is concerned with decoding one cultural meaning system (the emic) and translating it back into another cultural meaning system (the etic).

Clifford and Marcus (1986) assert that ethnographies are never politically or value neutral. They are inherently biased, as they have to be, to a greater or lesser degree, politically mediated, as a result of the asymmetrical power relations involved in the process of cultural representation in the final report. This political bias is exemplified by the influence of the dominant hegemony of quantitative scientific discourse that constrains the theoretical, expressive and methodological positions that the ethnographer may adopt (Biddle and Locke, 1993).

As ethnography is fundamentally a written narrative (Czaraniawska, 1998), then it follows that: the composition of the report: (Biddle and Locke, 1993; Agar, 1995); the expressive style adopted by the author (Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Jeffcutt, 1994; Van Maanen, 1988, 1995); their style of writing and expression (Paget, 1995; Van Maanen, 1995); what the researcher elects to represent from field observations (Brady, 1976; Agar, 1986; Jeffcutt, 1994); the beguiling influence of written semantics; and the varying degree of concrete description versus empirical abstraction (Glaser and Strauss,1967; Van Maanen, 1998; Agar, 1995) will all impinge on the final cultural representation that emerges from the ethnographers study. These are just some of the issues that the ethnographer is faced with when they try to write up an interpretative account of the culture or selected aspect of culture that they are studying.

The ethnographer and their subsequent ethnography are not free from the dilemma of being culturally bound by their individual subjective cultural reality, repertoire of meaning systems and interpretative frames of reference (Blumer, 1969; Coffey, 1999). It follows that objective reality is not the ethnographer's quest as their task is essentially a subjective project. What the ethnographer strives for is a thick cultural description (Geertz, 1973) situated in empirical context (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) that reveals the meaning systems created, modified, sustained and further developed by human beings which account for the some of the multiple social realities that constitute the interpretative frames of reference of a given cultural grouping (Bartunek, 1984; Isabella, 1990; Barley, 1996.)

Allowing for all these representational problems what, then, does one consider as the ontological status of ethnography as a descriptor of cultural experience? Most definitely the written ethnography is not an objective account of a culture (this I believe is impossible). It is a means of representation of the culture under study and ultimately, at minimum, a second order construction (Sanday, 1979; Vann Maanen, 1988; Balogun and Johnson, 2004).

Culture is an incredibly complex socially constructed phenomenon that is mediated through the signifying power of language (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bourdieu, 1991; Berger, 1997; Ford, 1999; Currie and Brown. 2003). It follows that its representation through the conduit of written description is mediated through the same process of social construction that results in cultural productions (Parker 2000).

The method that I have designed will produce a multi-subjective reading of the text and actions performed within the organising domain. To provide a sense of balance with regard to the narrative that constitutes the final ethnography, I intend to have the empirical accounts of my respondents rendered explicit in their own words followed by my interpretation of the cultural meaning embedded in their talk (Isabella, 1990; Van Maanen, 1995; Denzin, 1997, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Whilst I will offer my interpretation of their verbalised experiences as well as non verbal expression e.g. action or non action, dress code and hierarchy etc (Rosen, 1985; Young, 1989), I will leave it to my audience to decide if my interpretation and subsequent emergent theory of what is going on within the context of the cultural scene under study offers a compelling explanation in response to the research questions (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). There is no doubting the fact that to produce ethnography requires decisions about what to tell (Denzin, 1997) and how to tell it and therefore by default it also involves decisions regarding what not to tell. Therefore the ethnographer has, I believe, a moral obligation to both their research participants and to the research community with whom they identify to consider the question of representation very carefully (Jorgensen, 1989; Fetterman, 1998).

Ethnography is not restricted to merely cultural description; it is also concerned with explaining, through developing cultural theory, the dynamics of the cultural scene under investigation. For example, the nature of hegemonic processes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992). Ethnography from the etic perspective alone would prevent the capturing of multiple versions of cultural reality that constitute a cultural scene (Agar, 1986; Spradley, 1980; Denzin; 1997, 2001). To do this it needs to be augmented with the emic perspective that captures contrasting perspectives on social reality (Van Maanen, 1979; Morey and Luthans, 1985; Boje *et al.* 1999; Beech, 2000).

Ethnography when presented from the emic perspective provides a method to present contrasting self-narratives (Jeffcutt, 1994; Boje *et al*, 1999; Beech, 2000) and to facilitate insight into the construct of competing cultural realities. In this sense a system of linguistic

symbols could be considered as a discursive device through which competing narratives reveal the multiplicity of meaning systems that guide actors behaviour (Boje, 1995; Martin, 2002). If one does not reveal the tacit knowledge that actors possesss, then arguably one cannot achieve a satisfactory cultural description that enables the illumination of a cultural meaning system (Whyte, 1943; Spradley, 1988; Isabella, 1990). This argument is in stark contrast to the ontology of colonial ethnographers who considered that there was a unified and objective culture waiting out there to be studied (Hammersley, 1992). Narrative analysis located within ethnography can reveal explicitly the power relations, competing paradigms, interpretations of self-identities and the performance work in which actors engage to socially construct their version of reality and to engage with and 'manage' competing frames of reference (Whyte, 1943; Young, 1989; Kondo, 1990; Czarniawska, 1998; Boje, 2001; Currie and Brown, 1993).

Through ethnography one can provide a reconstruction of empirical data for both future analysis and interpretation. To achieve this aim one has to consider the historical context of the culture under examination (Geertz, 1973) and immerse one's self in the day-to-day activities of that culture (Dalton, 1959; Becker, 1966; Spradley and Manne, 1975; Spradley, 1988). Further, by detailing slices of actors every day experiences of the dynamics of culture via participant observation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Jorgensen, 1989; Beech and Cairns, 2003), and then by creating narratives in relation to cultural realities as perceived by organisational actors via ethnographic interviews (Jeffcutt, 1994; Beech, 2000; Boje, 2001; Denzin, 2001) one can provide a reconstruction of cultural data that enables a clearer understanding of the dynamics and contextual richness of the culture under examination. The ethnographic narratives I construct will be influenced by both the cultural inferences that both myself, and my research participants arrive at (Spradley, 1980; Coffey, 1999) thus combining the emic with the etic perspective as a representational strategy.

Both Boje (1993) and Beech (2000) assert that by employing different narrative styles, which capture empirical data on the culture of the research participant, that this constitutes an effective strategy for representing cultural events. This method is especially appropriate for research that aims for a multi-subjective and inter-subjective reading of cultural events because it specifically identifies patterns in language on issues such as agency and role performance, which can be related analytically to the construction of hegemony. In Beech (2000), the author cites the narrative method of Jeffcutt (1994) as an exemplar of its type. Jeffcutt identified four representational narrative styles that can be used to frame cultural

events for analysis: (1) The Epic; (2) The Romantic; (3) The Tragic; and (4) The Ironic. The author acknowledges that there are inherent problems in these representational styles in that dependent on the style selected that this would influence both interpretation and representation (Agar, 1995). The positive in support of this method is that it captures the multiplicity of interpretation that can be placed on cultural events by actors, regardless of whether they actually witness aspects of these events as they unfold or if they are told 'stories' about these events in the past tense (Barry and Elmes, 1997; Beech and Huxham, 2003).

Summary

In summary, the discussion so far regarding ethnography has orientated towards the methodological issues of both representation and of developing a definitional understanding of ethnography as a process of data collection, analysis and as a written account/ descriptor of culture or a limited aspect of culture (Rosen, 1991b; Van Maanen, 1995) e.g. the processes that produce hegemony. Ethnography is to be considered as a textual construction that is fundamentally informed by language as a written medium (Moerman, 1988; Ford, 1999). To extend the discussion on representation I will now consider the relationship between language and ethnography.

Language and Ethnography

Ford (1999:480) defines organisations as: "*socially constructed realities in which the reality we know is interpreted, constructed, enacted and maintained through discourse*". Ford considers organisations as "*networks of conversations*". The author poses the question that enquires: "*what if our knowledge and understanding of reality is not a mirror of some underlying "true" reality, nor a reproduction of that reality?*" The thrust of the previous question is concerned with the assumption that perhaps what we assume to be a taken for granted objective reality may in fact be a social construction of our own making or the making of others (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Weick, 1979, 1995; Czarniawska, 1998). It is clear that Ford holds the view that from a social constructivist perspective a positivist approach to researching organisations as networks of conversations is both philosophically and practically untenable and therefore not fit for purpose (Ford and Ford, 1995; Beech, 2000; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005). This is because social constructivists would argue that 'perceived' reality does not exist independent of mind

(Berger and Luckman, 1966; Blumer, 1969; Searle, 1999) in the sense that it is a symbolic construct. This ontological position does not deny that the empirical world exists independent of mind rather that the meaning that we attribute to 'objects' is constructed through a process of mind (Mead, 1934; Strauss, 1959; Cohen, 1985; Bourdieu, 1991; Jackson and Carter, 2000). Therefore '*reality*' exists in the intersubjective arrangement of the collective mind of humanity. External reality is not accessible as any form of absolute truth by the actor but rather is perceived as sense datum (Denzin, 2001).

Ford argues that reality construction is mediated through discourse (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Geertz, 1973; Alvesson, 1994; Berger, 1997; Czarniawska, 1998; Beech, 2000) and in particular through conversation (Whetten, 1993; Boden, 1994; Ford and Ford, 1995). It is through language that actors are able to invent the world symbolically and discuss its constructed form linguistically. The structural material of this symbolic background is understood as being constituted by conversations. Through a process of socialisation (Mead, 1938; Park, 1950; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bourdieu, 1991; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) the self inherits these pre-constructed social realities as both given and real. Importantly for the subject of hegemony, Ford argues that our '*knowledge*' of things of which we have had no empirical experience of is based on the cultural representations (interpretations) of others that are passed on to us in the form of narrative; this line of theorising has been advanced by scholars such as: Opler (1945); Boje (1991, 1995); Berger (1997); Johnson (2000); and Cairns and Beech (2003). Berger and Luckman (1966) refer to this concept as '*typifications*'; in fact their treatise is based on this concept.

Summary

In summary, the idea that reality is socially constructed and mediated through language has important consequences for the way in which we conceptualise organisations (Rosen, 1991b; Ford, 1999; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). As language is a cultural production and as it is through language that reality is constructed, then it follows logically that organisations are to be considered as discursively constituted cultural constructs embedded in a complex web of inter-texuality (Jeffcutt, 1994; Boje, 1995; Gabriel, 1995). The concept of inter-texuality of background conversations, which constitute the organisation for what it is, and for what it will become, makes the idea of the discursively monolithic organisation theoretically and empirically untenable (Van Maanen, 1995; Czarniawska, 1998; Cairns and Beech, 2003;

Oswick and Richards, 2004). The next section of this chapter will discuss in detail the empirical and analytical application of my methodology.

Section Four

Locating a Social Situation

In keeping with the methods of: Whyte (1943); Spradley (1980); and Fetterman (1998), after securing a client and access to the field, the next step in my ethnographic study was to locate a social situation to practice ethnography by means of participant observation. Jorgensen (1989:15) defines participant observation as: *"the methodology that seeks to uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives."* To carry out my participant observation I had to locate myself in a *'place'* (Spradley, 1980) to observe actors and to participate in their daily activities. As discussed earlier the actors under observation were managers within a Public Sector Organisation and the activities that I both observed and participated in were slices of their daily management lives (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). The site that I selected for observation was the morning coffee gathering held in the Executive Director's office in which the senior management team participate. This social situation can be considered as an organising domain (Spradley, 1980; Schultz, 1991), which is concerned in one sense with the manufacture, amendment, maintenance and dispersal of hegemonic themes (Opler, 1945; Park, 1950; Spradley, 1980; Morey and Luthans, 1985; Boje, 2001) that constrain or enable the expressive capacity and thus agency of organisational actors. The purpose of the study was to understand the processes which produce hegemony. I will now consider the organising domain as an analytical device through which to study the processes involved in the production of hegemony.

The Organising Domain; The Coffee Gathering

The *'coffee gathering'* can be considered as a daily event that is enacted in the corporate centre of the client organisation during which 9 senior public sector managers meet between 8am and 9am for morning coffee. This social gathering has taken place Monday to Friday for the past 10 years. This coffee gathering is to be considered as a *'cultural organising domain'* (Spradley, 1980). The organisational consequences of the constraining or enabling effect

resulting from the symbolic activities of the actors who constitute the membership of this organising domain will be explicitly accounted for in the ethnographic findings.

I have selected the cultural scene of the coffee gathering because as a full participant in this social situation I have uninhibited access to it (Fetterman, 1998). The frequency of recurrent activities characteristic of this cultural scene affords me with a dual opportunity: (1) to learn to practice ethnography and; (2) to actually conduct original research. Contextualised within the organising domain is my unit of analysis (Spradley, 1980). I attended approximately 2 meetings of the coffee gathering per week for a period of 18 months. The organising domain was chosen as it constitutes a symbolically rich setting and was selected after broader observations and the consideration of other settings such as organisational development boards, senior management team meetings and general task team meetings.

The Units of Analysis

The units of analysis at a general level of enquiry were the symbolic interactions and the framing of interactions between the actors who have access to, or participate in the coffee gathering. I hold the view that the composite outcome of interaction is the realisation of culture. I was particularly interested in the hegemonic outcomes of cultural becoming and in identifying the processes that enable these phenomena. I selected interactions that have an impact on the production of hegemony. I was and remain interested in both the interaction and the cultural framing of interaction that produces hegemony.

At a focal level of enquiry the units of analysis selected for my research were the micro interactive cultural processes that produce hegemony (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). It was the intention of the research study to illuminate for theoretical expansion actual hegemonic processes that are empirically grounded. The hegemonic processes that were of particular interest to me were those that may be so institutionalised that they remain broadly below the level of consciousness yet continue to be effective as hegemonic mechanisms (Alvesson, 2002). The output of the study will be a theory of the processes that produce, protect, amend and facilitate the migration of hegemony (Rosen, 1985). To record data that would facilitate the exploration of my unit of analysis, I maintained a field -work journal.

At the onset of my research I established a method of recording the experience of both the research process and the data that I collected as I conducted participant observation. The method that I chose was to maintain a fieldwork journal throughout the 18 months of the study period (Wolcott, 1973; Fetterman, 1998). This journal not only records condensed and expanded accounts of field observations, it also acts as a diary of my experiences as a researcher (Spradley, 1980). The field journal documents my experience of the research process such as the reaction of peers, superiors, and research participants towards my research. It also records my concerns, doubts, optimism and the mistakes that I noted as relevant to the research process (Spradley, 1980; Coffey, 1999).

The technique that I employed to capture empirical observations was to write down, as near to witnessing a cultural event of interest, my description of the essence of the observed event. Spradley (1980:69) refers to these kinds of field notes as a: *"condensed account"* of observations. This brief note documents a field experience I have had or observed for future expansion, which is termed the *'expanded account'*. Such a technique is a combination of my own subjective interpretation of what I witnessed and that of the actors cited. I supplemented my participant observations with a program of ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1980; Jorgensen, 1989; Fetterman, 1998).

The Question of Language Choice

Spradley (1980) emphasises the princple of language management as being absolutely critical to the practicing ethnographer. He presents three language principles for consideration: (1) the language identification principle; (2) the verbatim principle; and (3) the concrete principle. The language identification principle advocates that if both research participants and observers terms enter the field notes, then the researcher must distinguish between them. The verbatim principle involves the ethnographer making a verbatim record of what people say. The concrete principle demands that when the researcher describes observations that they employ the use concrete language in their descriptions. In my field journal, I noted with the aid of domain analysis (a concept to be discussed in detail further on in this thesis) the distinction between *'native domains'* and *'analytical domains'* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), thus respecting the language identification principle. The verbatim principle was observed as I recorded all of my interviews with my respondents and had the content of

these interviews transcribed. With regard to field conversations in which I either participated or observed, I recorded these, if theoretically relevant, as near as was possible to the experienced conversation. Finally, I practiced writing in concrete terms to capture the empirical granularity that is consistent with micro ethnography. To supplement and further explore the data that I have recorded via participant observation I have completed a program of 35 ethnographic interviews. I will now discuss the methodology of ethnographic interviews.

Ethnographic Interviews and the Development of Ethnographic Questions

Fetterman (1998) asserts that ethnographic fieldwork begins when the researcher starts asking ethnographic questions. The overarching decision to take was which questions to ask. Spradley (1980) advocates that the ethnographer should adopt a *'funnel approach'* to developing their ethnographic focus (Humphreys, 1999). As one develops one's ethnographic focus one simultaneously develops ethnographic questions that are theoretically and empirically relevant to the units of analysis. This process involves adopting a general field of ethnographic enquiry (Adler and Adler, 1988; Jorgensen, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As one develops an initial line of enquiry i.e. *'How does culture constrain or enable organisational performance activities?'* one narrows the ethnographic focus of enquiry to a tighter scope of ethnographic analysis as with the narrowing of a funnel. Thus, one graduates from a wide scope of enquiry to a narrower scope of enquiry i.e. from exploring culture as a constraining device to exploring the role that an organising domain performs with regard to the production of micro hegemony (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Wolcott, 1973; Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

I immersed myself in the cultural scene and associated cultural scenes within the client organisation for 12 months in advance of approaching the medium of ethnographic interviews (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Schultz, 1991; Suddaby, 2006). I adopted during this period a reflective stance based on participant observation and incremental literature review. The inspiration for my research questions came from four sources: first a review of the data documented in my field journal from my participant observation; second from my literature review of organisational theory pertaining to organisational culture and hegemony; third from my review of literature regarding ethnographic research methodologies, in particular the work of: Spradley and Manne (1975); Spradley (1979, 1980, 1988); Van Maanen (1979, 1988, 1995); and Fetterman (1998); and finaly, from organisational stories narrated by respondents or organisational dramas in which I had been involved .

Whilst I had a set of pre-determined questions *(see appendix one)* I often started with a descriptive question and thereafter allowed the research participant to reflect and provide a response. If this meant digressing from my schedule of questions then so be it. Usually such a happening presented rich data, unique perspectives and interesting new lines of enquiry. The interview sessions that I have conducted have focused upon the research participant's reflective experiences of three cultural categories. These were: (1) The social dynamics of the coffee gathering; (2) identity work; and (3) organisational conflict. These categories each had associated questions which aimed to explore the respondents experiences of hegemonic processes for future analysis and emergent theorising. These questions explored social phenomena from the respondents perspective such as language use, status, power relations, identity issues, dramaturgical expression and expressive control. The reasons that I selected these categories were for their theoretical relevance to my research questions (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and further that they enabled empirical description followed by theoretical abstraction at the micro, meso and macro level of the organisation with regard to organising. The aim of the interview process was to stimulate discussion regarding matters important to the research participants in relation to these cultural categories as opposed to focusing upon the role and the presence of the researcher (Spradley, 1979; Jorgensen, 1989; Schultz, 1991).

Spradley (1980:123) defines ethnographic interviewing as: *"a special kind that employs questions designed to discover the cultural meanings people have learned"*. I carried out 35 interviews with 15 senior and middle managers. Most respondents were interviewed at least twice and in some cases three times. I have adopted, in the main, a semi formal interview technique. My technique was formal in the sense that the interviews took place at an appointed time as a result of a specific request to stage the interviews. The interviews were also audio taped to be later transcribed and they took place at a predetermined location. However, the meetings were informal in that I endeavoured to conjure an air of informality on the day of the event. I organised catering and conducted the interviews over lunch.

I encouraged the development of a shared conversation with the research participants (Spradley, 1979; Schultz, 1991) and sought to understand the interview as a conversational subject as opposed to a verbal interrogation (Denzin, 2001). The interviews, I was to discover, had a familiar pattern in terms of time dynamics: 15 minutes to relax and for both the research participant and researcher to socially get the measure of each other within the context of the interview situation and to afford an introduction to the research process; 45 minutes for lunch and conversation; a further 15 minutes of concentrated discussion; and

after approximately 1 hour 15 minutes the research participants started to get tired, act restless, lose attention and basically signify that the research encounter was over. In the main most respondents were easy-going and responsive to the research questions, highly reflective and appeared to enjoy the process. However, they all remarked that they found the impression they articulated of the underlying culture of the organisation depressing once they had stripped it of its dramaturgical veneer. The next element of my methodological scheme concerns the analysis of ethnographic data.

Analysing Ethnographic Data

It has been claimed that ethnographic accounts can end up as monographs of thick description yet lacking of any noticeable theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hammersley, 1992; Silverman, 2001). I have some degree of sympathy with this point of view. Whilst I accept that ethnography itself is theoretically informed, the written ethnography may not make explicit the theory that it presumes to have generated and the analytical process that elevates the ethnography beyond description to theoretical generalisation (Hammersley, 1992). I required a methodology for analysing my field notes so that I could both construct the ethnographic report and generate theory. I borrowed from the ethnographic methods of both *'domain analysis'* and *'theme analysis'* put forth by Spradley (1980) and elements of the *'grounded theory'* approach as articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). These three analytical methods were then augmented with the method of narrative analysis as developed by Jeffcutt (1993, 1994) and subsequently employed and further developed by Beech (2000).

The analysis of my ethnographic records operated at three levels on a concurrent basis: (1) domain analysis to generate a deeper understanding of the cultural categories in use that constitute the cultural scene under study; (2) hegemonic theme analysis to map out the main hegemonic themes that organise much of the behaviour patterns identified, and (3) coding of conceptual categories and their properties identified as being grounded in the data for the generation of theory. When I produced an outline of the ethnographic report I then employed a fourth analytical method, which was a narrative approach to data contained within the report. This supplementary method illuminated explicitly the power relations, competing paradigms, interpretations of self and identities as well as the performance work that actors engaged in to socially construct their version of reality in efforts to engage and 'manage' competing frames of reference. I will now discuss each of the analytical techniques that I applied datathat I collected.

Spradley (1980:86) states that: *"Analysis of your field notes is the first step in going beyond mere descriptions of behaviour and things to discovering the cultural meaning of that behaviour and all the things you see"*. The method for doing this begins with the basic unit in every culture, the *'cultural domain'*. Domain analysis is a type of ethnographic analysis. A cultural domain is a category of cultural meaning that includes other smaller categories; these are referred to as *'included terms'*. A domain is constituted by several basic elements. It starts with a *'cover term'* that is the generic category within which equivalent objects are placed, e.g. *'front'* as a cover term and the Executive Director's Office as a kind of front. The object *'Executive Directors Office'* is regarded as an included term. The third variable in a cultural domain is the single *'semantic relationship'*. This semantic relationship links the cover term with the included term. The following diagram illustrates this concept;

Figure 3.1:Domain Analysis
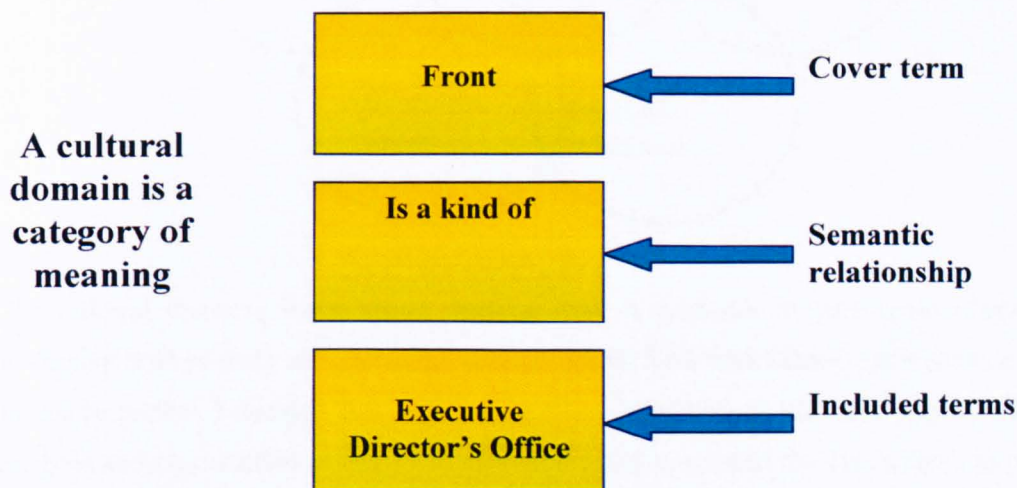
Spradley (1980) differentiates between three types of domain: (1) *'folk domains,'* which are to be located from within the speech acts of the research participants; (2) *'analytical domains'*, a term given to an observed cultural category by the researcher using their own language; and (3) *'mixed domains'* which include both folk terms and analytical terms. In the

above example the cover term is an analytical domain whilst the included term is a folk term. I decided to frame the analysis with the aid of a bespoke analytical scheme that guided domain analysis. This I felt was important as I required to complete a domain analysis on categories of meaning and their properties that were theoretically relevant to my study (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The inherent danger in domain analysis is that without such a guide the ethnographer can be performing extensive domain analysis only to later realise that much of the worked data may not be theoretically relevant to the research question. The following diagram illustrates the analytical scheme that guided the domain analysis;

Figure 3.2: Analytical Scheme
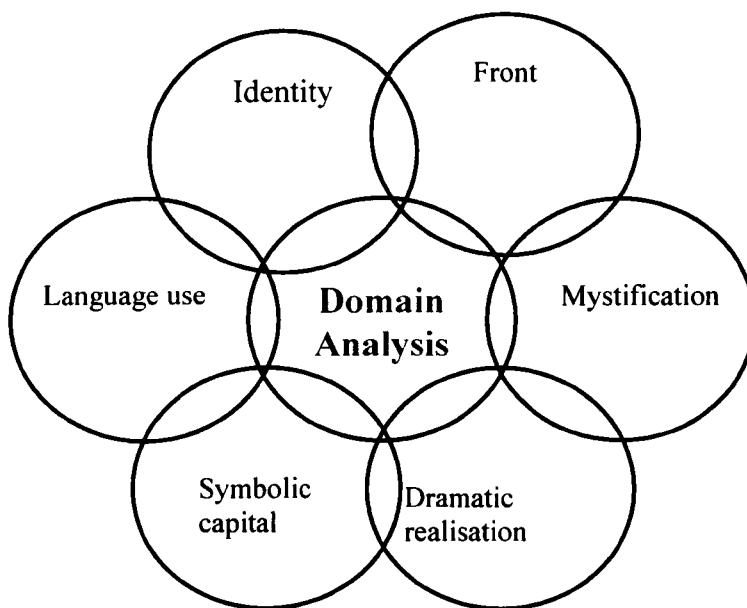
The cultural domains listed above resulted from a synthesis of participant observation, reviewing both primary and secondary data generated from both ethnographic interviews and literature review. I decided that such a framework would be an effective way to guide the analysis and organisation of empirical data after I had completed the data collection process. I searched sections of transcripts for included terms that fitted under the domains detailed above. Each identified included term and its corresponding semantic relationship was tracked and coded in the margins of the transcript notes. Once I had theoretically exhausted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) all the potential included terms, I then prepared nine flip chart sheets, each with the heading of a cover term, e.g. 'mystification' or 'symbolic capital'. I then searched the coded transcript notes for both included terms and their semantic

relationships that related to the domains cover terms as detailed on the flipcharts sheets. Spradley (1980:96) claims that: *"The goal of domain analysis is two-fold First, you are trying to identify cultural categories; second you want to gain an overview of the cultural scene you are studying. With several dozen domains which represent most of the semantic relationships, you can achieve a good overview of the cultural scene."* This process of domain analysis enabled the identification of the full range of domain properties identified by the respondents and by myself as the researcher, to be systematically recorded on to one 'canvas'. It was important that I acknowledged the dynamics of domain analysis; it is not a once and for all procedure, it requires to be repeated as new data are collected through participant observation and ethnographic interviewing.

This categorisation of both empirical and theoretical included terms, under the heading of a domain, enabled the achievement of the goals of domain analysis as advocated by Spradley, which are to gain a comprehensive overview of the cultural domains that constituted the coffee gathering as an organising domain that I felt were theoretically and empirically relevant to my research. This process was supplemented with participant observation in other cultural domains such as management team meetings and via analysis of transcripted data of respondents experiences throughout the organisation. This analytical process also enabled me to identify the way in which these domains influence the development of hegemonic themes. At this point in my methodology chapter I will discuss the study of the nature of hegemonic themes and how such a study can be employed to provide the researcher with a holistic view of the cultural scene under study.

Hegemonic Themes

Through the study of an organising domain and the analysis of the findings produced by the study, the ethnography will describe the empirical nature of hegemonic processes. Spradley (1980:106) describes an organising domain as: *"a cultural scene that appears to produce, maintain, amend and filter cultural themes that in turn permeate the cultural landscape of an organisation and constitute its meaning system"*. The theory that cultural themes are organised in an organising domain provides a useful method to consider the study of the processes of hegemony. Opler (1945:198) defines a cultural theme as: *"A postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behaviour or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society"*. Some cultural themes perform a hegemonic function and therefore may be re-interpreted as hegemonic themes. For example

Opler noted that in Apache culture a cultural theme was that men were intellectually and physically superior to women. This, to me, is a hegemonic narrative. Hegemonic themes are to be considered as derivatives of cultural themes. The distinction that I make between hegemonic and cultural themes is the significance that a cultural theme has with regard maintaining a general world-view towards social reality. For example, gender being used as a form of identity control to elevate male superiority and subjugate female expression is no longer merely a cultural theme it has a clearly defined hegemonic function. Much of Apache culture is orientated around this gender theme and it defined both the power relations and social order of the community according to Opler. A cultural theme would be a cultural production that does not necessarily have such a constraining or enabling grip on the expressive capacity of the members a society, i.e. it may exist and may be generally accepted and respected but may not invite sanction if it is ignored. Cultural themes as with hegemonic themes are I believe constituted in the form of narrative. It is recognised in the literature that hegemony is also both constituted and expressed in narrative. It is also acknowledged that hegemonic narratives, as with cultural themes, permeate an organisations culture and influences its meaning system.

Hegemonic themes are phenomenon, which stipulate cultural expectations in relation to the human conduct of a given social group. Hegemonic themes therefore can be conceived of as both constraining and enabling devices regarding the choice of human conduct available to the self in any given social setting. This concept was empirically illustrated by Kondo (1990) in her ethnography entitled 'Crafting Selves', a study of identity control in contemporary Japanese society. In this ethnography Kondo describes how her American Japanese Self was subjugated by the hegemonic themes that indigenous Japanese natives employed to craft for Kondo, her native Japanese self. Kondo came to the realisation of just how effective this identity work, mediated through the use of hegemonic themes, was when she caught sight of her reflection in a shop window and did not immediately recognise that it was herself she was witnessing shuffling along in traditional Japanese dress and exhibiting native traditional Japanese habitus. I will now discuss the process of emergent theorising.

Emergent Theorising

I employed the methodological scheme of Glaser and Strauss (1967) concerning grounded theory, to explore the art of theory development (Suddaby, 2006). It is important to note that when Glaser and Strauss refer to the notion of conceptual categories and their properties, in

contrast I adopted the model of domain analysis as an alternative analytical approach. However, it is my contention that both concepts perform a similar methodological function. The distinction I make between the two analytical methods is that domain analysis is primarily intended to provide a means of cultural description whilst the quest for conceptual categories and their properties is concerned primarily with theoretical abstraction. Mediated by the method of grounded theory advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I extended the value of both domain analysis and hegemonic theme analysis from merely empirical description to theoretical abstraction to aid the development of an emergent theory regarding the processes that result in the production of micro hegemony. Therefore, I would claim that my research could be considered as incorporating a research strategy predicated upon the principles of grounded theory as conceived of by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

The concept of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was rooted in the Symbolic Interactionist School of research known as the Chicago School (Turner, 2003). The grounding for their work was developed from the body of work synonymous with classic scholars such as Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) and may be understood as a clear break from the dominant positivist position of the day to advance the case for Symbolic Interactionist research. Glaser and Strauss (1967:5) define grounded theory as: *"the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research"*. Critically they assert that, *"grounded theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of datum"*. Their methodological treatment of grounded theory argues that it reduces the possibility that the theory and the empirical world will be mismatched as the theory is grounded in the data. This criterion is compatible with Blumer's (1969) treatment of the methodological position of Symbolic Interaction and the broad methodological premise of ethnographic research, particularly domain and hegemonic theme analysis (Spradley, 1980; Boje, 2001). I will now discuss the process of theory building as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

The Generation of Theory From Grounded Data

Glaser and Strauss (1967:3) define theory as: *"a strategy for handling data in research, providing modes of conceptualisation for describing and explaining."* They argue that generating a theory from data means that most hypothesis and related concepts not only come from the data, but that they are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research. I agree in part with this statement. However, I also think that prior

study and indeed the ongoing study of a body of literature that is theoretically relevant to the study will enrich my understanding of the units of analysis and therefore will serve to sensitise my review of the data as I endeavour to identify conceptual categories and their properties (Suddaby, 2006). For example, my review of Goffman (1959) helped to identify, in analytical terms, naturally occurring categories such as 'performance work' as they were both articulated by research participants and observed in social encounters observed.

The analytical method developed by Glaser and Strauss to generate grounded theory seeks to analyse data to identify naturally occurring conceptual categories and their conceptual properties. As stated earlier, this is very similar to Spradley's (1980) notion of domain analysis. However, Glaser and Strauss have the intention of abstraction for theoretical generalisation as opposed to merely the identification of cultural categories for cultural description. This is what I did with the completed domain analysis work sheets. I employed domain analysis to develop an empirical overview of the cultural scene under examination. However I also used the domain analysis work sheets to identify conceptual and empirical properties of the domain cover terms for both theoretical abstraction and generalisation. I will now briefly discuss the elements that Glaser and Strauss argued constitutes theory.

Elements of the Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967:35) argued that theory generated by comparative analysis is constituted by: "*1st conceptual categories and their conceptual properties, and 2nd by hypothesis or generalised relations among the categories and their properties*". They assert that comparing and contrasting between both a category and its properties enables a relationship between both elements to be established. Domain analysis works exactly in the same way in that the category is denoted as the cover term and a property of the category is denoted as the included term. The semantic relationship demonstrates the relationship between the category and its properties or the cover term and the included term. Glaser and Strauss assert that a category is an independent conceptual element of the theory whereas a property is a conceptual attribute or element of a category. The authors argue that the generation of theory should aim at achieving as much diversity in emergent categories, synthesised at as many levels of conceptual and hypothetical generalisation as possible. The next component of the methodological scheme advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is that of theoretical sampling.

Theoretical Sampling

Glaser and Strauss (1967:45) define theoretical sampling as: *"the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges."* Critically the authors argue for an iterative approach to the development of emerging theory and that the emerging theory, whether substantive, or formal, should control the process of data collection (Spradley, 1980; Jorgensen, 1989; Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Suddaby, 2006). This again is compatible with the ethnographic method advocated by Spradley (1980).

Glaser and Strauss assert that the main criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups in relation to a category is based upon the concept of the categories theoretical saturation. This concept implies that no additional data are being found whereby the researcher can further develop properties of the category (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Suddaby, 2006). In such a situation I elected to seek out conceptual categories that stretched the diversity of data as far as possible. This I did to make certain that saturation was based on the widest possible range of data on the category. The final step in my analysis was to revisit my field journal and the coded transcripts to focus on the stories the research participants narrated to explain their relationships with, and experience of, organisational life. I will now consider narrative composition as a research method.

Narrative Composition

I collected organisational stories from research participants for future analysis. These organisational stories were then broken down into narrative structures (Jeffcutt, 1994; Cairns and Beech, 2003), which illuminated the underlying themes and reported actions implicated in the data. The outcomes from this analytical process were specific plot summaries (Beech and Huxham, 2003). The plot summaries were composed of factors that were drawn from both theoretical categories and empirical themes derived from the methods of analysis previously discussed. I developed from the analysis of the data narrative themes of interest, conceptual categories and hegemonic themes that could be employed as an aid to making sense of how actors perceived organisational life and how they constructed their interpretative frames of reference (Johnson, 2000; Beech and Huxham, 2003). The next step was to select theoretically relevant data and extracted plot summaries for the final task of

writing up the ethnography. The final stage in the ethnographic process was the writing up of the ethnographic findings

Writing up the Ethnographic Findings

Taking a cultural inventory proved to be an effective way of reviewing my field materials as I prepared to write the partial ethnography (Spradley, 1980). I detailed my inventory on a flip chart sheet of paper. This involved the scanning of all the different kinds of ethnographic data that I had organised on my existing library of flip chart sheets. Thereafter, under the heading of each domain theme I reviewed inventory examples which were descriptions of some concrete event or experience within the cultural scene under examination. These examples along with my plot summaries, which were located from a retrospective analysis of my field notes, provided the discursive materials to evaluate in the final ethnographic findings. Spradley (1980) claims that such methodological practice enables the ethnographer to discern the main structure of the culture under study. I then returned to my completed domain work sheets and inventory of hegemonic themes and I composed a synthesis of empirical data with theoretical insights under the heading of each domain theme.

The final ethnographic report includes an introduction; an actors profile; a client profile; a section discussing the research findings relative to each domain together with an ethnographic explanation of the behaviour reported under the heading of each domain theme. Finally I composed a concluding section that brought together the significant theoretical themes generated by the study. In each section I also included a "*Tale of the Field*" (Van Maanen, 1988), that employed the representational strategy of both Jeffcutt (1994) and Beech (2000) to provide a link between the hegemonic themes/ processes identified and the practice of organising at both the meso and macro levels of the client organisation.

The final written partial ethnography also demonstrated the effectiveness of selecting a micro organisational event for intensive study through a particular cultural perspective, in this case the processes that produced hegemony (Rosen, 1985; Van Maanen, 1988; Alvesson, 1994; Barley, 1996). However, this ethnographic account will not be purely critical, as it will also attempt to combine critical and non-critical (managerial) perspectives, (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). This concludes my account of the granularity of the design and application of my methodology. I will now provide an account of my reflective learning derived from the research experience.

Reflective Learning

The application of my research methodology has set out to develop an understanding of the ways in which hegemony is both produced and protected in organisations. The ethnographic method that I employed could be used in advance of change efforts to provide descriptions of hegemonic themes that may be powerful blockages or enablers to substantive cultural change efforts. The methodology permits the detailed examination of micro actions that can have influences on change initiatives or general management practice at both the meso and the macro level of the organisation. It can also provide rich empirical data on the potential impact that hegemony may have on identification outcomes, which subsequently impact on selected modes of organising. Finally, the methodology enables research into the empirical social world of managers in relation to how they construct their frames of cultural reference that guide their behaviour to maintain, protect, produce and amend corporate hegemony.

Ethnography necessitates long-term involvement in the research field. As a full participant observer I discovered that managing the dual identity of both researcher and manager was initially very difficult for me and I believe difficult for the research respondents who were also my colleagues. This tension has often been a source of critique of the native turning ethnographer because allegedly only an outsider who is unfamiliar with the culture under consideration can study culture 'objectively'. However, I reject this view. There have been notable examples of organisational ethnographers who were also full participants in the object of their study (Dalton, 1959; Spradley and Manne, 1975; Golding, 1986; Humphreys, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Watson, 2001).

Being a full member of the management team afforded me great advantages as I had access to their private inner world. I had their trust and I believe (hope) their respect. Therefore, I was able to engage with them not only as a researcher but also as a fellow colleague who shared the pain and joy of organisational life at Excel Services. It is unlikely that I would have gained such intimate access to the world of the coffee gathering and the subjectivities of its participants towards this organising domain if I had approached the study as an outsider. However, the down side to this was that I allowed myself to be a target for negative identity work and had to withstand the frequent 'ribbing' that perhaps my energies were not entirely focused on the job in hand, i.e. as a member of the management team. This was

unfair because although I had integrated the research project into my work experience, I ensured that not only did I meet with my managerial obligations, but where possible exceed those obligations.

The politics of being a manager in the client organisation presented a problem to me as a researcher. In one instance I had a corporate disagreement with a managerial colleague and he decided to demand that I return to him both the tapes and transcriptions of his interviews, as he no longer trusted me. This I agreed to do but after a healing period he retracted his request and we carried on as normal. This example demonstrates the fragility of managing two such different identities. Another example was when a research respondent during an interview decided to inform me that members of my team held me in what can only be described as un-flattering regard. I was not prepared for the emotional violence that this encounter signified and in a way my ethnographic self (Coffey, 1999) was momentarily displaced and the organisational self mortified. This manager, a member of the middle management team, would not have had an opportunity to engage in such a conversation with me under "normal circumstances". She took the opportunity to attack my idealised self and I had to grin and bear it. Thankfully this was the only time out of 35 interviews that this happened and it taught me the meaning of expressive control.

I under estimated the sheer magnitude of ethnographic research. For example I carried out 35 ethnographic interviews and did not realise until I started transcribing, the work load involved in this process. Each interview generated approximately 15,000 words. I was soon to realise that transcribing from tape was a skill that I did not possesss. It was far too time consuming and I decided to 'contract' this function out to a professional. This was an expensive process. When I attempted to analyse the returned transcripts I quickly became overwhelmed with the variety of cultural categories embedded in sections of transcript data. I completely underestimated the volume of data that a 90-minute interview generated. So in the end I had to take the decision to copy and paste all data relating to the coffee gathering into a separate file under the heading of 'dynamics of the coffee gathering' I then established a series of word documents with specific headings such as: identity formation: strategy work; and conflict management and searched the interview transcripts for data relating to those headings and once again copied and pasted such relevant data into the appropriate file. This process was essential in-order to maintaine a theoretical focus when analysing data.

As a researcher I learned the art of compromise. I had to learn to edit out documented experiences to which I was emotionally attached due to the magnitude of data that started to emerge and also the tight focus required. Thankfully this action and realisation took place at an early stage in the research process so that I did not compromise the iterative principles of my methodology. A simple but a major issue I encountered was hosting the interviews in cafes for which I was responsible as a manager. The issue was background noise.

Background noise created a level of interference that at the time, during conversation, appeared negligble, however I under estimated lip reading and how as actors we hear mainly with our eyes. The transcription process was at a disadvantage here and therefore some, but not all, of the data were difficult to understand. However this disadvantage was compensated by the fact that the research respondents responded to the stage that cafes provide, mediated through food and drink for the act of socialisation or more specifically conversation. The interviews were more of a conversational style and proved to be both rewarding and enriching for myself and for the participants (at least that is what they told me).

A key danger that I recognised during my initial interview attempts was to interrupt the research participant when they were making a point I was particularly interested in and felt obliged to contribute towards. This illuminated the need for me to develop a higher degree of the mastery of listening skills. Through practice and with the aid of re-playing interview tapes I identified listening faults and repaired those in future interviews. As the interview program progressed the proportion of data generated by the respondents significantly increased and my voice became less and less prominent.

The question/answer sequence (Spradley, 1980) proved to be challenging for me. Spradley claims that every statement implies a question and every question implies an answer and therefore I had to find a way to manage this predicament so that I was not leading the respondents too much. To a degree this is unavoidable as I did have a theoretical interest that was guiding the interview but I had to be careful, or rather, sensitive towards the idea that I had an ideal answer or question in mind when I asked questions or made a statement in support of a question. The corrective strategy I employed was to ask descriptive questions rather than pointed questions whenever possible and to supplement these with follow up questions such as: *"could you expand on this for me please?"* I also had to be prepared to allow the respondent to take me away from the initial question and to improvise with

questions that enabled me to take advantage of exciting new lines of enquiry that I did not envisage or plan for.

Finally, an important area of reflective learning I can detail was the unexpected empathy that I experienced with the respondents. When they were providing me with an emotional account of the degradation of organisational life at Excel Services that they experienced in the most mundane circumstances, such as having to observe senior managers taking coffee in their offices and then memos being sent out to these staff (key respondents) advising them that such practice was not permissible, it was difficult not to agree with them that this was an insensitive act and thus create a space for dual critique of my senior management colleagues. This problem was amplified when the issue moved from mundane issues such as coffee rights to more serious issues such as promotion opportunities for those who were politically in favour or views towards the Executive Director expressed in personal terms. I found that these situations were both an emotional and political juggling act. On the one hand I had to remain passively interested with regard to what the respondents had to say, yet also guarded so as not to agree openly with the grievances embedded in their talk.

Overall I enjoyed the experience of developing my methodology and of enacting it. The process of writing up the final ethnography I found to be as much a creative act as it was a means to present research data. When I carry out future research I would reflect on these experiences and hopefully provide higher standards of research materials. What will now follow is an account of the ethnographic findings of my research for consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR: ETHNOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents a partial corporate ethnography. Through the study of an organising domain the partial ethnography describes the operation of hegemonic processes. As earlier stated, Spradley (1980:106) describes an organising domain as: *"a cultural scene that appears to produce, maintain, amend and filter cultural themes that in turn permeate the cultural landscape of an organisation and constitute its meaning system."* It is acknowledged in the literature that, as with cultural themes (Spradley, 1980), hegemonic narratives also permeate an organisations culture and meaning system (Rosen, 1985; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992).

The partial ethnographywill be based upon my observations as a participant observer supported by accounts of experiences articulated by research participants. Some of these empirical accounts will be represented verbatim from transcripts and some of them will be presented in the form of *"Tales of the Field"* (Van Maanen, 1988). These secondary accounts were informed by both my observations and by the reflective accounts of research respondents (Humphreys, 1999). Throughout this ethnography I will focus on a specific repeated encounter (*an organising domain*) that has been selected as the focus for study. This organising domain was chosen following my full participation in the broader culture. The research participants are members of a senior and middle management team responsible for the management of a Public Sector Service department called Excel Services. The focal encounter is; *'the daily coffee gathering'*. This event is constituted by the gathering of the senior management team of Excel Services for morning coffee. It occurs in the Executive Director's office each morning, Monday to Friday, between the hours of 8am and 9am and has been so for the last ten years. As a participant observer I participated in approximately two encounters of the coffee gathering per week over a period of eighteen months.

I am interested in understanding how phenomena such as identification outcomes, symbolic capital, language use and properties of drama interrelate and manifest as hegemony. The ethnographic findings will report the way in which selected symbolic interactions of the actors may be interpreted as contributing towards the operation of hegemony. I enquire as to how hegemonic themes constrain the expressive agency of the organisational self. In this chapter I will describe hegemonic experiences from the research participants perspectives.

This chapter contains four sections. Each section is framed by an analytical theme that was employed to guide the collection, analysis and representation of research data (Humphreys, 1999). In terms of ordering, the themes emerged after initial open data gathering informed by literature review. This approach reflects the method of Humphreys and Brown (2002) who employed Elsbach's (1999) model of identity outcomes to both frame and guide their ethnographic account of the efforts of a senior management team to '*author*' a hegemonic narrative within a site of further education. It also reflects the method of Humphreys (1999) who employed the cultural dynamic model developed by Hatch (1993) to guide his comparative ethnography of two Further Education Facilities. This method helps to ensure that data is theoretically relevant and aids the production of emergent theory that is empirically grounded (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Blumer, 1969). I will now provide a summary description of each of the analytical themes selected to structure the opening section.

(1) **Front**: Goffman (1959:32) defines this concept as follows: "*Front is that part of the individuals performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.*" He claims that a salient property of front is that of; '*setting*' which involves the '*props*' and '*scenery*', which enable a performance. In the main, observes Goffman, '*settings*' are static. Personal Front, in contrast, is not static and follows the performer wherever he goes. Of particular intersest for this study, Goffman (1959) considers front as being critical to managing perception, which the author argues may be considered as a form of social control. He argues that control over what is perceived is control over human contact or interaction, and by limiting what is shown as an empirical performance perpetuates a systematic control over contact. Goffman (1959:74) claims that: "*failure to regulate the information acquired by the audience involves possible disruption of the projected definition of the situation; failure to regulate contact involves possible ritual contamination of the performer.*" Front is a dynamic property of the construction and performance of reality and '*managing*' front may also be considered as a process of hegemony.

(2) **Dramatic Realisation**: Goffman (1959:40) claims that this dramaturgical process involves the actor when in the presence of an audience of: "*infusing his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure.*" This process is significant if an individual actor is to secure in the minds of their audience that what they are doing is important or legitimate. In relation to

dramatic realisation, Goffman (1959:43) also introduces the concept of "*investment in one's egos*". This concept involves the social scenes or audiences that an actor aspires to impress or, to put it another way, who are the significant others for an actor. These are the groups that the actor will attempt to impress through the performance of an activity, a routine or of a role. The actor will be primarily interested in perfecting the performance from which his ego or his occupational reputation derives. This is exemplified, notes Goffman, by the concept of '*aristocratic habit*' which Goffman (1959:43) describes as follows: "*the aristocratic habit, it has been said, is one that mobilizes all the minor activities of life which fall outside the serious specialties of other classes and injects into these activities an expression of character, power and high rank.*" Dramatic realisation contributes towards facilitating the demonstration of legitimacy and is to be considered as a process of hegemony. The micro study of selected interactions that contribute towards the constitution of the cultural scene that is the coffee gathering may be considered as the study of the aristocratic habit of a senior management team that contributes towards the production of hegemony.

(3) **Language Use:** Language is understood as the medium through which actors socially construct reality (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Social constructionsts argue that empirical realities are symbolically constructed, interpreted, amended, renewed and maintained through language (Ford, 1999). Ford (1999:481) asserts that: "*Conversations are proposed as both the medium and product of reality construction within which change is a process of shifting conversations in the network of conversations that constitute organizations.*" Ford (1999:480) also claim that "*Reality is interpreted, constructed, enacted and maintained through discourse.*" Currie and Brown (2003) claim that both individual and group narratives operate as sense making devices that may lead to establishing hegemony. They argue that group narratives and individual narratives play important hegemonic functions. The '*forms of talk*' (Goffman, 1981) that both constitute the '*linguistic habitus*' and the '*linguistic market*' for the research subjects (Bourdieu, 1991) of the coffee gathering will be studied to help further develop the function of language use as a hegemonic process.

(4) **Symbolic Capital:** This was conceptualised by Bourdieu (1991) as being embedded in the symbolic fabric of a culture. The possesssion of symbolic capital arguably contributes towards the acquisition of legitimacy (Maclean *et al*, 2006). Symbolic capital is arguably concerned, among other concerns, with signifying who has the right to speak on a given subject in a given culture. Symbolic capital also contributes towards the definition of the significant other. Symbolic capital contributes towards ensuring that actors recognise

authorised speech agents. If dialogue creates the possibility for new realities to emerge (Ford, 1999) then controlling who may speak and what constitutes appropriate discourse may be considered as an exercise in hegemony. Symbolic capital is therefore considered as the ability to influence and constrain the expressive capacity of actors to construct social reality.

Bourdieu (1991) introduces two supporting concepts that partially explain how symbolic capital manifests: these are '*linguistic habitus*' and '*linguistic markets*'. The former is concerned with the forms of talk that an actor produces which are determined by the cultural influences on their life journey and the latter is concerned with the way a particular class or group establish particular language categories that constitute reality for that class or group. A salient function of symbolic capital (from a hegemonic perspective) is to facilitate the crafting of linguistic habitus and to structure the constitution of a given linguistic market. This cultural production constitutes a form of control and is primarily concerned with identity work. Habitus is not restricted to speech acts; it also incorporates sign vehicles such as class, occupation, education, economic status etc. These cultural variables are conceptualised by Bourdieu as forms of capital, e.g. '*social*', '*economic*' and '*cultural*'. The interplay between these three types of capital provides actors with '*symbolic capital*'. The acquisition and enactment of symbolic capital is to be considered as an important process of hegemony.

Summary

In summary, this section will present aspects of the organisational culture, which constitute both intended and unintended hegemonic outcomes that the respondents engage in as a direct consequence of their participation in the coffee gathering. Also, coffee gathering is conceptualised as an important source of '*symbolic power*' for the participants. Thompson in his introduction to Bourdieu (1991:9) states when considering symbolic power: "*It follows that the myriad of symbolic devices-the robes, the wigs, the ritual expressions and respectful references – that accompany occasions of a more "formal" or "official" kind are not irrelevant distractions; they are the very mechanisms through which those who speak attest to the authority of the institution which endows them with the power to speak.*" I contend that to understand the processes of hegemony it would be fruitful to study in detail the micro symbols which constitutes a given performance that produces hegemony. I will now present the partial ethnography for consideration.

Section One: Drama

Setting the Scene

The research subject is a local authority service provider called Excel Services. The organisation was created in April 1996 following Local Government Re-organisation. The department has a budget responsibility of approximately £120 million per annum and employs 8500 staff, predominantly on a part time basis. The department's service composition (post April 1996) was established through the merging of four service departments that had formerly been part of the organisational structure of Bloomford City Council and Starlight Regional Council. These service departments delivered either catering or cleaning services and prior to the merger they were managed under different organisational structures. The following diagram illustrates the senior and middle management structure of Excel Services:

Figure 4.1
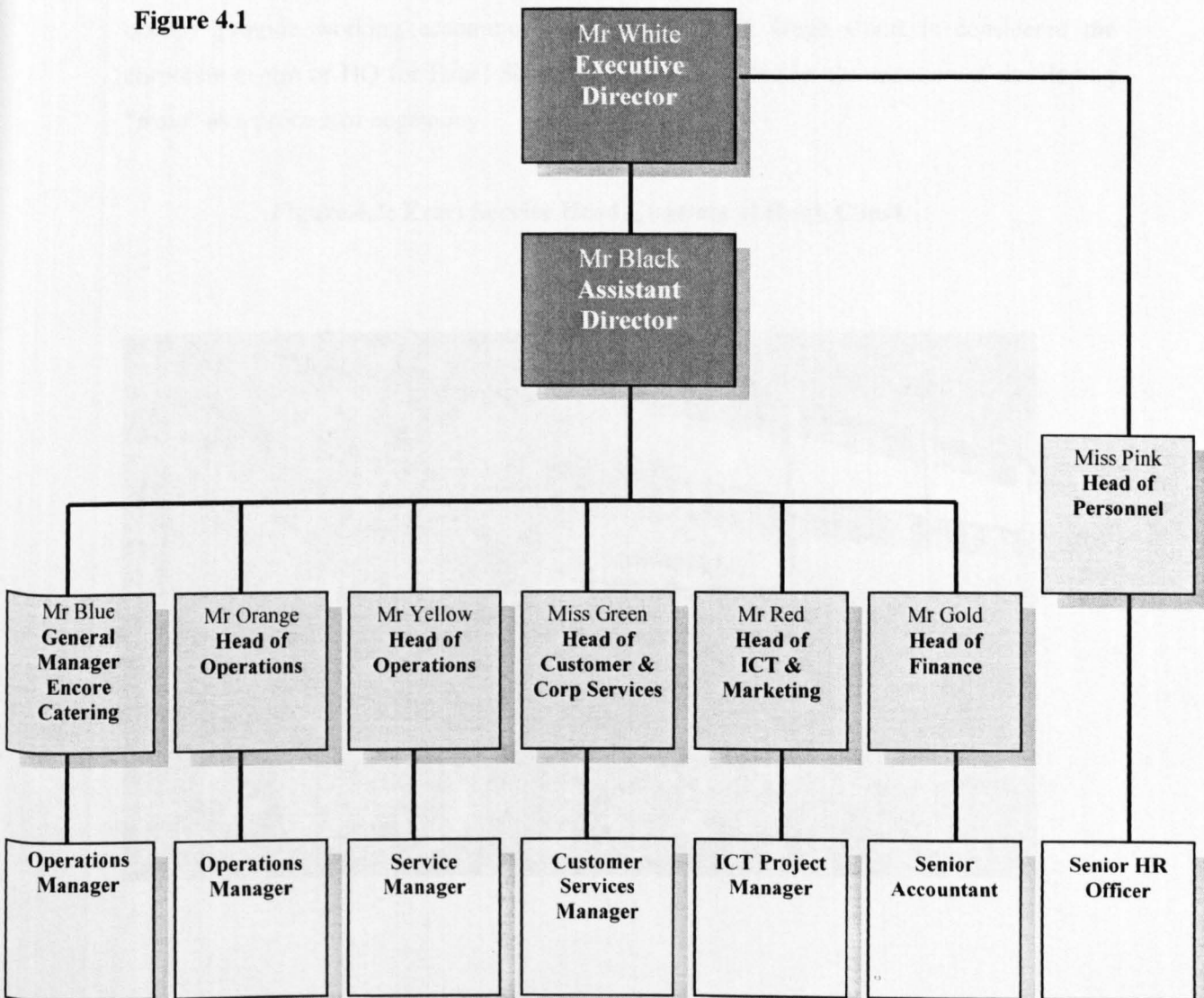
The following cast of actors is central to this ethnography; Mr White is the Executive Director of Excel Services. Mr Black functions as Assistant Director. Operations are defined as the organisations front line services. Operations are split by market speciality into three distinct divisions, which are headed up by three Heads of Operations. Firstly there is Mr Orange as Head of Operations for School Meal Catering; secondly there is Mr Blue (the author) as Head of Operations for Commercial Catering such as public restaurants and banqueting operations and finally there is Mr Yellow as Head of Operations for Home Care Services to the elderly community. Operations are supported in their trading activities by HQ based support services. Firstly there is Mr Red who is Head of Information Technology and Marketing. Secondly there is Miss Pink who heads up Personnel and Payroll Services. Thirdly, there is Miss Green who is Head of Customer Services and fourthly there is Mr Gold who is the Head of Finance for Excel Services.

Excel Services is based in Hugh Court, which is a contemporary style building located within an industrial estate in the east end of Bloomford. The offices that Excel Services occupy provide working accommodation for 300 staff. Hugh Court is considered the corporate centre or HQ for Excel Services. I will now consider the function of developing "*front*" as a process of hegemony.

Figure.4.2: Excel Service Head Quarters at Hugh Court.

Front

The acquisition of '*front*' may be considered as a hegemonic process within the context of the coffee gathering. When visiting Excel Services, visitors would present themselves at a reception area.

Figure 4.3: Excel Services Reception Desk

Figure 4.4: Excel Service Reception Area

The visitor would then be provided with a visitors pass and invited to take a seat. If the visitor was there to meet a member of the senior management team they would be met at reception by the individual manager with whom they had arranged to meet and escorted to either a conference room or to a management office. The visitor would then pass through what is locally termed as the '*senior managers corridor*'.

Figure 4.5: The Senior Managers Corridor

They would experience an array of wall mounted corporate symbols of achievement such as certificates of excellence and letters of commendation. As one turns left at the end of the corridor one arrives at Mr White's office, which occupies the corner position of the senior managers corridor. Mr White's office provides the stage for the coffee gathering. The set for the coffee gathering consists of a polished mahogany coffee table which is enclosed by a dark blue arrangement of comfortable sofas for guests to sit, relax and enjoy coffee with Mr White. The wall surface of the office is decorated by framed images of Mr White associated with powerful symbols. For example there is a picture of Mr White holding the World Cup; a

picture of Mr White with the former Prime Minister Tony Blair and finally, a picture of Mr White collecting an award for industry innovation.

Figure 4.6: Mr White's Office

Figure 4.7: The Setting for the Coffee Gathering

Each morning the participants arrive at different times. Mr Yellow tends to be first to arrive and describes the arrival of the participants as follows:

Mr Yellow: "*I'm normally the first in. Second person in is usually Mr Orange, and he does not always stay. He's a flitter; he's in and out. Our chat is nothing to do with work, mainly his personal issues. Football, a lot of football talk, that type of thing. Mr Gold comes in quite a lot. Once again, he's just a football man. I would say if we do anything, we slag Miss Green in lots of ways. Mr White is usually in probably fourth. He is a tart always looking at the girly pages in the newspaper and talking about sex. Miss Green arrives last and Mr Red and Miss Pink tend to drop in and out.*"

Mr Blue: "*Where does Mr White sit?*"

Mr Yellow: "*He comes over and sits on that settee as you come in, the first place in the door, talks about the papers, sometimes talks about work. So it's an opportunity for me and him to talk about something. But that's only when there's some issue coming up. He does not really talk about work.*"

Mr Blue: "*What is the dress code that the participants adopt during the coffee gathering?*"

Mr Yellow: "*Kind of tends to be a jacket off scenario, from a significance point of view it almost implies that the business day has not started. It creates an impression that it should be a place without conflict.*"

This is a time for socialising with light chat and amiable social interaction. This is not a place according to Mr Yellow where conflict over work based issues takes place. Mr Black reflects on the purpose of the coffee gathering: "*My view is it's probably nothing more than a place to get a cup of coffee and catch up on whatever's going on at the time and I don"t mean work related.*" This view again emphasises the un-related nature of the event to work and amplifies its social dimension. Mr White considers the purpose of the coffee gathering from a historical perspective when he claims that: "*It was just an idea that wouldn't it be nice to have a kind of open door in somebody's office first thing in the morning where you can catch up, read the papers, talk about the football or what they did last night. But also you have the opportunity to raise business issues with other colleagues that perhaps you can*

do over a cup of coffee in five or ten minutes rather than a one hour meeting later in the day."

The above data illuminates the inherent ambiguity caused by the dichotomy of work/non-work talk. Further analysis of this observation may consider who manages the flow between the two kinds of talk as in doing so these actors can be considered as engaging in hegemonic processes, a theme to be discussed later in this ethnography. The coffee gathering is also concerned with identity work for example Mr White states: *"It (the coffee gathering) tends to gel some kind of relationships. You get to know people an awful lot better. Right down to what they did for their holidays, what makes them buzz and tick, what motivates them, what annoys them etc."* Mr White implies that the coffee gathering is a stage upon which identities are crafted. Both Mr White's and Mr Black's interpretation of the purpose of the coffee gathering are not isolated perspectives. However, this setting is used as a front for many activities other than the former idealised explanation of its purpose, which I will now discuss, starting with the phenomenon of *'status'*.

Status

As a front, the coffee gathering is associated with status. This is made explicit by the fact that it is mainly members of the senior management team who can participate in this gathering. Historically the coffee gathering was enacted in the organisation that Mr White previously managed. Mr White transferred the coffee gathering to Excel Services. Mr Black reflects: *"One of the few legacies, that have been transferred over from the past is this practice of morning coffee. Well the strange thing is that it is supposedly only for senior management. Now again, that's by design because that's what TAC Services (a pseudonym for Mr White's previous employer) did. During that time it was seen as elitism."* A research respondent who experienced working life in TAC Services amplified this view and when considering the coffee gathering stated that: *"It was set up in the TAC Service days. It was seen as the elite people who sat there and I believe the people that participate most are the people that don't want to be seen as not to be part of that power base."*

This front acts as a performance stage for actors to signify to the *'other'* their senior management status. It is also very clear that the coffee gathering is related to as a source of symbolic capital. The coffee gathering provides an environment where only the views of the senior management team are aired. The idea of considering the coffee gathering as an elite club was put forth by a respondent who states that: *"Erm, I probably think that for some of*

the senior managers they like this club environment, that they can go into a nice comfy office, have a coffee and see it probably as a position of power." As with the club analogy, status is intertwined in the enactment of the coffee gathering.

An analysis of the way in which the participants use the coffee gathering as a "*stage*" for their daily performance as serious executives reveals the importance of morning newspapers as performance props. I asked Mr Red what effect their absence would have on the encounter. He responded as follows: "*Big style. The newspapers give it an informality, it also gives it some sort of a breakfast meeting type executive type pish which ... so if the newspapers weren't there then I suppose there would be a different environment.*" This aspect of front is crucial to the coffee gathering functioning as a source of corporate legitimacy. This front presents senior management as responsible executives who are authorised to lead. I will now consider the coffee gathering as a front behind which identities are both constructed and deconstructed.

Identity Construction

The idealised account of the coffee gathering as a preamble to the real working day may well be a legitimate claim. However, deeper exploration of what this front is used for demonstrates that it has multi dimensional purposes. For example, Mr Orange, when considering the purpose of the coffee gathering, states that: "*I would say, it serves to probably to help pull the team together, to help communications and various issues, day to day. Also for a bit of fun and laughter as well as an opportunity for people to get to know their peers or an opportunity, maybe, for people to score points.*' Note the contradictions embedded in Mr Orange's response. On the one hand the coffee gathering is concerned with team building yet on the other it is concerned with the undermining of the credibility of fellow colleagues through "*scoring points*". Scoring of points is a conversational strategy intended to discredit the competency of the other. Mr Orange states: "*I believe for people of that calibre, because I've witnessed it, what they say about people is just totally off the wall and unprofessional.*" For example as a full participant observer I have often heard comments being made about actors identities such as: "*Miss Green can"t even run a corner shop without making an arse of it*", this comment, referred to Miss Green who operates a £4.5 million stores and distribution facility within central Scotland; "*Mr Gold ...fucking accountants a waste of time*", this comment refers to the identity of the Chief Executive who is a Chartered Accountant and was aimed also at Mr Gold who is Head of Finance for Excel

Services: "*You have got to get a grip of that wee lassie (Miss Pink) she is totally fucking up IBusiness...she has no idea what she is doing*", this comment was aimed at Miss Pink, Head of Personnel with regard to her management of the data cleansing and transfer of employment details of 8,500 staff to an integrated shared service centre. The idea of the coffee gathering serving as a place where identities are authored merits additional consideration.

Mr Orange reflects on the purpose of the coffee gathering: "*It may have been an opportunity for people to get to know their peers in a new organisation, as well for a structure to take place, a levelling of people.*" The process that is called the "*levelling of people*" involves the authored imposition of identities. Levelling enables the casting of both the leading self and the status of each supporting self both within and outside the coffee gathering. How do members of the coffee gathering reflect on their personal use of this event and how does their experience of it affect them personally? Mr Orange states that: "*I quite enjoy it, you hear a bit of gossip it's an easy start to the day. Most of the time it's a fairly positive experience. Sometimes it is a negative and you come out of the room thinking, why the fuck did I go in there in the first place because you hear negative things.*'

The previous quote infers that Mr Orange demonstrates concern of the productive use of the coffee gathering and the negative impact it can have on his state of mind. There also appears to be an emotional dichotomy that Mr Orange identifies with. This emotional dichotomy results in either a highly positive emotional charge or a highly negative emotional charge. Dichotomy of purpose emerges in the following respondents view of the purpose of the coffee gathering: "*Well as I said earlier, two fold. Probably just a get together pre business, but there's a lot of speculation that it's a witches coven.*" The coffee gathering is simultaneously perceived as a pre-business gathering over coffee and as a "*witches coven*". This metaphor conjures up images of the coffee gathering serving as a place of black arts, with secretive membership.

The coffee gathering is also interpreted as a front behind which a social clique operates. A research participant stated that: "*Any time I've had to visit the coffee gathering I would say I feel slightly intimidated, on the basis that I am intruding and I am not part of the clique that should be there.*" The previous statement illustrates the intimidating effect of the coffee gathering on the actor. It indicates feelings of alienation and dis-identification. She appears

not to trust in her ability to identify with or to be identified as being part of the management team.

To demonstrate the way in which the coffee gathering functions as a hegemonic device I shall now present, in the spirit of Van Maanen (1988) a tale of the field, which provides an empirical illustration of the coffee gathering operating as a hegemonic device. I have drawn from Bourdieu's concept of '*symbolic capital*' and Goffman's concepts of '*front*', '*dramatic realisation*' and '*mystification*' to explain how the coffee gathering is used by Mr White as a source of legitimacy.

A Tale of the Field: A Case of Impression Management

Introduction

Drawing on the previous data, supplemented with participant observations, this tale of the field explores the impact of the operation of hegemonic processes on the construction of identity narrative. It reports how, through an organisational drama, a form of hegemony emerges which subsequently constrained and influenced political decision-making, which regard career choices. The usefulness of this tale is that it demonstrates a way in which hegemony may function beneath the consciousness of actors by subtly influencing the way in which they construct identities and therefore interpret a perception of reality, which produces social encounters. The data illuminates Goffman's (1959) claim the perception may be considered as a form of communion with reality. Goffman (1959:15) expands on this claim when he states that: "*Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan.*' Building on this line of theorising in this tale of the field the operation of hegemony is illustrated through a dramaturgical framework of analysis as functioning as a form of power mediated through social construction processes and resulting identification outcomes.

The focus of this tale is on the way in which Mr White's corporate front functions as a '*theatre of hegemony*'. It is important to stress that this episode occurred prior to the research

process. However, I was a full participant to this organisational drama and it impressed me so much that I never quite forgot it. I think it is appropriate to use data that is theoretically relevant to the development of the thesis even though the data occurred in a time frame out with the study period. The conversation, as presented between two actors, Mr Silver (a Council Director) and Mr Copper (his deputy) is based on my memory of this conversation and is therefore a reconstruction based on my recollection of what was said at the time. I have subsequently discussed this presentation with Mr Copper and he is satisfied that it is both a reasonable and balanced reflection of the themes of his conversation with Mr Silver in relation to the encounter he had with Mr White. This was also an impressionable moment for Mr Copper. This is the only piece of empirical data that I have used to develop my thesis that occurred out with the time frame of the research. This theatre of hegemony is theorised as being expressed through the impression *given of* (Goffman, 1959) by the symbolic arrangement and interplay of the artefacts that constitute the reception area, the senior management corridor, Mr White's office and Mr White's *personal front*. The tale discusses the way in which the theatre of hegemony, with Mr White as the principle performer, influenced the outcome of a struggle for dominance between competing organisational and self-identity narratives. What was at stake as an outcome of this struggle was the *legitimacy* to claim the potential leadership of a departmental merger of two opposing Council service departments within Bloomford City Council that were being considered for restructuring.

Background

In April 1996, Mr White had just been appointed to his position as Executive Director for Excel Services. This was his first role as a Director. During this period there were rumours that Excel Services were to be merged with another council department called *FM Services*. This re-organisation would trigger a competitive interview process for a new post of 'Commercial Services Director'. Therefore, the merger, if it went ahead, would result in a forced redundancy of an internal Director. The two internal candidates who were identified as the primary candidates for the rumoured post were Mr White and an established Executive Director of Bloomford City Council called Mr Silver who managed FM Services

At this time Mr Blue (the author of this thesis) worked for Mr Silver. Mr Blue was a participant observer to the identity narrative that Mr Silver co-authored with his senior team in relation to Mr White and his organisation (Excel Services). It had already been agreed by the Chief Executive of Bloomford City Council that Mr Blue and his team of catering staff

would transfer from the management of FM Services to the management of Excel Services. It was this public recognition of a perceived functional synergy between Excel Services and a contract division currently managed by FM Services which triggered the organisational conversation with regard the potential of merger of the two departments. The tale of the field reports on how the consequent identity constructions, which I interpret as a response to the experience of the operation of hegemony, mediated through '*front*' (Goffman, 1959) '*dramatically realised*' (Goffman, 1959; Hatch, 1993) Mr White's '*symbolic capital*' (Bourdieu, 1991), which operated as a form of hegemonic narrative. This realisation process influenced identity constructions. It was these identity constructions, which subsequently constrained and diluted the privileging of Mr Silver's internalised organisational self-identity to the point that he felt powerless to compete with Mr White for the perceived new post of Commercial Services Director. It is important to acknowledge that the encounter with Mr White mediated through Mr Copper alone did not result in Mr Silver's decision to retire. He was of pensionable age and he lacked the political support within the council to be certain of the outcome of a competition with Mr White. The year, 1996, also coincided with the acquisition of power by New Labour. The public relations spin and smooth style synonymous of Tony Blair was now at the forefront of British politics. In a way Mr White, as a young (39 years old) Public Sector Executive, represented New Labour. This was a battle of image over substance (Alvesson, 1990) and the hegemony of Mr White as experienced and interpreted by Mr Silver's deputy was amplified against the background conversation and symbolism of New Labour. The strategy of impression management adopted by Mr White was, in my opinion, intended to impress upon Mr Silver that this was the time of Mr White and that Mr Silver, as a war time General was on borrowed time. In Mr White the "Politicians" had employed a "politician" to operate as an Executive Director.

Actors Profile

Mr Silver was a managerial veteran with 14 years experience at Executive Director level in three different local authorities. He led a highly skilled workforce of 3,000 trades men and professional staff. This actor held an MBA and was committed to pro-actively developing a managerial culture based on a sound commercial ethos. His self confessed mission was to transform Local Authority Services to the status of efficient commercially driven business organisations. In contrast Mr White did not possess a degree. His 'formal' business education, relative to Mr Silver's educational pedigree was minimal. This actor was a product of a Technical College through which he acquired an Ordinary National Diploma in

Hotel and Catering Management. He had limited Executive Management experience at Director level, although he had worked as an Assistant Director for the previous 8 years. Prior to that Mr White was employed as a Sales Manager in the commercial sector. At the time of this unfolding drama Mr White was charged with managing a large-scale manual staff of 8,500 staff, which constituted the work force of Excel Services.

The Operation of Corporate Front as a Hegemonic Process

Despite both his extensive management pedigree and formal business education Mr Silver was concerned that if he had to compete with Mr White for the emerging position of the Commercial Services Director that he would lose out in such a competition, if indeed it were to take place. Why was this the case? A plausible answer to this question may be derived from an appreciation of both the constraining and enabling impact of performing a social front as a hegemonic process relating to identity constructions. This constraining and enabling force, the data will suggest, was induced by Mr White's corporate front manifesting as a *'theatre of hegemony'* that actors experienced when visiting Mr White in his office based in Hugh Court. The theatre of hegemony is conceptualised as manifesting as a hegemonic narrative, which asserted Mr White's legitimacy to lead a modern business organisation within the UK Public Sector.

The Organisational Drama Performed

Mr Silver sent his Assistant Director on an intelligence-gathering mission to *'assess'* Mr White's attributes as an Executive Director. His assistant arranged to meet with Mr White to discuss the 'transfer' of Mr Blue and his team to the management of the newly formed Excel Services. The meeting was scheduled to take place at Mr White's office. The Assistant Director arrived at Hugh Court, had his meeting with Mr White and then returned to the office of Mr Silver to provide an account of his impressions. Mr Blue was fortunate to be a participant observer to the encounter that ensued. Mr Silver was behaving in an animated fashion and was clearly anxious to be provided with his assistant's account of the meeting that he had with Mr White. The atmosphere in Mr Silver's office was tense with anticipation. His Assistant Director eased himself into a chair to provide an account of his reading of his encounter with Mr White. Mr Silver was eager to hear all the micro details of the encounter and enthusiastically asked an array of short questions in close succession e.g. *"What was he like?"*; *Describe his office?"*; *"How were you greeted?"*; *"What did you think of him?"*; and

"Do you think he is any good?" The Assistant Director patiently waited for Mr Silver to exhaust his battery of initial questioning then delivered his carefully constructed account of his reflective impressions, which now follows:

"Smooth Dave....real smooth...quite an operator..."

"What?" Mr Silver spluttered.

"Just real smooth Dave. In all my experience I have never met someone like Mr White before. The reception area where I reported for the meeting is like something you would expect to find in a blue chip corporate company. Not necessarily in a local authority service department." (In contrast Mr Silver's reception area is a claustrophobic space, with dark and gloomy colour schemes and was staffed by a male security guard of senior years). This dimension of contrast momentarily stunned Mr Silver and one could witness the cheerful anticipation drain away from him as his assistant elaborated upon, in complementary terms, his impression of the projected organisational identity of Mr White. The Assistant Director continues:

"I was met at a large expansive brightly lit reception area by an attractive receptionist who greeted me in a most courteous way. As I walked in to reception I noticed a wall mounted display board above the reception desk, which had the message; "Excel Services welcomes Mr Copper", I could not believe it, I felt whoa this guy is ahead of the game. All around me were wall mounted and glass displays upon and within which there were industry awards and letters of commendation for the organisations services. I was issued with a name badge, invited to take a seat and then I overheard the receptionist say in a polite and polished voice through a head set "Mr Copper is here to see Charles". For a moment I did not understand to whom she was referring to in terms of "Charles", however literally two minutes later this guy appears dressed in a striped shirt, no jacket (Mr Silver in contrast always kept his jacket on, which was part of a black sombre suit and he always wore a white shirt) *...you know the stockbroker kind, gold cufflinks, well groomed hair and a warm smile. He approached me with considerable confidence, stretched out his hand and said "Bob, great to meet you at last, Charles White welcome to Hugh Court."* (Pause).

"I was impressed by the fact he was on first name terms with all of his staff (Mr Silver in contrast is always addressed by staff below his senior team by his surname, never by his

Christian name) *and also that Charles (Mr White)* (Mr Silver's assistant was now on first name terms with Mr White, much to Mr Silver's annoyance) *met me personally at reception and took the time to escort me to his office* (in contrast Mr Silver never meets his visitors personally at the reception of FM Services) *as we walked together to his office he pointed out to me some of the industry achievements that his organisation had been recognised for in the form of industry awards".*

"What was his office like?" (Mr Silver interrupts)

"Some set up. He does not have a conference desk, he has a sofa arrangement with a coffee table around which we talked and enjoyed his hospitality. He had arranged fresh coffee and little scones with jam and cream for me and we munched away at these as we chatted. I noticed in his office that there were a number of framed photographs of him in the company of industry and political figures, including Tony Blair." (Mr Silver's office by contrast consists of a worn mahogany desk and a large austere looking conference table. His receptionist sits outside his office giving the impression of a terse gatekeeper. His visitors, once they have navigated past the ageing male security guard have to sit crunched together on a compact two seated couch and wait for an 'audience' with Mr Silver. Hospitality extends to powdered coffee sometimes served in stained and mixed china with sugar sachets and plastic milk portions.) Mr Copper continues:

"After about an hour of friendly chat, the meeting kind of smoothly came to an end. I thanked Charles for his time and he walked me to the front door and bid me farewell. As I got in to my car to drive out of his car park, I suddenly felt overwhelmed by the encounter. The guy was totally smooth, he is clearly connected very well in industry and in politics and he is unquestionably socially able to handle himself. But you know what? You know what the most impressive part of the meeting was?"

"No, what? tell me...come on tell me" (Mr Silver interrupts as he was getting impatient)

"I realised that after an hour of fairly robust conversation that he had told me nothing of any use to us about his business, let alone himself, he had controlled the whole encounter from start to finish, told me nothing yet manipulated this situation with grace and charm, quite a guy. I think he could be a problem for us Dave."

Conclusion

The previous tale of the field demonstrated how the staged performance of Mr White's symbolic capital, dramatically realised through the theatre of hegemony, produced a hegemonic narrative, which asserted corporate legitimacy to lead a contemporary business within the UK Public Sector for the new millennium. This hegemonic narrative was both linguistic and non linguistic in its constitution. One could also argue that it drew its ability to function as a hegemonic narrative because it tapped into a macro societal hegemony embodied in the concept of 'New Labour' that privileges image over substance (Mr White has a framed photograph of both himself and Tony Blair standing shoulder to shoulder together displayed on his office wall.) As Goffman (1959:55) once perceptively stated:"*Executives often project an air of competency and general grasp of the situation, blinding themselves and others to the fact that they hold their jobs partly because they look like executives, not because they can work like executives.*" Some executives spend their time practicing the function of 'managing organisations', for example Mr Silver, whilst others spend their time finely tuning the 'aristocratic habit' (Goffman, 1959:43) of acting like executives and managing the performance of looking like an Executive (Mr White). In doing so they master the art of performing the micro and apparently mundane social details that enable them to deliver carefully choreographed performances intended to '*mystify*' their audiences.

This mystification process may be considered as hegemonic. By maintaining social distance with Mr Copper and by providing the 'illusion' of social intimacy within the stage used for the coffee gathering, Mr White regulated the sign vehicles available to Mr Copper that may have disrupted his hegemonic performance. Mr White essentially engaged in the appearance of dialogue with his guest yet actually told Mr Copper nothing. Mr White, it appears from Mr Copper's account, guided the conversation and kept its themes firmly orientated around a carefully choreographed congenial corporate script, which was performed within an equally carefully choreographed corporate setting. This may be understood as a hegemonic act enacted within a theatre of hegemony. Goffman (1959:75) argues that '*mystification*' is employed by actors to generate and sustain '*awe*' in one's audience to protect the actors performance from scrutiny. This may be interpreted as mystification functioning to '*insulate*' the hegemony of Mr White from centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) that may disrupt his hegemonic narrative.

This dramaturgical hegemony re-presented to Mr Silver by his assistant, who now functioned almost enthusiastically as a 'hegemonic ambassador' for Mr White, appears to have constrained the scope for Mr Silver to author a negative organisational identity narrative for Mr White. Mr Copper was so impressed by Mr White's performance that he re-produced the implicit hegemony imbedded within the theatre of hegemony that manifested through the symbolic arrangement of Mr White's corporate front in the form of his performed narrative to Mr Silver. The symbolic capital that this signified, as imbedded in Mr Copper's talk, was so impressive that it constrained both Mr Copper and Mr Silver from separating image from substance.

Mr Silver pondered over this performed identity narrative and concluded that New Labour was manifesting in the new style of Public Sector Executives. Mr Silver was wartime General, a gruff and abrasive managerial professional. He concluded that he could not compete with the impression management of Mr White and he subsequently negotiated an early retirement package and left his post. The twist in this tale of the field was that in the end the Council did not merge the two departments. Eventually they were to be established as independent Limited Liability Companies and were judged to be exemplars of Public Sector Reform of direct labour services. Mr Silver went on to make a small fortune as 'poacher turned gamekeeper' as a Commercial Director for a private sector construction firm bidding for Public Sector work in England.

Summary

In summary, this section related to the way in which actors influence identity constructions through the use of performance devices. It considered a social drama (the coffee gathering) with its settings, actors, scripts and performances as a hegemonic process. This consideration was aided by certain elements of Goffman's theory on performance. In this way, I hope, the section and the tale of the field have demonstrated how Goffman's theory of Front as a process of social construction together with the conceptual properties of Front such as: 'dramatic realisation'; 'social distance'; 'mystification' and 'aristocratic habit' may be employed to analyse and explain hegemonic processes in dramaturgical terms. The section also considered the way in which the concept of front may be employed to secure 'legitimacy' to act through the enactment of 'idealisation'. The acquisition of legitimacy to lead and therefore to act or not to act, is understood to be a salient property of hegemony.

The main assertion of this section has been that the setting for the coffee gathering (Mr White's office), its geographical relationship with the reception area, the senior management corridor together with the close proximity of senior management offices located around this stage, supported by the presentation of symbols of power such as the photographs of Mr White with senior politicians, provided the impression of access to and possession of considerable symbolic capital. It is theorised that this impression functions to legitimise both Mr White's and the coffee gathering participants self authored identities as a group of serious executives. One could argue that the coffee gathering is concerned with the cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1991; Maclean, *et al*, 2006) of hegemony. The main source of the legitimacy for the hegemony produced is derived from the symbolic capital culturally generated by the aristocratic habit produced by the social encounter constituted by the coffee gathering itself. The coffee gathering provides the stage for learning the aristocratic habit or corporate habitus of the senior management team. The next section of this chapter discusses the role that the concept of '*dramatic realisation*' has with regard the framing of a definition of a given situation.

Section 2: Dramatic Realisation

Introduction

In this section I will demonstrate how the participants employ dramatic realisation as a method of privileging their self-importance through the mediums of talk and action. Linguistic dramatic realisation tactics are employed by the participants in an attempt to dominate everyday talk. These linguistic strategies are mediated through framing talk in a range of verbal styles. Mr Red states: "*I can't be bothered with listening to Mr Orange swear every morning or getting hyper or Miss Green cackling or Mr Yellow being cynical, or Mr White talking about sex or whatever.*" Cynical talk, I observed, functioned to constrain alternative modes of thinking and talking about organising. Miss Green states: "*I believe Mr Yellow's cynicism should be stopped. It only takes the shine off staff achievements and prevents us from praising team and individual achievements. I don't know why Mr Black tolerates it, as it kills team spirit.*'

The previous respondents statement is evidence of phenomenon that I have often witnessed in Excel Services. Management as a craft is trivialised to the point that it almost does not exist as an organisational identity. When I asked 12 senior and middle managers to tell me what kind of managers work for Excel Services, none of them described managers by

occupational type e.g. Accounts Manager, Personnel Manager, Unit Manager. They thought of them as *'bad managers'*, or *'lazy managers'* or as *'difficult managers'*. None of these respondents had a positive identity construction of a manager even though they belonged to this occupational grouping themselves. The coffee gathering is also used to dramatically realise status as the following short tale narrated by Miss Pink demonstrates:

A Tale of the Field: The Rise of Miss Pink

"In the early days, because of the structure set up, I reported directly into another manager, Miss Green, and from my perspective acknowledgement into that room in the morning for coffee was very significantly important to me. On paper I reported to Miss Green, but by them including me in the group (the coffee gathering) it created for me a feeling of equal status on things within my area that were important to me".

By her own admission Miss Pink employed the coffee gathering to dramatically realise her status within the senior management team to great effect. In the early days of the formation of the senior management team of Excel Services Miss Pink was in-between the senior and the middle management team. This was because she technically reported to Miss Green and not directly to Mr Black. There was a promise made that this anomaly would be *'sorted'* in time. Miss Pink employed her rights of admission to the coffee gathering to dramatically realise her true status. This tactic also served to publicly state through her symbolic presence her expectation that this promise should be kept. The coffee gathering was central to the process of dramatically realising the enactment of Miss Pink's seniority. Subsequently Mr White re-structured the senior management team and Miss Pink was promoted to Head of Personnel reporting direct to Mr Black. Thus the dramatic realisation that a corporate promise was to be kept was enacted daily in the coffee gathering.

Power and Identity Dramatically Realised

Participation in the coffee gathering dramatically illustrates both the power and identity of the organisational self. The following statement by Miss Pink concerning what she thinks Mr White used the coffee gathering for illustrates this point: *"I felt that he (Mr White) was gathering his team in our building, in the most important office which was his, and therefore reasserting the fact that he was the leader of this new team, and that it was his office, and it was his coffee".* Mr White uses the site of his office and not that of his deputy Mr Black for

the coffee gathering. By gathering an audience of Mr Black's team around him, Mr White symbolises that he has the power and that he is the Executive Director. This was his team, in his office, drinking his coffee in the most important office in the building. Mr White was the leader of the team and not Mr Black. I will now discuss the function of *'membership categories'* with regard the coffee gathering as display devices which dramatically realise both hegemonic practices and influences.

Membership Categories

There are three distinctive kinds of membership of the coffee gathering: (1) full member; and (2) partial member. The former denotes senior management status and the latter middle management status. Finally there is a third membership category to the coffee gathering which may be termed as *'guest membership'*. This category of membership in some cases facilitates hegemonic relations that exist between the participants of the coffee gathering and other stakeholders.

The guest membership category is reserved for suppliers of goods and services to Excel Services who have transcended the traditional supplier/company relationships. These guest members are actors who have acquired positions of power and influence within the inner sanctum of the senior management team. This phenomenon is dramatically realised through the example of such a supplier having unbridled access to the coffee gathering that manifests as *'supplier hegemony'*. Mr Red comments as follows: *"Now there's a cracker, Mr X, who does not even have to announce himself at reception...he just swans in to Mr White's office, parks himself down ...and will even offer me a coffee...I can't abide it. It's so unprofessional and suppliers should not have that sort of clout...it sends out the wrong message"*. The relationship between key suppliers, of which there exists a population of 20 due to the homogeneity of product and the application of bulk buying, is centralised within the ranks of the senior management team. Supplier hegemony is embedded in relationships with Miss Green as Head of Purchasing, Mr Black as the architect of tender documents and Mr White as the absolute power to award supplier contracts. All three of these senior managers regularly enjoy corporate hospitality as guests of key suppliers. Suppliers can influence the crafting of the organisational self of Unit Managers (a manager who is responsible for a sales unit out with Hugh Court) as perceived by their senior managers. This power to author identities is mediated through the dramatic realisation of the imbalance in supplier power at unit level and the subsequent blurring of identities within the coffee gathering. This process

is facilitated by the access of guest members not only to the coffee gathering but also to the senior managers social world.

Supplier hegemony is mediated through a counter discourse that the suppliers engage in to neutralise any complaints from unit managers to the corporate HQ of Excel Services with regard to supplier service. By labelling the identity of the complaining manager as being of unreasonable disposition, and therefore an 'issue' the supplier can re-frame a legitimate complainant as a troublemaker. Respondents define an issue as 'a kind of problem'. For example, absence levels would be defined as an issue; or a staff grievance as an issue. Employees who are labelled as issues become defined by default as organisational problems. The following email from a purchasing manager to a group of unit managers and head chefs presents these phenomena succinctly:

From; Cake, Jack

*Subject; Blooms Problem Orders - **Worst Offenders***

Dear All,

*I have attached a summary of the premises that have created orders that have become "**problem orders**" for Blooms throughout February and March. I have highlighted the premises whose name has been reported on three or more occasions.*

*Please can you **urgently** address this problem with your premises as Blooms are finding this to be a **tremendous problem** and we must see **these problem orders** reducing as soon as possible?*

Many Thanks

Jack

It is interesting to note that unit managers and chefs are labelled as 'worst offenders'. The supplier's position is taken as a given and the unit managers/chefs are assumed guilty. Then of course there is the tactic of naming and shaming. This exemplifies the role that dramatic realisation plays in authored identity impositions being constituted as hegemonic narratives. The sender of the email employs the dramatic use of language such as "urgently address this problem" and "tremendous problem" to further legitimise the requirement for action. The next email provides an illustration of the way, which the hegemony is resisted;

Jack

*Please advise what exactly Blooms seem to think the '**problem**' is. The 3 Saturday deliveries for Unit X were placed timeously, one was a short delivery and 2 of the 3 deliveries had expected breads replaced with alternatives (Blooms choice), all this over 3 deliveries and with 72 hours (changed by consent to 48 hours) notice. **Did Blooms send you a spreadsheet highlighting the Saturdays they haven't delivered at all? That caused a small problem for us let me tell you!***

*Please can you address the above problems **<u>as a matter of urgency</u>** as it is causing **tremendous problems at the sharp end?** We are constantly having to work with 2 and 3 day old bread for fear of running out – knowing what the level of business will be two days ahead can sometimes be cloudy. Perhaps we could source a supplier that could deliver a variety of breads with a shorter notice period and who is willing to pick up the phone and speak to the end user? I've always found this method of communication very constructive and mutually beneficial.*

Instead of automatically assuming we have committed an offence, perhaps a smidgen of investigative work may have been appropriate. Blooms seem to be both judge and jury here and it reads like we are assuming liability.

***All of the above would indicate to me that Blooms are the problem.** Would it be possible to set up a meeting with some operators and the supplier to discuss and to resolve the problem? On a positive note, Blooms don't consider Unit X to be a problem in March, perhaps they've lifted their game. Hope this helps.*

Regards

Paul

The above email demonstrates Paul developing a counter narrative that attacks the legitimacy of the supplier hegemony being presented in the narrative of the purchasing manager. This exemplifies the fragility of the potential for the smooth migration of hegemony throughout organisations. If uncontested then the hegemony appears as if it were travelling down hill, as if there are no competing hegemonic narratives in its way. Paul's narrative changes the slope that the supplier hegemony is travelling, in that it now has to travel up hill as Paul's narrative has changed the direction of the gradient the hegemony must travel upon. Interestingly Paul's counter narrative is itself hegemonic.

The guest membership afforded key suppliers in the coffee gathering functions to realise the informal structure that exists between the senior management team and suppliers. It is this relationship that enables supplier hegemony. For example I have of often-heard Miss Green make the following statement: "*I mean how come we have a huge amount of units and it's only Unit X that causes us any trouble*". A tale of the field that would further illustrate the dramatic effect of supplier hegemony is the case of the antagonistic chef;

A Tragic Tale of the Field: The Case of the Antagonistic Chef

Head Chef Blond operates his kitchen on the basis of detailed organisation. Chef Blond experienced regular quality issues concerning both product and delivery schedules with regard to a butcher supplier. These issues he felt were starting to impact on his ability to do his job. The relationship between the sales manager of the butcher supplier and Chef Blond deteriorated to the point that he placed his business with a second listed butcher supplier.

The sales manager of the butcher company contacted Miss Green (Head of Purchasing) and performed his version of the issue regarding Chef Blond. His narrative was that the Head Chef was unduly difficult to deal with and was unfairly criticising the supplier. Miss Green accepted the sales managers account and proceeded in the coffee gathering to narrate an account of the behaviour of Chef Blond based on that perception. Mr Blue, (Chef Blond's line manager), was advised by Mr Black that he had "*real concerns*" concerning Chef Blond with regard to his ability to manage relationships with "*key suppliers*". Mr Black instructed Mr Blue to meet with Miss Green and "*sort*" this issue out. By this time the issue had been transformed and now had nothing to do with quality of product, rather it was concerned with Chef Blond's inability to maintain perceived cordial relations with suppliers. This narrative implied that he was to refrain from complaining about supplier quality.

Chef Blond was now the '*issue*' and not the supplier. Chef Blond was having his identity authored for him. By this time within the coffee gathering all the senior managers had been '*taught*' how bad a manager Chef Blond was, how efficient Miss Green was and how the supplier relationship was to be privileged over that of the unit-based manager. Mr Blue met with Miss Green and she advised him that Chef Blond was to be '*summoned*' to HQ to have his behaviour addressed. Mr Blue refused to do this. He pointed out that Chef Blond had yet to receive a fair hearing. Mr Blue suggested that Miss Green meet with Chef Blond and listen to his side of the story. Miss Green refused to do this and subsequently the drama

diffused over time. Chef Blond still has problems with his suppliers. He still refuses to use the supplier quality control system and he claimed: *"I don't use it because it is only there so that the bosses can say to auditors: "look we have a comprehensive control system through which we monitor supplier quality...a load of crap"*.

The outcome of this tale resulted in damaged relations between Mr Blue and Miss Green. It also resulted in poor relations between Chef Blond and both the supplier and Miss Green's team. It resulted in a negative definition of Chef Blond standing in the organisation from the perspective of the senior management team. Finally, and possibly more significant, the hegemonic narrative cemented a lack of belief amongst unit, area and middle managers that they have any influence with regard performance issues concerning suppliers.

Summary

In summary, the theme of dramatic realisation may be considered as being linked to the concept of legitimacy. Dramatic realisation relates to the way in which actors influence identity constructions through the amplification of particular characteristics of the presentation of a given performance. This section demonstrated that dramatic realisation was a process that contributed towards the establishment of the significant other. This was done through dramatic presentation of self to emphasise their symbolic capital. Dramatic realisation is achieved by the dimension of contrast between signifiers of high and low symbolic capital and the performance of this differential. The technique of establishing: full membership; partial membership; or guest membership of the coffee gathering perpetuates a class system and dramatically realises the status differential between managers throughout the organisation. Finally, this section demonstrated the link between the coffee gathering and the manifestation of supplier hegemony, and also the way in which hegemony, if dramatically challenged and identified as being illegitimate, is vulnerable. This illustrated the idea that hegemony does not travel in organisations uncontested at all times. The next section will consider language use as a hegemonic process.

Section 3: Language Use

Introduction

This section sets out to illustrate linguistic processes that contribute to hegemony and will focus on the kinds of talk in which actors engage as participants in the coffee gathering. In the first instance I will consider the concept of *'barriers to talk'* and the ways in which this concept when empirically grounded impacts on the production and protection of hegemony.

Barriers to Talk

Mr Black was invited to reflect on the kinds of conversations that the participants to the coffee gathering engage in each morning, he said: *"Some of the people would rather not spend the first half hour of the day listening to prattlers going on about things that they have got no interest in. Some people like to talk about football, but not about work"* As Assistant Director and therefore, officially as the second most influential participant in terms of status in the coffee gathering Mr Black is critically disdainful of some of the kinds of discourse produced by some of the participants. He identifies speech agents he calls *'prattlers'* who have nothing to say worth listening to. This categorisation of speech agents when combined with the boundary impact of the coffee gathering functions as a source of *'audience segregation.'* Miss Pink when asked whether or not she thinks that Mr Black handles the coffee gathering well or not, replies that: *"He does not like to talk about business he is happier to talk about football which leaves me as a female manager kind of out in the cold"*.

The observation that the Assistant Director does not wish to talk about business acts as a barrier to those who would benefit from such a conversation each morning. If he privileges football as a *'kind of talk'* (Spradley, 1980) then perhaps he is constraining the expressive capacity of others who do not have access to this topic. As football talk is generally a male discourse he is, by default, privileging male discourse over female discourse. Thus we have empirical evidence of audience segregation being established through the privileging of kinds of talk within the context of the coffee gathering. When Miss Pink was asked the question, is there a status order that influences who has the right to speak in the coffee gathering each morning? she replied:

"I would say that every one has the right to speak, providing that what they are saying is relevant for the mood of the setting for that day. The earliest players, set the mood of the morning."

The above example illustrates the subtle language use in the coffee gathering. All participants have the right to speak providing what they have to say is relevant and therefore legitimate. However we need to enquire as to whom decides on what kind of talk is legitimate? Miss Pink points towards the earliest players in this language game as those who set the mood for the kind of talk that is to be performed. I can confirm that this is sometimes the case, although on other occasions when a power player arrives later in the morning, they can still shift the mood of conversation, albeit this is more difficult. Therefore every one has the right to speak as long as they are legitimised as *'speech agents'* by the significant other. Mr Yellow asserts that Mr White does not talk about work; however he contradicts himself when he admits that he uses the coffee gathering to employ a kind of conversational strategy to talk business with Mr White when he states that: *"So it's an opportunity for me and him to talk about something. But that's only when there's some issue coming up. He doesn't really talk about work, so I may start of talking about an issue in the papers, say budget cuts being driven by the Scottish Executive in the public sector then link this to an issue in the work."*

This *'work talk'*, tends to take place early in the morning. There is never anyone else in the room when Mr Yellow is discussing work talk with Mr White. Notice the *'bridging'* technique that Mr Yellow employs when he introduces a kind of talk called *'issue talk'*. Bridging through *'light talk'* is used to legitimise a subject that is clearly concerned with work talk. It appears that there remains some kind of dimension of contrast between issue talk and work talk. The research participants define *'issues'* as organisational problems that could damage the reputation of the organisation. Issue talk is important because *'issues'* could also damage the professional standing of Mr White. In contrast work talk is concerned with the detail of the management process. Light talk would be exemplified by *'football talk'* or *'corporate gossip'*. Work talk is rare in the coffee gathering. The ramifications of this are considerable as the linguistic and identity constructs of the coffee gathering subjugate the opportunity for participants to discuss the management process and to linguistically conceptualise organising in different ways. I wll now provide an illustration of the way in which *'institutionalised kinds of talk'* prevents group engagement with alternative ways to both think and talk about organising such as management development programmes.

A Tragic Tale of the Field: The Management Route Way.

A staff survey was carried out in Excel Services following a request from the Chief Executive for evidence of Excel Services engaging staff with regard to organisational development practices. A summary report of the research findings was compiled and issued to the senior management team. These findings claimed that employees were concerned with the style of management demonstrated by the senior management team. This report also included themes such as: *'cultural transformation'*; *'coaching'*; *'mentoring;'* and *'command and control'*. The report was subsequently ridiculed by the senior management team for the use of jargon and as a result was withdrawn, rewritten and subsequently re-issued. The report outlined for consideration an *'organisational development plan'* (ODP) called the *'Management Route Way'*. Miss Green, who was charged with managing the delivery of the ODP for 300 HQ staff and 8,500 operational staff, said in her opening statement, at the first planning meeting of her project team: *"Right we have a program of seven quick and sharp meetings to deliver the ODP for the department"*

This was a development program that involved wholesale cultural change, the design of which was to be constructed over seven meetings. The political commitment to enact the Management Route Way within the ranks of the senior management team was weak. As a result of a profits warning issued by management accounts a decision was taken to put the Management Route Way on hold. This decision further damaged the credibility of the program and stories of the way it was being considered by senior management within the coffee gathering started to leak into the ranks of HQ staff. Mr Black was then forced to look for quick wins that would signify progress to satisfy the expectations of the Chief Executive. The Management Route Way Program was now explicitly being used to assure the Chief Executive that Excel Services was committed to organisational development. There was no attempt to evaluate the impact of the program.

The conclusion to this tale of the field was that the lack of support for Organisational Development practices materialised very publicly in a combined meeting of both the senior and middle management teams chaired by Mr Black. At this meeting the topic of the program was on the agenda as a part of its implementation plan. As the discussion got underway, Mr Orange stated openly that: *"I am thinking too much about jargon and this is making my head hurt "*. Mr Orange further stated he was not prepared to consider the issue of organisational development any longer. Another participant claimed never to have

received the document and it was clear that around the table both the majority of senior and middle managers had not read the development strategy. It was also very clear, that neither Mr Black nor Mr White challenged the lack of support for the program. The Training and Development Manager was very upset and felt that this episode undermined the potential of the Management Route Way Program, and she was most probably quite right in her assessment. I will now consider conversational synergy as part of a process that is productive of hegemony.

Conversational Synergy

An important element of a language game, or indeed any language game, is *'conversational synergy'*. Conversational synergy is a technique that research paricipants employ to engage one and the other in particular kinds of talk. For example a member of the coffee gathering may ask Mr White if he was aware of a performance issue within the department when Mr White was himself involved with preparing a report for an external agency such as the *'Audit Commission'*. This conversational strategy may be considered as *'identity hooking'*. Miss Green expands on this point: *"Quite often for me anyway the coffee gathering is usually the one and only chance, sometimes to say to Mr White 'did you know about that? and are you aware about that?' or vice versa, this is only possible if I can link my conversational theme with an issue that is hot for him."*

Thus the coffee gathering is used as an opportunity to establish conversational synergy between organisational issues and the framing of social reality around those issues. The coffee gathering is also used as a kind of a *'script writing centre'*. This is a domain where narrated responses are articulated and therefore scripted in relation to corporate issues. Another kind of talk that is highly important to the language games that constitute the coffee gathering is that of the art of *'story telling'*. The coffee gathering is an excellent stage for both the storyteller and the telling of stories. The stage has soft furnishings for the audience to sit comfortable in; a coffee table is made available to place refreshments upon and for the audience to huddle around as they listen to the stories being performed. Any chair can be used for the storyteller to perform from to a familiar audience. The office of Mr White is suitably designed for the performance of story telling.

Summary

In summary, language use relates to the way in which both linguistic habitus and linguistic markets control and mediate the emergence of reality constructions. The findings demonstrated that language is fundamental to reality construction. How actors talk about symbols influences how they perceive and act towards those symbols. The findings indicate that there exists an institutionalised form of talk that both constrains and enables the conceptual repertoire of managers. Also that there are rules or techniques supported by authored identities called '*speech agents*' which determine who gets into and how effectively they can perform within the language game of the coffee gathering. The influence of hegemonic narratives that provided positive or negative confirmation of idealised self-identities was illustrated. Finally, the power of story telling to influence the process of hegemony within the coffee gathering was illustrated. This section considered the role of the organising domain as a hegemonic device that is used by participants to the coffee gathering in both structuring the linguistic market of the organisation and in defining linguistic habitus. The next section will consider the coffee gathering as a source of symbolic capital.

Section 4: Symbolic Capital

Introduction

The coffee gathering is a centralising domain of the highest-ranking managers in Excel Services. It functions as a symbol of elitism. The coffee gathering provides the key source of symbolic capital to be found in the organisation. The coffee gathering is concerned, amongst other concerns, with status. This is the domain where social, cultural and economic capital merges to provide '*high density symbolic capital*'. It is arguably this high-density symbolic capital that provides corporate legitimacy to the full members, the partial members and to guest members of this organising domain.

The partial ethnography illustrated that there is a cultural assumption amongst Excel Service staff that the coffee gathering functions as an elite space for senior management to occupy. A respondent describes her feelings towards the coffee gathering, when she states: "*That's their room and if you're not at that level you won't cross that boundary. I won't until I'm invited in, I know my place*". The perceived boundary line also amplifies the status differential between management groups. A research respondent commented on the practice of the

coffee gathering participants stopping talking when she approaches the open door of Mr White's office: *"It's a wee bit like interrupting two people talking. If they stop talking then you automatically think they're talking about you. It's just a mad thing people assume and it's probably wrong, but that's how that group makes me feel as though it's all a big secret and I shouldn't be part of that secret."* It appears as if the coffee gathering is perceived by non participants as guarding a corporate secret to which only the ruling elite have access. The symbolic capital of the coffee gathering is also enhanced by the dramaturgy of the senior management corridor.

Miss Pink comments on the current purpose of the coffee gathering and states that: *"I think it is a gathering of Mr White's top managers in his arena as opposed to Mr Black's"*. This insight demonstrates how Mr White uses the coffee gathering to dramatically illustrate his seniority over Mr Black. The coffee gathering serves as a dimension of contrast between two kinds of front, the Executive Director's office and the Assistant Director's office, so as to amplify its high status and symbolic capital. Symbolic capital can be understood as synonymous with the coffee gathering and with Mr White himself. The dramaturgical arrangement that constitutes the coffee gathering provides a rich source of *'hegemonic symbolism'* i.e. symbols that perform a hegemonic function e.g. photographs of Mr White in the company of elected politicians. A research respondent describes its participants as simply: *"Untouchables, just basically we are in control, and you're not"*.

There is evidence of Excel managers resisting the negative identity work that they perceive as being characteristic of the coffee gathering. The way in which managers appear to cope with the kinds of narrative identity constraint that are synonymous with the coffee gathering is to privilege a self-narrative of their own professional competence. A research participant provides an account of this strategy: *"It (the coffee gathering) doesn't effect my business day at all because I keep it totally separate and I don't see any of them having any more clout than me, basically I can do my job."* This idea is developed further my Miss Pink, who when reflecting on the way she now views the coffee gathering, claims that: *"You know, there is for me no more set rules anymore. The underlying rules that I may have thought were there originally when I was lacking in confidence and I was unsure about who I was have now all gone, for me it's a place where I can drop in if I wish to.'* Miss Pink is claiming that when she was lacking in confidence; her experience of the coffee gathering constrained the expression of her professional self. Now that she has developed an inner self-confidence, the constraining influence of the coffee gathering had less impact on her. Miss Pink comments

on her early experience of the coffee gathering: "*I felt that Mr White was gathering his team in our building, in the most important office which was his, and therefore reasserting the fact that he was the leader of this new team, but what he was not there for, was, to help you achieve that day*". Instead of using the coffee gathering to offer his managers support, Mr White appears to be using the gathering to ensure that his symbolic capital is privileged and reinforced daily.

Audience Segregation

The coffee gathering gains some of its hegemonic impact from the way in which it segregates audiences. For example a middle manager when describing how she thinks lower ranked staff (a different kind of audience) interprets the coffee gathering she states that: "*I think they would be more in awe of it. I think people lower down the organisation think of senior management as God-like*". What is disturbing is the analogy of the participants in the coffee gathering being thought of as being God-like. This comparison with the supernatural illustrates the extent of symbolic capital that the coffee gathering signifies to a wider audience. The reference to: "*those lower down in the organisation*" actually refers to employees who work no more than fifty feet from the coffee gathering on a daily basis.

The Theatre of Hegemony

A recurring theme emerging from the research with regard to the concept of symbolic capital is the idea of spatial arrangements providing a stage for a concept that I have termed as '*the theatre of hegemony*'. Mr Gold remarks, when considering the physical layout of the coffee gathering and the surrounding senior managers corridor, that: "*I believe it's put together with an element of thought in relation to status. If you have such and such a status you get this quality. If you are in such and such a status you get lesser quality and so on.*" In Excel Services, as with many other organisations, the quality of one's office, its décor, furnishings and computer equipment stand as symbols of status and symbolic capital. A research participant continues: "*The coffee gathering took place in White Tower (the former HQ of Mr White) when I worked out there for TAC Services, the senior management were up in the floor above and it was like the glass ceilinng, you would go upstairs to see the senior managers. Now you've got this kind of line of senior management corridor which is extremely intimidating for most people*" The centralising of symbolic capital in a tightly

defined geographical location appears to be a hegemonic theme that Mr White has displaced from his previous organisation.

A research participant reflected on her experiences of encounters with the coffee gathering and stated that: "*I used to get sick when I thought of going to meet a senior manager in the coffee gathering. I can remember before when I used to work upstairs, I used to go the Board Room way so I wouldn't have to walk up the senior management corridor.*" The respondents experience demonstrates the intense emotional impact that the coffee gathering can have on non-participants. The dramaturgical arrangement of symbolic capital may be considered as a 'theatre of hegemony' resulting from densely clustering high status symbols together in the same geographical space. It is important to note that emotional distress is not only experienced by non-participants, but also by full participants as Mr Orange explains, when reflecting on his experience of the coffee gathering: "*Most of the time it's a fairly positive experience. Sometimes it is a negative and if you come out of the room thinking, why the fuck did I go in there in the first place because you hear negative things*". A middle manager also remarks that: "*Miss Green will say to me 'do you want a coffee?' And I'll say 'yes that's great' and I'm going to get the coffee and if Mr Black or anybody comes in I actually feel 'oh God I've been caught stealing a coffee' because it's not really meant for me it's meant for senior managers.*" Interestingly a self-morality narrative that informs her that what she is doing is wrong triggers the emotional anxiety she experiences. The importance of the morality narrative is that it demonstrates the function of 'cultural valence' in triggering critical self-reflection on the part of the actor. Cultural valence implies that hegemony triggers critical self-reflection if it is culturally meaningful to the actor.

The degree of emotional anxiety as experienced by middle management in response to the hegemony of the coffee gathering is vividly articulated by the reflections of the following respondent: "*I've gone in (to the coffee gathering) when I've had meetings with some of them to say 'I'm up here for the meeting. If I walk along that senior management corridor I hate it because I know that their in there and I used to just about-turn and walk away, but now if I've got a meeting at a certain time and their still in there chatting I just walk straight in and ask if they want me to come back. So I feel very intimidated about going in*". The degree of emotional constraint that the respondent has to employ as she approaches the coffee gathering is considerable. She interprets the coffee gathering as a very intimidating and disturbing setting. The walk down the senior managers corridor that constitutes the theatre of hegemony intensifies the emotional anxiety created by the experience. This respondent

openly admits to feeling intimidated by the hegemony being performed and she has to meekly enquire if '*they*' want her to '*come back*'.

A research respondent remarks on the emotional anxiety that she also experiences when she is in the proximity of, or has to engage with, the coffee gathering: '*I used to have a tightness in my stomach and feelings of apprehension when I approached the coffee gathering, I don't have it nearly as much, but when that was first set up I used to think 'God I've got to go and see such and such.*' When asked if she still experiences such emotional anxiety when she has to interact with this hegemonic arrangement that we call the coffee gathering she stated that: "*Because I've probably got myself an opinion that I am as good as they are in what I'm saying and why are these people intimidating me? So I'm not nearly as intimidated by the senior management in the coffee gathering now as I was two years ago.*" This middle manager constructs a sense of self-confidence as a coping mechanism in response to the hegemonic impact of the coffee gathering. This coping mechanism is characterised by an inner source of high self-esteem regarding her professional self which is drawn from an internalised self identity narrative.

Summary

The previous section demonstrated that symbolic capital may be understood as a relationship based construct which constitutes a key hegemonic process with regard to defining who or what is significant in the organisation. I demonstrated that the role of symbolic capital in determining the significant other could be considered as a property of legitimacy and therefore the concept requires attention in a study of the processes of hegemony. The role of symbolic capital as a significant process in the production of hegemony has not as yet been fully established within organisational and management studies, although in the field of sociology it is considered a central process of social construction (Bourdieu, 1991). A rare example of the role of symbolic capital in producing hegemony within the field of organisational and management studies is that of Maclean, *et al* (2006) into the hegemony that produces the corporate elite in both France and the UK. The findings of my research demonstrate that hegemony may be embedded in the mundane detail of the symbolic fabric of an organising domain. Symbolic capital functioning can constrain the expressive capacity of actors. It may also define class identities. Symbolic capital contributes towards the ability of the significant other to author the self-identity of the other. Symbolic capital also segregates audiences on the basis of status and is amplified if the symbolic capital is

centralised within a theatre of hegemony. This concludes this chapter and I will now consider in the next chapter, for further detailed theoretical abstraction, the findings that have been discussed thus far.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter builds on the findings of the ethnography in theoretical terms and its purpose is to develop a model of the micro cultural interactive processes that both produce and protect hegemony. I shall present the analytical outcomes of the grounded approach that I have used throughout this research process in the form of a model of the processes of hegemony. The production of the model is classic Glaser and Strauss (1967) in that it is a product of emergent theorising that employs the conceptual categories that come from the data analysis and engages with, builds on and applies pre-existing theory. I have used concepts from: Opler (1945); Goffman (1959); Spradley (1980); Bourdieu (1991); and Humphreys and Brown (2002) in a generative way. This chapter represents the outcomes of the grounded approach that I have used and is therefore to be regarded as emergent theorising. The emerging model theorises that the dynamic interplay of cultural processes that manifest as hegemony initially occur within an organising domain. The study, informed by literature review, has identified seven processes for discussion. These are: (1) dramatic realisation; (2) symbolic capital; (3) identity cohesion; (4) cultural valence; (5) narrative; (6) legitimacy; and (7) mystification. Throughout this chapter I will consider these concepts in detail.

The earlier discussion in Chapter One with regard to the concept of '*front*' (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985) will not be considered as a separate hegemonic process in this chapter. This is because, on critical reflection, I now hold the view that 'front' is a property of hegemony that enables all of the process categories selected to function effectively. Front and its various properties will form part of the general theoretical discussion throughout this chapter. I have allocated separate sections dedicated to both '*identity cohesion*' (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986) and '*cultural valence*' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This I have decided upon as '*identification outcomes*' (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) in relation to hegemony repeatedly emerged as a key theme in the ethnography. Cultural valence as a process has been treated separately for the same reasons.

The structure of this chapter will be presented as follows: in Section One I discuss the various functions of the coffee gathering as an organising domain in relation to hegemony (Spradley, 1980); in Section Two I will discuss identity cohesion as a process of hegemony; in Section Three I will then present an interim consolidation of my findings with the aid of a

tale of the field; in Section Four I discuss cultural valence, narrative and audience segregation; Section Five then considers the role of every day talk in producing hegemony and in this section I present for consideration a model of the language game of the coffee gathering; finally in Section Six I present another tale of the field to advance my emerging model of the salient micro cultural interactive processes that facilitate the production, migration and protection of hegemony in organisations. I will now discuss the nature and purpose of the organising domain within the context of the study.

Section One: The Organising Domain and Hegemony

Mr Yellow defined the purpose of the coffee gathering as merely an opportunity, prior to starting work, for the senior management team to meet over coffee. This meeting, he asserted, was non-work related. During this encounter, this event is symbolised as an informal gathering by the cultural norm of *'keeping jackets off'*. From Mr Yellow's perspective this symbol of jackets off acts as a *'personal front'* (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985) to signify that the coffee gathering is mainly non-work related and that the actual working day is yet to commence. Mr White claimed that the purpose of the coffee gathering was to build relationships within a relaxed social setting. Mr Black also claimed that the coffee gathering was not really concerned with work. Mr White asserted that the coffee gathering provided an opportunity for a team of managers to gel together as a team. The previous explanations of the purpose of the coffee gathering from the respondents perspective can be considered as an *'idealised purpose'* (Goffman, 1959) of this organising domain.

There is a reason that the coffee gathering is initially idealised in this way. I think that a possible explanation is concerned with the hegemonic pressure applied to the professional self to conform to an idealised account of managerial activities (Whyte, 1959; Jackall, 1988; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This idealised presentation to both self and others is concerned with the pursuit of the acquisition of legitimacy to enact leadership claims (Rosen, 1985; Schein, 1985). To consider the coffee gathering in any other terms would involve the acknowledgement of the fragmentation of the professional self (Kunda, 1992) and therefore would require its internalised redefinition. Perhaps it is more comfortable for the organisational self to live in an idealised empirical bubble? However, the empirical experience of the coffee gathering from the multiple perspectives previously reported somewhat contradicts this idealised account of the purpose of this daily drama. The

following analysis of the ethnographic findings will focus upon the plurivocal understandings of the coffee gathering (Young, 1989; Alvesson, 1994; Beech, 2000; Currie and Brown, 2003).

From the respondents perspective, the coffee gathering provides a site for powerful people to congregate each morning. It signifies a social event to which only 'A List' managers get access. It may be considered as a kind of club that amplifies the status of a powerful group. The coffee gathering functions as a 'dimension of contrast' to those of lower status (Spradley, 1980). Both access and denial to membership of the coffee gathering ensures that the distinction between management categories is on public display each day. As the ethnography demonstrated there was arguably no need for formal articulation of this distinction beyond the daily performance of the coffee gathering.

The organising domain may be considered as an important part of the process of producing hegemony. This is because it provides a 'front' from both behind and within that actors may perform, learn, amend, and maintain hegemonic narratives. This front insulates a hegemonic narrative from 'performance punctures' (Goffman, 1959) and from being undermined by competing hegemonic narratives (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The organising domain is also an important site for 'inculcation' (Bourdieu, 1991). This process involves teaching the participants a particular 'corporate linguistic habitus' (Bourdieu, 1991). Therefore the organising domain is to be considered as a site of important identity work. The organising domain is both produced by, and is a producer of, corporate hegemony.

For an organising domain to be effective it must be perceived to have high 'symbolic capital' (Rosen, 1985; Bourdieu, 1991). This symbolic capital is understood to constitute an important source of legitimacy to lead and to declare meaning, properties that hegemony requires to be effective. I will now discuss the way in which the concept of 'dramatic realisation' (Goffman, 1959) frames perspectives on reality within the context of the organising domain.

Dramatic Realisation

Dramatic realisation (Goffman, 1959) is used by the participants of the coffee gathering as a method of privileging their self-importance through the media of talk, front and action. The use of swearing, cynicism and humour serve to dramatically realise both the influence and

power of key actors. Cynicism can be understood as constituting a phenomenon, which nullifies the enthusiasm of the organisational self. Cynicism also constrains the emergence of alternative managerial discourse. This may be considered as hegemony operating to marginalise the other and regulating the scope for considering alternative modes of organising (Chia, 1995).

The combinations of infusing foul language into one's talk with a demonstration of excited and hyper behaviour functions to illustrate for the audience the dominant position of Mr Orange. He is interpreted within the group as an actor who can resist the cultural censorship of the group's social structure. Thus, infusing foul language into one's talk, in this cultural setting, serves as a *'hegemonic insulator'*. It insulates the discourse of Mr Orange from critical engagement on the part of his audience (Goffman, 1959).

The organising domain functions as a device to dramatically realise *'social segregation'* (Goffman, 1959) between management groups. This social segregation provides a source of social distance between the senior management team and their staff. It also dramatically realises the existence of a class distinction between managers. Thus, the coffee gathering appears to be inextricably linked to the maintenance of ongoing *'asymmetrical power relations'* (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). These dynamic power relations were dramatically realised within this symbolic space (Rosen, 1985). For example, Mr White employs the coffee gathering to dramatically realise his identity as Executive Director. This he does by the social fact that the coffee gathering is being enacted in 'his' office, using 'his' coffee, by 'his' team, in 'his' presence. This method of performing hegemony was documented by the work of Rosen, (1985) which reported the efforts of a President of an American advertising company to establish a hegemonic presence at his companies annual breakfast meeting.

The coffee gathering dramatically realises the way that the *'other'* authors the organisational identity of the self (Goffman, 1961; Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The ethnography showed that identity could be considered as a fragile ever-evolving construct that is embedded in narrative; a conceptual explanation of identity that is well developed in the literature (Young, 1989; Dutton, and Dukerich, 1991; Beech, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Doolin, 2002)

The practice of identities being both authored and performed within the coffee gathering emerged as a recurrent theme throughout the ethnography. The tale of the '*antagonistic chef*' documented this process of '*identity dramatization*'. This tale of the field illustrated how identities were both authored and performed through narrative (Hatch, and Schultz, 1997; Fiol, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) within the context of the coffee gathering. It was also demonstrated how dramatic actions towards those identities can result in organisational dysfunctionality at the micro; meso and macro levels of the organisation.

The nature of expressive hegemony as relationship-dependent phenomenon (Gramsci, 1971), and its effects on organisational behaviour at the micro; meso and the macro were illustrated. The role that the coffee gathering played in this process was highlighted. Underpinning the empirical example of the antagonistic chef was the hegemonic theme of conflict avoidance that was enacted through relationship management. Good managers were defined as those who maintained cordial relations and bad managers were defined as those who engaged in organisational conflict with stakeholders. The tale of the antagonistic chef also showed that the guest membership of the coffee gathering afforded to key suppliers dramatically realised (Goffman, 1959) the informal structure that exists between the participants and suppliers. This status of guest membership perpetuated '*supplier hegemony*'.

Summary

In summary, dramatic realisation privileges the importance of a hegemonic narrative (Gramsci, 1971; Rosen, 1985; Willmott, 1993; Boje *et al*, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) in relation to competing hegemonies (Currie and Brown, 2003). It does this through the mechanism of '*the dimension of contrast*' (Spradley, 1980). This dimension of contrast is rooted in the ability of actors to dramatically realise the important and distinctive characteristics of their performed hegemonic narrative. Dramatic realisation can manifest as both distinctive forms of talk (Goffman, 1981) and demonstrable attitudes toward forms of talk and action. Social segregation is maintained through the dramatic realisation of status differential (Rosen, 1985). These status differentials result from the density of symbolic capital and power associated with the coffee gathering and thus its participants. Social segregation is important to the production of hegemony because it insulates the narratives that constitute the hegemony from interrogation and disruption by others (Goffman, 1959). Finally, guest membership of the organising domain can result in external stakeholders developing '*surrogate hegemonies*' in the host organisation. This was illustrated by the case

of the '*supplier hegemony*'. Without the capacity to dramatically realise their relationships with senior management in the coffee gathering, it would be unlikely that supplier hegemony would be as effective as it was. I will now discuss the ways in which the coffee gathering functions as a source of symbolic capital for its participants.

Symbolic Capital

The membership status of full participant to the coffee gathering provides access to relationship power, which subsequently provides access to symbolic capital. Full participants are understood by non-participants to be associating with the '*in crowd*' and with the '*right people*'. Certain actors can be understood as belonging to a category called '*partial membership*'. This kind of membership elevates the organisational self into a hierarchy of dominance that transcends its legitimate status. Partial membership involves achieving '*symbolic communion*' (Goffman, 1959) with the hegemony of the coffee gathering. This symbolic communion is signified by the practice of being allowed to participate in the morning drama or to achieve access to the free tea and coffee to take to one's office.

The coffee gathering operates as a centralising place for the symbolic capital of the senior management team (Bourdieu, 1991). This is because both its participants and non-participants perceive it as a symbol of elitism. It is understood as the key source of high symbolic capital to be found in the organisation. On this stage the participants signify to the other their senior management status and in doing so they amplify the status of their rank. This amplification contributes towards achieving legitimacy to lead (Rosen, 1985). Acquiring symbolic capital contributes towards the attainment of legitimacy (Maclean *et al*, 2006). Legitimacy may be required in the struggle to both declare meaning and enact leadership claims (Gramsci, 1971; Smircich and Morgan, 1982; Young, 1989; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). Symbolic capital is important to the hegemonic process because it may influence the definition of the significant other. From a Symbolic Interactionist perspective the significant other is considered as an essential influencing factor with regard to meaning making (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Kunda, 1992).

Hegemony may be understood as an output of the process of acquiring symbolic capital which in the case of the coffee gathering results from the cumulative distribution of the '*cultural*', '*social*' and '*economic*' capital of its participants (Bourdieu, 1991). The symbolic capital of the coffee gathering is amplified as it represents the highest density symbolic

capital to be found in the organisation. The symbolic capital on display, in some cases, constrains or enables the expressive capacity of actors.

The ethnography illustrated that cultural intimidation can be an unintended consequence of the performance of symbolic capital. Access to relationship power may be be realised by the practice of appropriating the free coffee. For example, being authorised access to free coffee is understood to be an important privilege. Wrapped up in this apparently mundane privilege is the exercise of hegemony (Young, 1989). This hegemony can be experienced by the actor as a kind of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1991) that occurs resulting in the 'mortification of the organisational self' (Goffman, 1961). Mortification of self results from the public airing of the authorisation on the part of senior management to their subordinates to permit them to take a coffee. Bourdieu (1991) developed the concept of symbolic violence. Bourdieu asserted that the analysis of speech acts reveal social structure and power relations in social context. By bestowing a small privilege on to subordinates Bourdieu argued that this was a form of symbolic violence because it revealed and enacted power relations between actors. Regardless of whether this is the intention or not, these are the hegemonic consequences of this minor interaction (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). I will now discuss one way in which 'front' contributes towards the production and reproduction by enabling the realisation of 'the theatre of hegemony'.

The Theatre of Hegemony

The section of the ethnography on 'Front' (Goffman, 1959) demonstrated that a form of hegemonic narrative (Rosen, 1985; Mumby, 1993) was established within the client organisation which resulted from the expressive communion between certain high status symbols. The uniqueness of these narratives was that their representative form was neither linguistic nor textual; they were specifically symbolic in form (Rosen, 1985). This dramaturgical narrative was constituted by the arrangement of architectural design, corporate art, industry awards and office furnishings, which inter-related to produce hegemonic effects, which manifests as a 'theatre of hegemony'. The actors who made sense of the symbolism inherent in the dramaturgical relationship between the senior management corridor and the coffee gathering co-authored this hegemonic narrative. This narrative may be considered as a construction within the 'theatre of the mind' (Mangham and Overington, 1987) of the actor. The ethnography demonstrated how the theatre of hegemony functions to regulate the scope of self-expression available to actors. The theatre of hegemony appears to conjure images of

mystification of power, superior knowledge and iconic success relative to the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of the coffee gathering participants within the theatre of the mind of the actor. It is within the theatre of the mind that organisational conspiracies, usually with the dramatist as a potential victim or hero of their own theatrical accomplishment, are constructed. In some cases the practical outcomes of the performance of hegemony are feelings of intimidation that constrain the expressive capacity of the individual intent on paying a visit to this organising domain (the coffee gathering).

The spatial arrangements that constitute the theatre of hegemony can function as power effects (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002), which privilege the legitimacy of senior management discourse through a prominent display of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The *'impression given off* (Goffman, 1959) by the symbolic capital on display is dramatically realised by the strategic positioning of five senior management offices within 15 feet of Mr White's office. The theatre of hegemony provides a means of *'audience segregation'* (Goffman, 1959). The selected photographs of Mr White, in the company of both industry and political leaders infer that Mr White has personal relationships with highly influential figures in wider British society. The dramaturgical arrangement of elite office accommodation, supported by signifiers of relationship power, combine to serve as hegemonic symbols which amplify the mystic of symbolic capital attributed to Mr White. The physical environment that constitutes the theatre of hegemony provides evidence to both visitors and staff of corporate and industry legitimacy. It is in a sense a proclamation of *'the right to serve'*. It signifies that this is a professional organisation that has achieved wide scale industry approval and recognition for the quality of its output.

Hegemony may be related to symbolic capital. Mr White's self conception is, I believe to a large degree rooted in his idealised view of the organisation that he is charged with leading. It is from his position as Executive Director of Excel Services that he gains most of his symbolic capital. In the case of Mr White social capital is derived from his status of Executive Director which has enabled him to secure board membership of three different organisations. His cultural capital is related to his middle class habitus and the fact that he attended private school. His economic capital results from an executive salary; investment portfolio and the buying power of Excel Services with regard to both goods and services within the local market place. The high levels of each of these kinds of capital combine to provide Mr White with considerable symbolic capital. This symbolic capital manifests as declarative powers to define social reality in a corporate setting.

Symbolic capital may be considered as being ingrained in Mr White's *occupational and class habitus*. Habitus is a concept employed by Bourdieu to explain the way in which the dispositions and demeanours of a particular class are embedded on the body of an actor and enable the actor to signify membership of fields of power in society. This concept is, I think, underplayed in the literature. Symbolic capital may also be usefully conceptualised as a contributing towards the realisation of identity cohesion with hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986) as symbolic capital may influence the social construction of the significant other and self-identity constructions. The distributions of cultural, social and economic capital that constitute symbolic capital are of a value that is itself a social construction of cultural groups. It is my view that if an actor can demonstrate symbolic capital, then this actor can possibly be understood as constituting the significant other to that group. The hegemonic impact of symbolic capital derives from the ability to influence meaning making on the part of the other (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Kunda, 1990; Kondo, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

Summary

In summary, symbols are used in a hegemonic sense intentionally; or un-intentionally by the ruling elite to amplify both their power and status in order to contribute to the overall strategy of legitimising senior management authority (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985; Mangham and Overington, 1987) to declare meaning assertions. As discussed earlier, the coffee gathering is a place where the '*significant other*' (Mead, 1934) authors the identity of the organisational self. This ability of the participants to '*author*' identities enhances the symbolic power of the coffee gathering to both participants and non-participants. The hegemonic device of identity authorship (Taylor, 1911; Kondo, 1990; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) also influences the dependence of each of the participants for political support in relation to sustaining their claims to legitimacy with regard to internalised self-identity narratives. The ethnography demonstrated that identity authorship as a hegemonic control method transcends the self-identity of the actor. It also incorporates within its sphere of influence relations between objects, ideas, values, processes and tasks that the actors self-identity is invested within.

The ethnography drew attention to the theatre of hegemony as constituted by the dramaturgical (Rosen, 1985) effects of the proximity of the senior management corridor to the coffee gathering. The theatre of hegemony provides a stage upon which Mr White

performs the role of Executive Director. This stage production (the theatre of hegemony) amplifies the symbolic capital that is synonymous with Mr White. This infusion of different forms of capital within the coffee gathering provides a potent mix of symbolic capital that is critical to the process of hegemony as it provides the legitimacy to declare reality assertions (Bourdieu, 1991).

Symbolic capital is to be understood as a relationship based construct. It is explained by Mead's (1934) concept of the significant other. Symbolic capital infers significance in objects. Therefore, symbolic capital functions as the signifier that contributes towards determining the significant other and as such should be considered a salient process of hegemony. This is because the significant other assumes legitimacy to lead. However it is important to stress that Blumer (1969) argues that Mead's self-identity theory incorporates all cultural artefacts, both at a material and at an ideational level into the process of Symbolic Interaction. Therefore, what may constitute a form of capital in one cultural group may not be the case in another (Bourdieu, 1991). Symbolic capital contributes towards the production, migration and protection of hegemony in organisations.

The coffee gathering represents an organising domain of high-density symbolic capital. This is because of the centralisation of the respective social, economic and cultural capital of its participants. The corporate artefacts (Schein, 1985) that are synonymous with the theatre of hegemony amplify the symbolic capital of the coffee gathering. It is established in the literature that the concept of the significant other influences meaning making (Mead, 1934; Ashworth, and Mael, 1989). Symbolic capital may therefore be defined as the capacity to declare meaning (Smircich and Morgan, 1982), a capacity that is derived from legitimacy to lead. This is the very essence of hegemony as a form of power; as a theory of social change and as a form of social construction. The expressive capacity of the self is constrained when in the presence of high-density symbolic capital, for fear of mortification (Goffman, 1961) should the self openly dis-identify within the hegemony on display. This minimises challenges to hegemony and functions as a hegemonic insulator. I will now discuss '*identity cohesion*' as a hegemonic process.

Section Two: Identity Cohesion

The ethnography demonstrated that the coffee gathering is a place where identities are '*authored*' (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The power to author identities contributes

towards '*mystifying*' (Goffman, 1959) the coffee gathering as a '*den of black political arts*'. This mystification process dramatically illustrates the perceived power of its members (Rosen, 1985) to both each other and to outsiders. It also ensures dependence on each of the participants for political support from their colleagues to obtain protection with regard to their idealised self-identities. This power effect produces a willingness to conform to corporate hegemony in an effort to secure identity cohesion with the other (Willmott, 1993).

The ethnography illuminated for theoretical abstraction that an important purpose of the coffee gathering was the '*framing*' of '*issues*' (Goffman, 1981). This is a process that is discursively crafted from '*day to day*', mediated through a concept that will be termed '*ontological framing*' which may be considered as fundamental to the hegemonic process; as the capacity to define reality for others is the purest form of hegemony as a form of power (Lukes, 2005). This process may be considered as part of the process of '*hegemonic metamorphosis*' through which hegemonic outcomes and themes emerge. As an integral part of the hegemonic process ontological framing is dependent on identity cohesion. Through a process of '*levelling*', which involves the framing of the status and knowledge rights to each organisational self, organisational identities are discursively crafted behind this front. This framing of knowledge rights may be considered as a hegemonic act. Authored identities constyrain the expressive agency of the actors who have to accept these authored identity impositions.

As previously stated, the process of '*levelling*' involves the framing of the status and knowledge rights to each organisational self. This results in a hierarchy of organisational identities being discursively crafted within the organising domain. This identity hierarchy functioned as a device for establishing and re-producing the social order of the actors. It does this by allocating speech rights, knowledge rights and status rights to the actors. The allocation of knowledge rights, speech rights and status rights support authored identity impositions and thus controls the capacity for self-agency of the actor by restricting their expressive capacity. The process of levelling enables the coffee gathering to function as a stage for casting the leading self and the role of each supporting self in this acting troupe. This process of levelling has left the legacy of fixed identities or stereotyped managerial roles that appear to hinder the emergence of alternative modes of organising and ensure '*cultural reproduction*' of asymmetrical power relations (Alvesson, 2002). Identity cohesion implies that actors share meaning with regard to symbols that are attributes of a given

identity. This involves a process of *'symbolic communion'* (Goffman, 1959), which I will now discuss.

Symbolic Communion as a Source of Identity Cohesion

Symbolic communion can be understood as an input to the process of producing hegemony. Both full and partial participants (partial referring to those actors who have coffee rights but who are not invited to sit with the full participants each morning) share in the symbolic capital that is synonymous with the coffee gathering. This process can be understood as a form of symbolic communion. Actors can benefit from this symbolic communion as it provides a source of symbolic capital. Symbolic communion for the actor is predicated upon achieving a degree of identity cohesion with the significant other. This concept was empirically illustrated by the data that highlighted that access to the coffee gathering, by partial members of the senior management team, provided a source of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The actors were, I believe, attempting to secure identity cohesion with the hegemony of the coffee gathering.

Symbolic communion as a hegemonic process was illustrated by the case of the 'antagonistic chef'. This empirical example demonstrated the supplier power and the blurring of identities that were facilitated by the ability of key suppliers to attain identity cohesion with senior management. This identity cohesion resulted in what may be understood as *'supplier hegemony'*. This supplier hegemony was only effective if suppliers could attain symbolic communion with the senior management team. They did this by sharing not only in the symbolic capital of the coffee gathering but also in the senior managers social world through corporate entertaining. Through this medium, the suppliers were able to provide additional sources of symbolic capital to the participants of the coffee gathering. This symbolic capital was signified by the opportunity to mix with top business people at corporate sporting and industry events.

The suppliers obtained the ability to influence the authorship of the organisational identity of non-participants to the coffee gathering. This ability to influence the construction of identities of others may be understood as a hegemonic act. The guest membership category that was afforded to key suppliers in the coffee gathering illuminated the power relations that exist between this stakeholder group and the senior management team. The process of symbolic communion mediated through the coffee gathering perpetuated supplier hegemony.

This would not have been possible without the suppliers possessing the legitimacy to influence the identity authorship of the other. For this type of hegemony to develop it requires certain discursive conditions. These conditions are constituted by: (1) attaining communion with the symbolic capital of the significant other; (2) the establishment of identity cohesion with the significant other; (3) access to social scenes from within which to 'blur' official identity relations; (4) legitimacy to author the identity of the other; and (5) the opportunity to 'learn' the linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; Turner, 2003) of the significant other. If we accept that identity cohesion is dependent on actors sharing the same depository of conceptual categories, then the exclusion of competing conceptual categories is also an important part of the process of identity cohesion and thus the production and protection of hegemony. I will now consider the theme of conceptual cohesion as a means of attaining identity cohesion.

Conceptual Cohesion and Identity Cohesion

The ethnography demonstrated that identity cohesion requires harmonisation between the conceptual categories that actors employ to make sense of and to interact with their culture (Gramsci, 1971; Chia, 1995). The coffee gathering, through a process of *'conceptual cohesion"* which is mediated through institutionalised discursive conditions, provides a means of both conceptual exclusion and harmonisation. Conceptual cohesion is a key requirement for identity cohesion because to a greater or lesser extent actors construct reality through concepts (Ford, 1999; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). If a culture can privilege hegemonic concepts and deny the intellectual discursive conditions for alternative concepts to be articulated then this may be considered as a form of expressive hegemony. This line of theorising was articulated by the work of Kondo (1990) into the practice of crafting selves in Japanese society and by Chomsky (1992) into the production and reproduction of American imperial hegemony, which was based on controlling intellectual expression in society by establishing a brand of American inspired global capitalism as the natural order of global society.

The exclusion of alternative conceptual repertoires and the privileging of an existing conceptual repertoire help to produce the hegemony of the coffee gathering. This process was illuminated by the tale of the field concerning the *'Management Route Way'*. Critical to this process are the requirements that legitimate conceptual repertoires are mediated through linguistic habitus so as to form the structure of the internal linguistic and conceptual market

(Bourdieu, 1991). This mediation process occurred in the coffee gathering. I will now consider the role of 'mystification' (Goffman, 1959) with regard identity cohesion.

Mystification as a Source of Identity Cohesion

Rosen (1985) argued that executives may employ social distance and mystification techniques as hegemonic devices. Goffman (1959:74) describes this defensive strategy as; 'a way in which the audience can be held in a state of mystification'. Mystification provides a means of social distance, which minimises the risk of challenge to the credibility of the performance. Goffman (1959:76) claims that mystification inhibits the audience from close inspection of the performance thus allowing 'some elbow room' to build an impression of the performer's choice for their own benefit or for that of their audience. Mystification is understood to be a process of hegemony as it insulates the hegemony from disruption. How then does social distance, which may result in events being mystified, influence identity cohesion as a hegemonic process?

The answer to the previous question was illustrated by the research findings. The purpose of mystification is to stimulate awe in one's audience. This is to ensure that the audience acts at all times in a respectful fashion towards the performer. Shrouding the coffee gathering in secrecy contributes towards its mystification. Secrecy was identified by the respondent who felt that the coffee gathering participants were sharing secrets that she was excluded from as contributing towards the mystification of the coffee gathering. These thoughts invoked feelings of both alienation and distrust in this research respondent. The emotional and intellectual effect of the coffee gathering on this respondent was common to both insiders and outsiders to the coffee gathering. These emotional anxieties motivated a desire in the actor to secure a means of identity cohesion with the other (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Chan and Clegg, 2002). This identity cohesion was deemed important to the actor because the perception of secrecy triggered critical reflection on her part as regards her lack of identity cohesion with the significant other. Identity cohesion is a process which is dependent on shared linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1991). I will now discuss linguistic habitus in relation to identity cohesion.

Linguistic Habitus and Identity Cohesion

Shared linguistic habitus may be considered as important to attaining identity cohesion between actors. The coffee gathering as an organising domain functions, among many other possible functions, to colonise actors in terms of shifting their world-view to reflect the hegemony of its participants (Alvesson, 1994; Ford, 1999). This process is best described as teaching a form of corporate linguistic and conceptual habitus. Bourdieu (1991) provides an analytical structure through which one can understand the process of evolving a linguistic habitus. Shared linguistic habitus acts as an expressive vice that grips and circumscribes the subjectivity of the self within the theatre of the mind (Kondo, 1990; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). This may be understood as the very essence of hegemonic control (Clegg, 1987; Bourdieu, 1991; Mumby, 1993; Lukes, 2005). Identity cohesion may be aided by a shared habitus but is not dependent upon it. The ethnography illustrated that shared linguistic habitus is always a partial construct. The different forms of membership that constituted the coffee gathering exemplified this. There will be both similarities and difference in all actors habitus.

Identification Outcomes

Elsbach's (1999) model of identification outcomes provides a means to understand identity cohesion. Elsbach identifies four types of identification outcomes: (1) Dis-identification; (2) Neutral-identification; (3) Schizoid-identification; and (4) Identification. The classification of an actors identification category may be based upon an analysis of the way in which the actors identify with representative narratives of a particular hegemony (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). It is also dependent on others self-categorisation of the actor (Spradley and Manne, 1975; Spradley, 1988; Kondo, 1991).

Identity cohesion is understood as a fragmented concept that is inherently fragile (Beech, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Beech and Huxham, 2003). This is because actors may identify with some hegemonic themes but not with others. Whilst identification with hegemony cannot be guaranteed in relation to all the themes that constitute its thematic structure, this it appears, is not necessarily a barrier to achieving hegemony.

The case of the unit manager challenging the supplier hegemony demonstrated that dis-identification leads to competing hegemony that threatens the dominant hegemony

(Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005). The ethnography also demonstrated that both neutral and schizoid identification with hegemonic themes equated to no resistance and therefore presented the illusion of identity cohesion. This was demonstrated by Mr White's view that the coffee gathering represented unity and was characterised by an open door policy. Neutral and schizoid-identification can be understood as having the potential for latent-identification or dis-identification. It follows that efforts to establish hegemony should focus on identifying those actors who do not identify with the key narratives that constitute the hegemony for colonization.

Summary

In summary, identification outcomes are to be considered as central to the process of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). A central goal of hegemonic struggle is the attainment of identity cohesion. Not withstanding positive identification outcomes, all other forms of identification outcomes may represent a direct or latent threat to expressive hegemony. The power to author identity impositions (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003) can function as a censoring device. This censoring device may be based on a lack of trust and fear of identity imposition experienced by the self. These phenomena appear, in some cases, to motivate actors to demonstrate evidence of identity cohesion in relation to hegemony (Boje and Windsor, 1993; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Identity cohesion may be considered as central to the process of hegemonic metamorphosis and involves sub-processes such as *'levelling'* and *'ontological framing'*. The combined process of levelling and ontological framing facilitates the production of stereo typed roles, circumscribed linguistic habitus and linguistic markets that constrain the expressive capacity of the actor. Symbolic communion and conceptual exclusion both operate to sustain identity cohesion.

Finally the processes of establishing social distance and mystification can function as protective devices or as *'hegemonic insulators'* that protect the hegemony from performance disruptions. Both of these protection devices establish a kind of `audience segregation` (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985; Mangham and Overington, 1987), which may stimulate audience anxiety. To overcome these feelings of anxiety actors may actively pursue or resist identity cohesion with both the hegemonic narrative and the actors associated with it. What will now follow is a tale of the field, which provides an empirical illustration of how the organising domain functions as a hegemonic device to frame social reality and produce

hegemony. This empirical example will draw together the key findings of the ethnography discussed thus far.

Section Three: Iterim Findings Aided by aTale of the Field

Introduction

The following tale of the field demonstrates, within the context of the organising domain, that particular discourses gain legitimacy and subsequently undergo a process of metamorphosis to emerge as hegemonic narratives whilst others do not. The data illustrates two examples of competing hegemonies, both produced in organising domains and it highlights the problematic nature of determining the outcome of hegemonic struggle. The tale of the field will emphasise the role of hegemonic insulators and centripetal and centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) in crafting the slope of the social gradients that hegemony must maneuver as it migrates throughout the organisation. In summary, the tale of the field provides an illustration of the production of hegemony, which subsequently migrates throughout the organisation to both block and facilitate options for organising.

An Epic Tale of the Field; '1 Business; What's in a Name?'

Introduction

The ITF (Information Technology Framework) of Bloomford City Council, prior to 2004, was constituted by a range of non-integrated information systems. This situation restricted the enabling options with regard to the organisational re-structure of Bloomford City Council in relation to changing market conditions. The tale of the field describes the struggle between the competing narrative of the Chief Executive's office that sponsored an organisational change program called '*1 Business*' and the defensive narrative of Mr. White and his team who resisted the narrative of 1 Business.

The Principle Actors

In charge of leading Bloomford City Council pre 2004 was Mr A, who functioned as Chief Executive. His deputy was Mr X who was employed as Director of Finance. Mr Y as Deputy Director for Finance supported Mr X. The Chief Executive (Mr A) announced his decision to

retire at the end of 2004. Whilst not reported in the ethnography, the research findings identified a hegemonic theme which asserted that Chief Executives should be recruited from either Finance or Legal Professions. Another hegemonic theme identified was that senior appointments were to be selected from within the ranks of internal candidates. Consequently, Mr X was promoted to the role of Chief Executive. Yet another hegemonic theme that imposed itself on actors within Bloomford City Council was that of appointing management deputies into vacancies created if their line manager was either promoted or departed the organisation. However, Mr X opted to break with this hegemonic theme and appointed an external female candidate (Ms Z) to role of Director of Finance. This was virtually unheard of in the history of the administration of Bloomford City Council. Mr Y was subsequently relegated to his existing role of Deputy Director for finance.

The Decision

The first major decision that Mr X, as Chief Executive, took was to launch the '*1 Business change initiative*', which was a fully integrated management information system. Mr X appointed Mr Y (Deputy Director of Finance) as the corporate change leader and overall project manager for 1 Business. The next section explains the way in which the coffee gathering participants interpreted 1 Business.

Sense Making as a Hegemonic Struggle

The hegemonic struggle enacted between the various actors was concerned with developing a common understanding of a definition of 1 Business. Was it intended to replace legacy systems? Or alternatively, was it concerned with corporate transformation? This hegemonic struggle over meaning was critical with regard to how effective 1 Business would be as a corporate change program. Define 1 Business as a replacement information system then one constrains the possibilities for corporate transformation. Alternatively, define 1 Business as an enabler for corporate transformation then imaginative possibilities enter into the daily discourse of senior and middle managers. The hegemonic struggle was over these two contrasting narratives. This struggle was contested between: (1) the collective participants of the coffee gathering, led by Mr White, who argued that 1 Business was concerned with merely replacing legacy systems; and (2) by the Chief Executives department, led by Mr X, who argued that 1 Business was concerned with corporate transformation. These hegemonic struggles were covert and not overt. They were indirect.

What was at Stake?

Central to this hegemonic struggle was control over the managerial fiefdoms that powerful Service Director's such as Mr White had built up over many years. These fiefdoms were protected by a departmental monopoly on reality assertions that interconnected to establish the hegemony of both Mr White and his senior management team. The preservation or destruction of this monopoly was essentially what was at stake as an outcome to the hegemonic struggle. 1 Business threatened to deconstruct the existing hegemony of Service Director's and produce a new hegemony; the hegemony of organising for the future. The emerging counter hegemony of Mr X, which was both complemented and supported by the hegemony of external business management consultants, was to clash with the hegemony of Mr White and his team. The following detail describes how Mr White and the coffee participants developed a powerful protective hegemony that for an extended period insulated their hegemony from the disruption of the emerging counter hegemony of Mr X and his team.

Identity Narrative as a Key Hegemonic Insulator

The coffee gathering participants constructed a shared hegemonic narrative, which asserted that Mr X had appointed a weak manager to lead the project in terms of Mr Y. This internal logic derived from the fact that Mr X had departed from Council tradition and had looked outside of the organisation to employ his replacement as Director of Finance. For Mr X to do this, the participants theorised that he must have felt that Mr Y lacked competence in certain areas. Therefore the hegemonic narrative of the coffee gathering asserted that Mr Y has been allocated 1 Business as a 'consolation prize' by Mr X as a direct consequence of his failure to succeed him. The dimension of contrast skilfully employed as an integral part of the crafting of this hegemonic narrative, was that if 1 Business was concerned with corporate transformation, Miss Z would be charged with leading this initiative and not Mr Y. This identity issue was essentially concerned with who had legitimacy to lead the change program. Subsequently 1 Business was interpreted on the part of the participants to the coffee gathering as simply being concerned with the replacement of legacy systems.

Organisational Silos as Hegemonic Insulators

The consequence of the emerging hegemonic narrative, which asserted that 1 Business was concerned with replacing legacy systems, was that the development of 1 Business was to be managed within departmental '*silos*'. Support service managers would lead this management process to the exclusion of any potential creative dialogue with front line operations. As the bulk of the early 1 Business work was concerned with the data cleansing of both payroll and HR records, enormous stress was placed upon Personnel Department of Excel Services. Importantly hegemony of the coffee gathering prevented serious conceptual engagement with regard to the potential organisational impact of 1 Business.

Mr X Mobilises his Ambassadors

Integral to the process of introducing a new form of expressive hegemony with regard to organising, the Chief Executive employed a competing form of hegemony as a means of disrupting the expressive hegemony of Mr White and his fellow Director's. This strategy involved the use of a team of consultants employed from global change management and accountancy firms. These consultants were empowered as hegemonic ambassadors on behalf of the Chief Executive.They established a complex change management program, recruited '*internal consultants*' from within the Chief Executive's Office and embarked on a 3-year change program. During this process Change Leaders were appointed from each of the ten service departments, all of which, with the exception of Excel Services, were recruited from finance backgrounds. What was now in place was: a Chief Executive who was an accountant as project sponsor; a project Director who was also an accountant; a lead consultancy firm '*Price Water House Cooper*' known for finance consultancy; ten Change Leaders, of which eight were accountants, one was a policy maker and finally, the last member was the author of this thesis, Mr Blue, the only appointment from within the ranks of blue collar operations. Finally, the consultants set up another layer of 1 Business representatives who were called '*Change Agents*'. Once again these actors were drawn from the ten service departments and usually they reported to the change leaders as they were employed as assistant accountants.

Mr X Establishes Counter Organising Domains

The consultants also established two new organising domains: (1) The 1 Business Board and; (2) the Change Leaders Forum. These organising domains would produce the hegemony of the Chief Executive to counter the hegemony of Service Director's. The Change Leaders and the Change Agents were to represent the Chief Executive as hegemonic ambassadors and '*colonise*' the established service departments. This hegemonic ensemble was to be called '*The Change Net Work.*' For the duration of three years that the change program unfolded, not once did Mr X or Mr Y visit the HQ of Excel Services to talk direct with the management team regarding the change program. This lack of direct interaction further damaged the legitimacy of both Mr X and Mr Y with regard the definition of 1 Business as a model for corporate transformation from the perspective of the participants to the coffee gathering.

Silence as a Hegemonic Insulator

In response to the hegemonic efforts of Mr X and his team both Mr Black and Mr White simply ignored their emerging narrative. Within the coffee gathering 1 Business was rarely discussed. Mr Black chaired all meetings on the subject and these meetings rarely lasted more than thirty minutes. These meetings were basically communication forums. Mr Blue liaised with Mr Black as departmental Change Leader and no dialogue with the rest of the senior team occurred. Mr Black's brief to Mr Blue was that 1 Business was nothing more than a replacement IT framework for the council. This '*silence*' facilitated the exclusion of the hegemony of the Change Network from the daily discourse of Mr White's team and subsequently diffused its potential at colonising Excel Services.

Drama as a Hegemonic Insulator

In an attempt to establish hegemony within Excel Services the Change Net Work advised Excel Services that it had to prepare a '*1 Business change plan*' for the scrutiny of external consultants. This exercise was legitimised under the argument of '*due-diligence*'. Mr Blue, drawing upon his MBA experience, produced a change plan that appeared rational. The coffee gathering participants ignored the change plan as it was understood to constitute a public relations tool as opposed to a prescriptive model for organising. The change plan was produced to '*legitimise*' Excel Services in relation to the consultant's hegemony of best

practice. Ironically the change plan was held up as an example of best practice by the governance board of the Change Net Work. Therefore, dramaturgically the coffee gathering participants learned to reflect back to the consultants a hegemonic narrative that complements the consultant's hegemony whilst simultaneously engaging in and enacting an internal hegemony of their own design.

Impact Upon Organising

The internal hegemony of Mr White and his team, whilst initially successful at blocking the hegemony of 1 Business, also constrained the expressive capacities of actors employed by Excel Services to realise the potential of 1 Business as an enabler and as a facilitator for social, economic, cultural and technological change. Critical reflection and serious discussion of the change issue (1 Business) proved to be not possible due to the language games established as the norm in the coffee gathering. As a result the organisation could not learn to organise differently. The implication of this hegemonic struggle was that 1 Business was not introduced to unit locations outwith the HQ of Excel Services. 1 Business promised corporate transformation. However, this was only possible if it were to be defined as a corporate change program aimed at total transformation. If this had been the successful hegemony then Excel Services staff based in HQ would no longer engage in activities such as purchasing, payroll, recruitment and training, alternatively unit-based managers who would in-put unit information into an integrated system. This new process would cut out Excel HQ and process all information electronically to a shared service centre. This would lead to a change in the senior management structure of Excel Services and of the corresponding support teams. The very idea of an Excel HQ would also be undermined and remote working would have been the organisational norm for operational managers.

What actually happened was that only partial procurement took place electronically at unit level; all other functions remained centralised at Excel HQ, with office staff inputting unit specific information direct into 1 Business modules instead of the historic stand alone systems. 1 Business, so far, resulted in mediocre impact on organisational improvement and the potential for interpreting 1 Business as a catalyst for corporate transformation has evaporated. What really changed? The management structure of Excel Services remains unaltered, the power relations remained intact, Mr White's hegemony prevailed and the 1 Business change program has been relegated to the status of a replacement ITF (Information Technology Framework), not as a program aiming for corporate transformation.

The Current Moment

In the current moment the struggle between the contrasting hegemony of Mr X and that of Mr White continues. A startling event that signifies the extent of this struggle was the creation of five new senior management posts and the development of departmental organisational structures by Mr X and his consultant allies. This new management structure was imposed upon Mr White and his fellow service Director's. These departmental structures had a new post that Mr Black referred to as '*Head of Service Development*' and these were graded at deputy Director level. The post of deputy Director, previously held by Mr Black, was deleted and replaced with the post of '*Assistant Director*'. The Head of Service development was to have a dual reporting line to both Mr White and to Mr X. This appointment had no definable remit that could be readily interpreted. The management teams across the organisation interpreted these new posts as the eyes and ears of Mr Black: these were interpreted as the '*corporate police*' of Mr X, his own hegemonic ambassadors. I shall now with the aid of the previous tale, present a consololidation of the key findings of the ethnography discussed thus far.

Interim Consolidation of Findings

The main finding with regard the tale of 1 Business was that hegemony should not be considered as a power resource that is the sovereign property of a select group. Hegemony appears to operate both as a sub-set of power and of social constructivism. Hegemony can therefore also be considered as a theory of social change. Hegemony as a power effect manifests through its ability in determining the outcome of the struggle between contrasting reality assertions between actors. Therefore, organisations can be defined as '*sites of hegemonic struggle*' (Bocock, 1986). This struggle may be overt, or it may be covert, or it may be both overt and covert, or it may be latent. The potential for hegemonic struggle is triggered by '*cultural valence*'. This phenomenon involves a process of critical self-reflection on the part of actors with regard to hegemonic themes that are culturally important.

The tale of 1 Business also demonstrated that hegemony does not necessarily operate smoothly and un-contested in organisations. The findings showed that hegemony is both expressed within, and travels through narrative. The restrictions based on a hegemony migrating throughout the organisation are dictated by the exercise of a '*counter hegemony*' being expressed on the part of actors. This concept may be understood as the hegemony

having to manoeuvre *social gradients*. If the hegemony is un-contested then the gradient has a *downward slope*. In contrast if the hegemony is contested then the gradient would have an *upward slope*. The function of ambassadors in spreading the hegemony contributes towards determining the slope of social gradients. There are cultural forces working both for and against the migration of a particular hegemony and these forces also serve to protect and insulate hegemony from potential disruptions. This concept may be termed as *'hegemonic insulators'*.

The general findings of the ethnography demonstrated the role of the organising domain as a hegemonic device that is used by participants to the coffee gathering to both structure the linguistic market of the organisation and to craft a corporate linguistic habitus. The findings highlighted the granularity of hegemonic processes mediated through every day talk through the analytical device of an organising domain. The data illustrated how hegemony is produced at the micro level of analysis through the dynamic interplay of hegemonic processes within the context of the coffee gathering. The findings also identified that phenomena such as: front; identity cohesion; cultural valence; narrative; symbolic capital; and dramatic realisation may be considered as sub-processes of the process of acquiring legitimacy. The findings also demonstrated the important role of an organising domain as regards the institutionalization of hegemonic narrative. This process of institutionalization is supported by the behaviour of the coffee gathering participants who once, they have adopted the hegemony of the organising domain, function as ambassadors for the hegemony in other domains, such as was evidenced by the tale of the field concerning the Management Route Way program and the tale of 1 Business.

The findings demonstrated that hegemony may be considered as a form of power, as a theory of social change and as a means of social construction. Hegemony operates as a form of power because it is based upon socio-ideological control. The findings supported the theory that hegemony at a primary level is concerned with both the social construction of reality on the part of actors to advance their sectional interests and to culturally reproduce existing power relations. The findings also illustrated that hegemony may be considered as a theory of social change, in that the phenomenon either blocks or facilitates change. The findings have also demonstrated that organisations can be considered sites of hegemonic struggle (Bocock, 1986) and that expressive hegemony is a multi dimensional concept.

The findings also showed how the concept of '*front*' influences identity constructions through the use of supporting props. The concept of front was employed to secure '*legitimacy*' for leadership claims mediated through the process of '*idealisation*'. The acquisition of legitimacy to lead is understood to be an important process of hegemony. The findings illustrated the process of '*dramatic realisation*' with regard to the framing of a definition of a given situation. The theme of dramatic realisation was also understood to be linked to the concept of legitimacy. Dramatic realisation appeared to relate to the way in which actors influence identity constructions through the amplification of characteristics of a given performance. These findings demonstrated that dramatic realisation was a process that contributed towards the establishment of the significant other. This was done through dramatic presentation of self to emphasise their symbolic capital.

The findings also identified that the technique of establishing: full membership; partial membership; or guest membership of the coffee gathering perpetuates a class system which dramatically realises the status differential between managers throughout the organisation. The way in which hegemony, if dramatically challenged and proven illegitimate, is vulnerable was demonstrated. This further illustrated the idea that hegemony does not travel in organisations un-contested at all times.

With regard to language use, the ethnography reported the way in which the coffee gathering participants manage both the expression and composition of linguistic habitus and linguistic markets to control and mediate the emergence of reality constructions. The findings illustrated that there are institutionalised forms of talk within the coffee gathering, which both constrain and enable the conceptual repertoire of managers. There are also linguistic rules or techniques supported by '*speech agents*' who function as hegemonic ambassadors to decide who gets into and how effectively actors can perform in the language game of the coffee gathering. The ethnography demonstrated that organisations could act as hosts for '*surrogate hegemonies*' such as '*supplier hegemony*'.

It was argued that '*cultural valence'* may be considered as a critical process of hegemony. The function of narrative as a process of hegemony that facilitates positive or negative confirmation of idealised self-identities was demonstrated. With regard to '*symbolic capital*' this was shown to be a relationship based construct which constitutes a key hegemonic process with regard to defining who or what is to be considered significant in the organisation. The acquisition of symbolic capital is to be considered a central process of

social construction. The findings demonstrate that hegemonic narratives are embedded in the symbolic fabric of an organising domain and that symbolic capital functioning performs the role of a constraining or enabling device with regard to the expressive capacity of actors. It may also define class and identities. Symbolic capital facilitates the legitimisation of the significant other to author the self-identity of the other. Symbolic capital also functions as a 'hegemonic insulator' that protects expressive hegemony from disruption as it segregates audiences on the basis of status. Finally, the findings illustrated how symbolic capital is amplified when centralised within a 'theatre of hegemony'.

Finally, the findings identified that the participants are both constrained and energised by the hegemonic themes that they themselves nurture and manufacture within the coffee gathering. They do not appear to know of any other way to talk about management other than the conceptual categories embedded in the linguistic market they themselves have created. The organisation appears to be constantly undergoing a process of cultural reproduction. This process is mediated to a significant extent within the coffee gathering and produces, amends or maintains cultural themes that may undergo a process of symbolic transformation to emerge as hegemonic themes that subsequently migrate through the organisation to constrain or enable modes of organising at the micro, the meso and the macro level of analysis. This concludes my interim consolidation of the theoretical expansion of the findings thus far. I will now discuss 'cultural valence'; 'narrative'; and 'audience segregation' in relation to the production of hegemony.

Section Four: Cultural Valence; Narrative; and Audience Segregation

A theoretical theme to emerge from this ethnographic analysis is the link between cultural valence (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and the manifestation of hegemony. The ethnography illustrated that actors appear at times to suffer from emotional anxiety if they dis-identify with the dominant hegemony (Goffman, 1961; Kondo, 1990; Boje and Windsor, 1993; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). In response to the experienced emotional anxiety the actors appeared to attempt to conform or to resist the hegemony of the significant other. This was demonstrated by attempts by actors to identify with the hegemony of the coffee gathering. They attempt to achieve identity cohesion through symbolic communion. If this was not possible, the actors developed coping mechanism that involved re-locating themselves in different identification outcome positions such as neutral-identification (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Actors could, it appeared, adopt any position

other than dis-identification and avoid the emotional anxiety associated with dis-identification. The capacity for re-locating identification position outcomes was dependent on the self-capacity for critical reflection and '*imaginative self renewal*' (Goffman, 1959) of self-identity. This was exemplified by the actors self-authoring an organisational self-identity that was affirmed as legitimate by an idealised self-conception of their managerial competence.

It appears that the emotional anxiety which some respondents demonstrated, when interacting with the coffee gathering results from critical self reflection with regard to an organisational morality narrative which functions to subjugate the organisational self into accepting its subordinate position (Kunda, 1992; Boje and Windsor, 1993). The realisation of status differential leads to feelings of low self worth on the part of the actor in relation to the dominant hegemony that authors the subordinate position of the actor. These negative feelings and the resulting emotional anxiety are in contrast to those of senior management who experience feelings of both high self-esteem and self-power. Emotional anxiety can result from actors interpretative experiences if they possess cultural valence. The concept of cultural valence relates to emotional bonds or connections that an actor makes with symbolic constructs that have meaning to the actor.

To manage the '*emotional anxiety*' that results from experiencing cultural valence the actors developed coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms such as an internalised self-narrative, which privelages the construct of the competent organisational self, reduced the experienced emotional anxiety. Dis-identification with the dominant hegemony appeared to trigger cultural valence and resulted in emotional anxiety. In response to this the actors engaged in '*imaginative self renewal*' to place themselves in a different identification outcome. Cultural valence and emotional anxiety may be pivotal to understanding the relationship between identity cohesion, narrative, symbolic capital and legitimacy as hegemonic processes and their resulting interplay that manifests as hegemony. I will now discuss narrative as a hegemonic process (Lyotard, 1984; Boje, 1995, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003)

Hegemonic Narrative

The ethnography provided evidence of the participants using the coffee gathering as a means to author the hegemonic narrative of the senior management team. This was highlighted by

the case of 1 Business. Through defining and crafting both the linguistic habitus and linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991) of the organising domain the participants were able to restrict the opportunity for reality construction and mediate the cultural reproduction of asymmetrical power relations.

The ethnography showed that participation in the coffee gathering produced an institutionalised linguistic habitus and market unique in the organising domain. This hegemony is so deeply ingrained in the culture of the participants to the coffee gathering that they appeared to be unconscious of its constraining effect with regard to both their thinking and expressive capacities. When asked who has the right to speak within the coffee gathering, Mr Black introduces the concept of *'audience segregation'* (Goffman, 1959). Mr Black seemed to identify a group within the group who have the power to decide on what narrative is of interest and what narrative is not. Subsequently he legitimises the censorship of individuals who he thinks do not merit a hearing. He does this by referring to the group within the group who he assumes would empathise with his viewpoint. These two categories of *'speech agents'* can be considered as constituting: the *'wise owls'*; actors who possesss knowledge and therefore influence; and the *'prattlers'*, who continue to struggle for the recognition of a receptive audience.

Hegemony, I observed, transfers from the coffee gathering to operational management team meetings in the form of narrative (Boden, 1994; Schultz, 1991). The same speech rules apply and actors, acting as ambassadors employ the same linguistic habitus and draw conceptually from a recognised linguistic market regardless of the subject or the location of the meeting. These external domains are secondary to the primary organising domain, i.e. the coffee gathering and may be considered as *'secondary organising domains*.I will now consider the way in which audience segregation insulates hegemony from competing narratives.

Audience Segregation as a Hegemonic Insulator

Audience segregation prevents the emergence of new ways of thinking about organising. It does this because language may be considered as the means through which reality is constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Boden, 1994; Ford, 1999; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Audience segregation, as with the concept of *'front,'* functions as a *'hegemonic insulator'* protecting the hegemonic narrative from impression disruptions (Goffman, 1959; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) or centrifugal forces. Hegemonic disruption is constituted by

centrifugal forces such as competing narratives that may alter or threaten the dominant hegemony (Boje and Windsor, 1993; Boje, 1995). This was demonstrated by the case of the supplier hegemony being challenged by the manager who was labelled a 'worst offender'. The scope for reality construction in organisations is dependent on the range of linguistic conceptual categories of meaning available to actors (Spradley, 1980; Bourdieu, 1991; Ford, 1999). Actors express their meaning and understanding of conceptual categories through every-day talk (Spradley, 1980; Goffman, 1981; Hazen, 1993; Rhodes, 2002). Hegemony is reinforced within the coffee gathering as a result of the institutionalisation and censorship of every-day talk within organisations.

Summary

The theatre of hegemony operates, at one level, as an exercise in power which emotionally constrains the expressive self. It appears that there is a link between cultural valence and the manifestation of hegemony (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Cultural valence indicates an emotional bond between the actor and aspects of the hegemony. For an actor to be aware of the hegemony cultural valence is a fundamental requirement. The hegemony must be culturally meaningful to the actor. The process of cultural valence triggers in the theatre of the mind a reflective process through which the actor circumscribes or expands their scope for self-expression.

The coffee gathering as a hegemonic device gains its impact in part from the way in which it segregates audiences. It signifies a social boundary that acts as a dimension of contrast between employees thus segregating identity narratives. It is also revealing that the coffee gathering serves the purpose of identity control by defining organisational class distinction. Research participants interpret the segregation of senior management from their teams, in terms of geography, as an unhealthy practice that appears to fuel feelings of separation, class distinction and alienation amongst Excel employees. Audience segregation hinders actors attempts at identity cohesion with the organisational leadership. Paradoxically, audience segregation can also facilitate energetic attempts on the part of actors to achieve identity cohesion with the other to reduce the emotional anxiety experienced by dis-identification. To understand the process of producing hegemony and its institutionalisation, one has to consider the forms of talk (Spradley, 1980; Boden, 1994) that structure the linguistic market that facilitates hegemony (Bourdieu, 1991) which shall be the focus of the next section.

Section Five: Institutionalised Forms of Talk

The ethnography demonstrated that linguistic hegemony is dependent upon the institutionalisation of forms of talk (Goffman, 1959; Bourdieu, 1991). This hegemonic process requires that the same ways of discursively constructing an understanding of organisational reality be maintained through the constant repetition of the same rules that dictate both legitimate discourse and speech agents. The coffee gathering provides the social conditions for the participants to construct their own linguistic market and to craft a monological linguistic habitus. What results from this process of linguistic development is the propensity of the participants to develop their own world-view (Gramsci, 1971; Johnson, 2000), their own brand of hegemony.

The product of this hegemonic process is the institutionalisation of both linguistic habitus and linguistic markets. Institutionalisation of linguistic habitus and markets occurs if the rules of discourse are culturally embedded in the language games (Wittgenstein, 1953; Mauws and Phillips, 1995) that constitute every day talk. Not only do they have to be embedded in the rules and textual fabric of the language game but also they have to be privileged by the significant other within the organising domain. To cement this process the rules of discourse have to be dramaturgically performed (Goffman, 1959; Alvesson, 1994) by the same actors consistently over time. This process results in the distinctive conceptual categories that constitute both linguistic habitus and markets being institutionalised within the organising domain.

The salient language strategy that was being evoked as a part of the hegemonic process within the organising domain is to privilege the right to speak. Controlling the subject matter that constitutes every-day talk supports this strategy. Miss Pink demonstrated that by controlling the kinds of talk and conversational strategies, or linguistic habitus that are to be employed throughout a given interaction, one could influence reality construction. The ethnography showed that Mr Black either by default or by intent determined what kind of talk was legitimate and by contrast what is not. By controlling what constitutes legitimate talk it follows that the expressive capacity of the participants is also controlled. Mr Black controls the structure of the linguistic market of the coffee gathering. He does this by determining what constituted legitimate linguistic habitus that could be performed in the organising domain. Therefore, if one possesses the legitimate linguistic habitus then one can participate in the language game that constitutes the coffee gathering. If an actor cannot

participate in the language game, as they do not possess a legitimate linguistic habitus, then they are relegated to the status of a member of the audience.

There is more to this hegemonic process of narrative than the important issue of legitimacy (Gramsci, 1971; Brown, 1997; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). To fully understand the narrative process that produces hegemony we have to consider the structure of the linguistic market of an organising domain. This analysis involves identifying and cataloguing the kinds of talk that are performed in the organising domain so that we may understand what their function is with regard to the process of developing and protecting hegemony.

Forms of Talk

The ethnography identified five forms of talk (Spradley, 1980; Goffman, 1981) that emerged as significant. These were: (1) light talk; (2) sex talk; (3) cynical talk; (4) work talk; and (5) issue talk. The ethnography demonstrated that cynical talk, if allowed to exert its influence, may constrain alternative modes of expressive thinking mediated through discussion or experimenting with alternative modes of organising. Cynical talk was also observed as functioning to constrain the organisational self with regard to demonstrating pride and commitment to the concept of team. As a direct consequence of cynical talk management as a process, or as a craft, was trivialised. The ethnography demonstrated that cynical talk, when unchecked by Mr White or Mr Black is subsequently legitimised as the corporate view. Cynical talk has the effect of wearing down the enthusiasm of others to engage in creative talk. What resulted from cynical talk as a form of hegemony was the development of *'intellectual inertia'*. This intellectual inertia is a hegemonic product of the dramatic realisation (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985) that occurs when the audience *'learns'* that the cynicism on public display towards both the organisation's activities and the aspirations of the organisational self of the other has been legitimised.

Sex talk is something quite different. This kind of talk alienates the female self and privileges the male self (Spradley and Manne, 1975). It also ensures that the male self can be dramatised as a male manager, when in contrast the female self as an attribute of her managerial self must remain silent. Established hegemonic themes that constrain the expressive capacity of the female self reinforce the hegemony of male dominance. Hegemonic talk shields the self from critical interaction by the other. This process provides a source of social distance (Goffman, 1959), which is to be considered as a hegemonic insulator.

The conversational subjects that constitute light talk within the coffee gathering, in the main, revolve around newspaper articles and football. Once again the male self is privileged through the choice of football as a subject. Football becomes established as an institutionalised conversation. Swearing whilst talking, cynical talk, sex talk and football talk can be understood as 'discursive hegemonic barriers' to engagement in the language game If one does not know how to mediate around these discursive barriers, the one is relegated to the stalls as a member of the audience.

Another strategy that the participants of the coffee gathering employ as a barrier to talk is simply not to engage with a speech agent. This non-engagement signifies their disinterest in what the speech agent may have to say. Whilst this may be stating the obvious, such a practice has a profound effect on the ability of teams to consider other points of view. This kind of behaviour permeates the boundary of the coffee gathering and is 'taught' to other members of the Excel Services management community. This can be considered as 'discursive leakage', which leads to 'behavioural leakage' at all levels of the organisation. This organisational learning experience becomes engrained in the habitus (Bourdieu, 1991) of the actor. The result of this is that it both disables organisational learning and perpetuates a kind of dysfunctional 'mobile' censorship of talk throughout the organisation. Critical reflection and serious discussion of a change issue is constrained due to the language games established as the norm in the coffee gathering (Alvesson, 1994) as was evidenced by the case of 1 Business.

The tale of 1 Business demonstrated that the kind of discursive and behavioural leakage discussed above ensured that emerging narratives relating to different modes of organising were either marginalised or politically neutralised. In the tale of the management route way, the subjugation of a progressive organisational narrative leaked out of the coffee gathering on-to the public arena via the medium of organisational narratives (Young, 1989; Boje and Windsor, 1993; Boden, 1994). This was exemplified by the performance of Mr Orange during the meeting concerning Organisational Development when he asserted that he was not prepared to engage in the meeting any more as his: "*head was hurting*". What resulted from this behavioural leakage was that abstract thinking in relation to the practice of organising was considered culturally alien and inappropriate in relation to the dominant hegemonic narrative. Being authorised to speak is not enough to enter the language game that produces hegemonic narrative; one has also to be skilled at manoeuvring gracefully

between different kinds of talk. I will now consider 'the art of bridging' between kinds of talk.

The Art of Bridging

The function of *light talk* is more than merely providing safe conversational subjects. The ethnography demonstrated that it is also used as a strategic bridge to link to an alternative discourse. This idea originates from the analysis of Miss Pink's question, which enquired; *who sets the mood of the setting for that day?'* As with the discussion regarding Mr Black's authorship of speech identities, Miss Pink alludes to the idea that there are additional hegemonic tactics being manoeuvred within the context of the coffee gathering. These tactics are employed to determine who decides on what discourse is to be performed at any given time (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

Football, as a kind of talk, serves to shift the focus of the group on to another kind of talk i.e issue talk. Miss Pink identifies some of the participants as *'players'* and theorises that the earliest players set the agenda for the kind of talk that is to be permitted in the gathering. This implies that each day there is a conscious attempt on the part of the *'players'* to manipulate the kinds of talk that are going to be enacted that morning. How is this done in practice? To help answer this question I have developed a model of the structure of the language game that constitutes the coffee gathering, which I will now discuss.

A Model of the Language Game of the Coffee Gathering

Every-day talk mediates, determines and thus constrains or expands the potential scope for reality construction. Every culture is, constituted by a particular linguistic market, which in some instances performs a hegemonic function. Authorised speech agents insulate the hegemony of the coffee gathering through a filtering process as they enact the language game of the coffee gathering. This filtering process is constituted by a tacit arrangement of rules of how to play the language game of the coffee gathering. The language game has four key purposes: (1) to protect the hegemony; (2) to reinforce or amend reality assertions; (3) to establish identity cohesion between the actors; and (4) to author identities. The coffee gathering participants have developed a model of the language game that performs the hegemonic function of *'institutionalising forms of talk'*. The following diagram illustrates this model:

Figure: 5.1 The Model of the Language Game
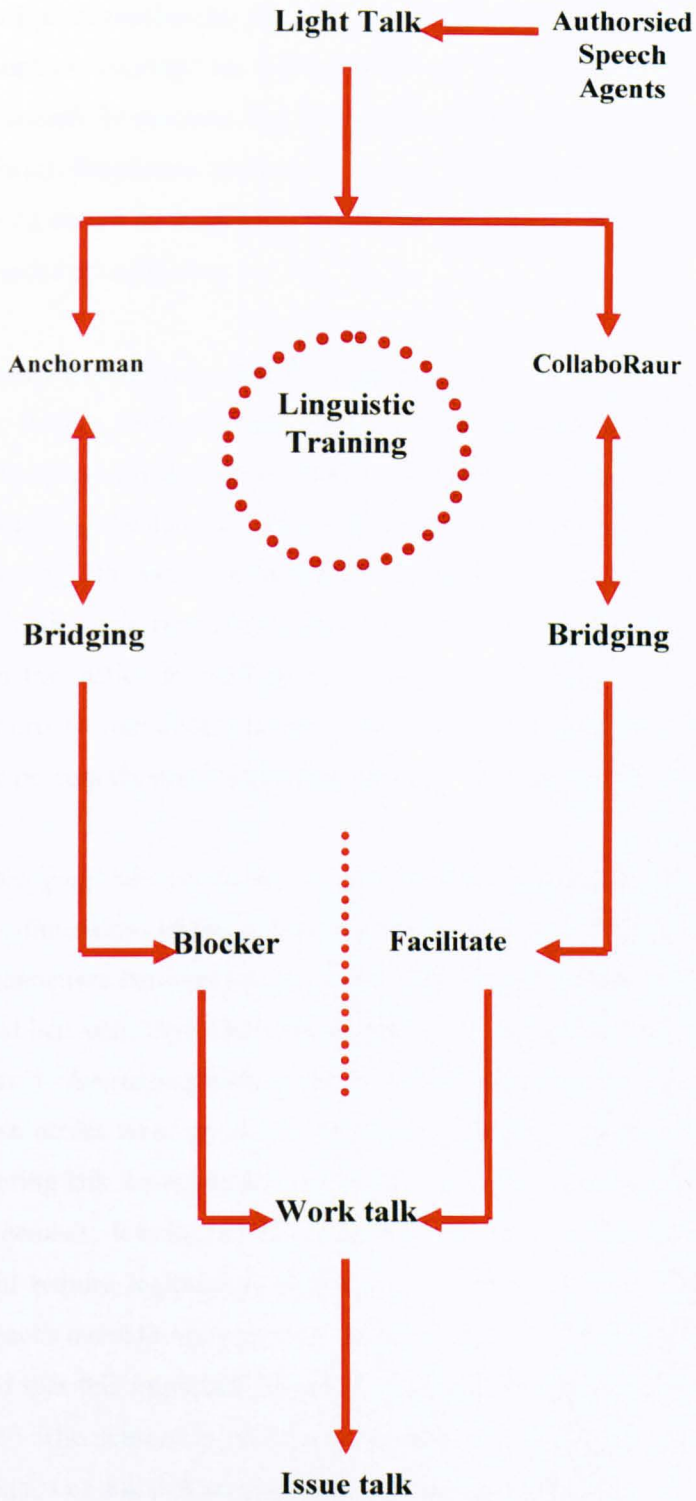
Each day the hegemony is articulated and expressed within the coffee gathering. Any attempt to introduce a new or alternative hegemony would either be blocked or facilitated in the hegemonic language game that constitutes the primary activity of the coffee gathering. This enactment of the same discourse has taken place daily for the past ten years. Therefore every day talk is institutionalized to the point that even the introduction of new words of expression such as 'strategy' are treated with suspicion and or ridiculed and have very little chance of successfully maneuvering through the language game to evolve as new linguistic expressive forms. Hegemony spreads throughout the organisation, and constrains or enables the capacity of actors to express alternative ways to conceptualise, talk about and enact alternative modes of organising.

The ethnography demonstrated that the organising domain requires a 'key story teller' (Boje, 1991, 1995; Boyce, 1996) to co-ordinate the narrative schedule for the morning coffee gathering. This person is the 'anchorperson' of the coffee gathering. The anchorperson had the ability to control the agenda for the kinds of talk to manifest and to decide upon who can talk each morning. However, the anchorperson required a 'collaborator' to support their role so as to maintain their central position in the group. The anchorman obtains his or her support from the tactics invoked by his collaborator to support his or her agenda and to subjugate efforts to introduce alternative stories or competing kinds of talk. Through this collaborative process the precious airtime of the coffee gathering is controlled.

The act of 'bridging' between kinds of talk is in itself a skilful act. This is because 'kinds of talk' serve as dimensions of linguistic contrast that have to be managed smoothly if one is to gracefully manoeuvre between forms of talk. This fact is amplified by Miss Pink's example of the contrast between: 'light talk; 'work talk'; and 'issue talk'. The coffee gathering can be considered as a 'language-learning centre' which functions to finely hone the linguistic skills of those actors who can access the language game. The more skilful the actor is at 'bridging' during talk the more influence they may have with regard to contributing towards authoring hegemony. It is important to remember that even if the actor is skilled at bridging they will still require legitimacy (Gramsci, 1971; Brown, 1997; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) as a speech agent to emerge as an influential player in the language game of the coffee gathering and that this important identity is authored by the significant other (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). The authorship of speech identities serve as hegemonic barriers to the actors engaging in kinds of talk that are out with their identity repertoire.

The model of the structure of the language game is now starting to emerge. Firstly the authorship of speech identities by the significant other is critical to controlling airtime. I have argued that the coffee gathering is employed to craft both linguistic habitus and linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991). I have discussed the importance of cataloguing the forms of talk that constitute the linguistic market of an organising domain (Spradley, 1980). Another category of talk that is important is that of *'transition talk'*. This is the form of talk that is employed to gauge the conversational mood of the audience. Bridging is the strategy which actors use to manage their efforts at transition from light talk to matters of talk that enable corporate influence and the authorship of self-identity or that of the other. Bridging can be either *'blocked'* or *'facilitated'* by the audience. Blocking results from hegemonic disruptions (Goffman, 1959; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). For example, an audience member mocking the speakers attempts to bridge. Facilitation results either from identity cohesion (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986) or from the support of an *'anchorman'* who *'collaborates'* with the speech agent to support the performance and legitimacy of their narrative. Blocking and facilitation at the micro level performs the role of hegemonic insulators. Once a speech agent has successfully bridged they may manage the transition to engage legitimately in *'work talk'*. This kind of talk enables the speech agent to introduce issues that are connected to work talk. This form of talk is called *'issue talk'*.

The ethnography demonstrated that it appears there remains some kind of dimension of contrast between *'issue talk'* and *'work talk'*. Work talk provides a transitional bridge to *'issue talk'*, which is the most important kind of hegemonic narrative that is mediated by every day talk in the coffee gathering. It is the most important because issue talk is fundamentally concerned with identity authorship (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). To achieve the successful transition from securing a legitimate speech identity to engaging in issue talk, one needs to provide consistent evidence of identity cohesion with the other. This kind of identity cohesion is enacted linguistically and may be described as *'conversational synergy'*. Through a tactic that I will term *'identity hooking'*, speech agents establish conversational synergy with the other. Identity hooking involves the speech agent presenting a narrative in which an issue is embedded, which threatens or offers opportunity for advancement to the idealised identity of the significant other (Rosen, 1985; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991).

Miss Pink described identity hooking as a kind of interaction/conversational strategy aimed at enabling the legitimisation of negative identity work within the context of the coffee

gathering. Identity hooking enables managers to raise thorny issues with their peers in a non-confrontational way that side steps the hegemonic theme of conflict avoidance. This strategy enables a participant to both shape and create a conversation regarding a *'burning issue'* with others who have the power to define the social reality of a given situation. When this strategy is effectively employed the alternative view is excluded from the symbolic interpretative process (Blumer, 1969). This was demonstrated by the case of the antagonistic chef. Thus the coffee gathering is used as an opportunity to establish conversational synergy between organisational issues and the framing of reality around those issues (Goffman, 1971). The ethnography illustrated that the most effective way to communicate issue talk is through the medium of story telling (Boje, 1995; Boyce, 1996; Beech, 2000) which I shall now discuss.

Story Telling

Story telling can function as a means of transmitting hegemonic narrative to an audience (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Johnson, 2000; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). As discussed earlier, stories blend together issue talk and work talk to engage the audience. As Miss Pink elaborated in conversation with the researcher through embedding another manager as a central actor in the tale of conflict or of a hot issue, the un-suspecting manager becomes contaminated with the negativity of the narrative. The coffee gathering is therefore a place that can be used to create anxiety in the other through the medium of story telling. The storyteller, with the support of a collaborator, authors the identity for those who are characters in the story, but who are usually not present when the performance of the story is delivered. This discursive tactic creates a kind of negotiated inter-subjectivity, a willingness to agree on the version of reality being narrated by the storyteller.

The ethnography demonstrated that stories could be considered as mediums for the transmission of hegemony (Boje and Windsor, 1993; Boje, 1995) as in the case of the supplier hegemony. Stories provide an effective vehicle for hegemonic narratives to travel in organisations. The analysis of how hegemony once embedded in stories travels in organisations indicates that there are centripetal and centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) that act as social gradients that either impede or accelerate the ability of hegemony embedded in a story to permeate the cultural landscape of the organisation. These phenomena were illustrated by the description of the emergence of supplier hegemony. The ethnography demonstrated that hegemony appears to travel both upwards and downwards in organisations. What dictates the nature of the gradient with a upward slope are the

centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) that are organised by actors as part of a competing hegemony that block the trajectory of an alternative form of hegemony. I will now discuss `knowledge claims/rights` as part of the process of producing hegemonic narrative.

Knowledge Claims/Rights

As a participant observer I noted the way that *'strategy talk'* manifests as a kind of identity control that perpetuates a managerial class distinction. This kind of identity control is based on the attribution of knowledge rights/claims. A respondent identified strategy talk as belonging exclusively to the linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1991) of senior managers. Such an observation implies that knowledge rights to a discursive activity such as strategy talk are assigned on the basis of seniority of rank. This again provides evidence of speech identities being authored by the significant other. It also implies that these speech identities are to some extent already crystallised in the culture of the organisation (Geertz, 1973; Spradley and Manne, 1975; Spradley, 1980).

As a participant observer I experienced a hegemonic theme that signified that only by attaining the high office of a senior manager can one acquire the knowledge to competently engage in strategy talk. The consequence of this hegemonic theme was that actors were allocated the legitimacy to *'claim'* knowledge rights as a consequence of both their management status and the occupational culture with which they were associated. This authorship of knowledge attributes by the other constitutes a hegemonic process. The hegemonic outcome of this process is that those of lower rank have to subjugate themselves to the knowledge claims of the senior management team. This attitude perpetuates the idea of a class system and ensures that there is always social distance between the different management classes and staff classes that constitute Excel Services. This social distance functions as a hegemonic insulator.

The hegemonic outcome of allocation of knowledge rights to actors in the coffee gathering contributes towards the achievement of legitimacy to lead. This is because legitimacy, as has been previously argued, is linked to mystification (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985). The hegemony of knowledge ownership constitutes the power to define legitimate knowledge and functions to mystify the art of senior management. It creates the impression that senior managers are engaging in complex strategic issues, which stimulate the authorship of

pastoral *identities* (Taylor, 1911; Boje and Windsor, 1993; Chan and Clegg, 2002) and subsequently foster an attitude of parental control. Senior managers are afforded the status of mature adults who possess the knowledge required for leadership. Followers (lower ranked staff), in contrast are identified as immature actors who depend on the leadership of their pastoral leaders i.e. the senior management team (Kunda, 1992; Boje and Windsor, 1993; Alvesson and Karreman, 2004)

Paradoxically the mystification of knowledge can also involve its de-mystification so as to mystify. As a participant observer I witnessed the way in which the coffee gathering was employed as stage to mock the complexity of every day organisational life. The purpose of this mocking was to reduce the complexity of organisational issues so as to reduce group self-anxiety levels. This strategy also served to disable an audience from probing the knowledge base of their leaders with regard to the nature and form of organisational problems. Therefore we have a kind of de-mystification intent on mystification which functions as a hegemonic insulator. What this means is that if the coffee gathering participants are successful in de-mystifying organisational complexity by re-defining the management of organisations as being uncomplicated then they create an atmosphere of knowledge censorship. This method of knowledge censorship manifests by establishing a hegemony that ridicules anyone who claims not to understand organisational issues. For example, if an actor was to ask questions of a senior manager such as: *"well what actually does 'we need to manage our culture, mean?"* they are quickly rebuked with a reply such as: *"don't ask silly questions"* followed up by theatrical face work, usually expressing disbelief at the question and therefore the person posing the question.

The allocation of knowledge rights and the recognition or non-recognition of knowledge claims has consequences: for the organisation; for the act of organising; and for the organisational self. This practice functions as a control system that censors potentially creative contributions from actors and encourages pastoral leadership (Williams, 1975; Chann and Clegg, 2002). It also serves to support existing power relations, social structures and organisational silos in the form of senior management fiefdoms (Alvesson, 2002).

Summary

In summary, hegemonic narrative may be considered as the apparatus within which self-identity once authored is embedded (Antaki. and Widdicombe, 1998). It is through the performance of narrative that self-identity is dramatically realised (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The ethnography demonstrated that the identity of the actor could be constrained within a discursively constituted hegemonic system (Kondo, 1990; Bourdieu, 1991;Kunda, 1992). This system can function to constrain the actors agency to select or self-author identities. Hegemony segregates audiences by speech type. It also, as a consequence, constrains their expressive capacity. The narrated hegemony presents ready-authored identities or authored identity impositions (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

An important strategy that actors enact to locate a hegemonic narrative into a position of dominance is to control both the linguistic habitus and linguistic market of the organising domain. The findings demonstrated, through the analysis of everyday talk, part of this hegemonic process. The focus of this analysis was concerned with the idea that if one controls which actors can access the language game; one can control the ability of those actors to author a competing hegemonic narrative (Mauws and Phillips, 1995).

The objective of the language game is concerned with establishing rules of discourse, which simultaneously privilege the talk that supports hegemony whilst subjugating talk that challenges the hegemony. Once rules of discourse have been established it is difficult to imagine how they would change when the participants interact as a team on alternative stages to discuss key issues (Alvesson, 1994; Boden, 1994; Ford, 1999). Senior management team meetings may have different titles and take place on different stages. However, the hegemony continues to constrain the expressive capacity of these actors. The outcome of this process may be that identities are controlled and asymmetrical power relations (Alvesson, 2002) maintained. This outcome is achieved through the inter-subjective censoring of alternative discourses and the establishment of audience segregation (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985). The findings demonstrated the role served by 'hegemonic insulators', such as audience segregation and mystification, in protecting hegemony from 'impression disruption'. Hegemony is dependent on the institutionalisation of everyday talk. Categories of meaning become first order realities (Ford, 1999) which freeze frames of linguistic reference. Hegemonic themes dictate who speaks and on what subject they may speak. This

process leads to institutionalised hegemony. This process of institutionalisation takes place in some significance in the organising domain.

If one can: control linguistic repertoire; the meaning of existing linguistic repertoire (Boje and Windsor, 1993); and control the identity of speech agents (Karreman and Alvesson, 2004), then one may to a degree control reality construction or at the very least control the scope for expressing different reality constructions. The structure of linguistic markets involves different forms of talk. The analysis of these forms of talk enables the researcher to develop an understanding of the structure of the hegemony characteristic of the organising domain. Institutionalised talk acts as an insulator to shield the speech agent from critical interaction with the other. The concept called '*discursive barriers*' was identified as another form of hegemonic insulator. It was noted that hegemony results in both behavioural and discursive leakage at all levels of the organisation. This kind of leakage both disables organisational learning and constitutes a kind of mobile censorship of talk that privileges a hegemonic narrative.

The findings illustrated that there are indeed '*rules*' of the language game (Wittgenstein, 1953). There has to be a storyteller, an anchorperson, a collaborator and an audience for the performance of a story. The storyteller and their collaborator set the agenda for the audience. Different kinds of talk have uses beyond their subject content. They provide discursive mechanisms to '*bridge*' between kinds of talk. This was called transition talk. This kind of talk (transition talk) can be understood as being vulnerable to being '*blocked*' or '*facilitated*' during the performance of a story. Both blocking and facilitating can be understood as kinds of hegemonic insulators. For transition talk to be effective '*organisational synergy*' is required. This process involves '*identity hooking*' which requires a narrative that either threatens or complements the internalised idealised self-identity of the other (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991).

Stories as a form of talk represent the ways in which '*issues*', '*gossip*', '*work talk*', and '*slagging*' are brought together as a coherent whole (Boyce, 1996). Hegemonic themes may be embedded in stories (Boje, 1995). The organisation of different speech genres and the inclusion of hegemonic themes in the structure of a story enable story telling to have maximum ontological impact upon the audience. Stories both inform and structure reality (Johnson, 2000) therefore stories and corporate story telling are to be considered as the fundamental linguistic materials that bring the coffee gathering into its rightful position as an

organising domain with regard to the production of hegemony. Stories and story telling are to be considered as powerful dramaturgical devices for privileging, teaching and institutionalising hegemony.

The concept of social gradients conceptually illuminated the way in which hegemony travels throughout Excel Services. The inherent hegemonic tension that emerges from the hegemony of the coffee gathering is that those who are licensed to talk enjoy the freedom to define knowledge and therefore the 'reality' of situations. Those who cannot claim knowledge rights are subjugated and their ideas or alternative knowledge claims suppressed. The ethnography illustrated how hegemony mediated through the authorship of linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1991) inhibits the cross fertilization between management groupings. Such a segregation of discursive property rights, when associated with a pastoral identity (Chann and Clegg, 2002), functions to protect the idealised senior management self from performance punctures (Goffman, 1959). The threat of a performance puncture is rooted in the potential of actors to expose the fragility of such knowledge claims. Concepts such as 'social distance': 'mystification'; 'front'; 'audience segregation'; (Goffman, 1959); and 'corporate legitimacy' (Gramsci, 1971; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) are recognised as operating as hegemonic insulators that protect hegemony.

Hegemony also operates as a control mechanism because, as was demonstrated by the ethnography, actors may suffer from emotional anxiety when they do not possess complete information regarding organisational activities. The coffee gathering legitimises this knowledge as organisational truth. As an organising domain (Spradley, 1980) the coffee gathering also enables the participants to develop a shared understanding through collective sense making (Johnson, 2000; Weick; 1995) of situational definitions and their probable consequences. What will now follow in Section Six of this chapter is an empirical example, presented as a tale of the field, which demonstrates hegemony in operation.

Section Six: Empirical Illustration of Hegemony in Operation

The following empirical example illustrates the way in which my model can be used to identify, analyse and explain the operation of hegemony in empirical context. This tale of the field is concerned with the hegemony of managing absence. The data demonstrates how the hegemony produced by the participants to the coffee gathering ensnares these actors in a hegemonic system that binds the organisation to established modes of organising. To support

this example I have produced the following diagram, which presents the model of the theory of hegemony that has been discussed thus far:

Figure 5.2: A Model of the Processes of Hegemony

Create Gradient

Cultural Forces for Hegemony

Hegemonic Insulators

Cultural Forces Uphill

Hegemonic Process Production and Reproduction within organising domain

Cultural Forces Downhill

Cultural Forces against Hegemony

Create Gradient

A constellation of Hegemonies

Centripetal Forces

Hegemonic Insulators

Organising Domain

Centrifugal Forces

Hegemonic ambassadors engage in dialogue between host domain and second order domains

A Tale of the Field: Managing Absence

Background

One of the core competences promoted by Excel Services as an employer of a large scale and part-time manual labour force is the skill of managing absence effectively. Ironically this issue (absence management) that should have possesssed cultural valence for the actors who manage Excel Services historically constituted a '*latent hegemony*', which lay dormant for many years. This latent hegemony was concerned with defining absence as an underlying health issue and not treating it as an issue over which conflict should emerge. This hegemony remained latent because the historical emphasis on top-level accounts had shielded inconsistencies of area labour performance with regard to absence levels. Further, a contract pricing mechanism of charging a fixed labour cost regardless of absence levels had established '*fat*' contracts. These phenomena resulted in a form of area management lethargy developing over time with regard to absence management.

As a consequence of this problem manifesting into a sizeable '*issue*' the corporate centre of Bloomford City Council intervened. This intervention dramatically realised the fragility of the idealised organisational identity of Excel Services. Mr White was '*mortified*' at the thought of this hegemonic disruption and sought to (dramaturgically) insulate the department's hegemony that it was competent to manage absence. The issue of being interpreted as competent at managing absence possesssed cultural valence for Mr White and his team as they derived much of their symbolic capital from the hegemonic narrative that asserted their organisational competence at managing a large-scale work force. The organisational legitimacy of Excel Services was being threatened. This threat triggered both a process of critical self-reflection and the activation of a transformation of a latent hegemony with regard to absence management into an active form of hegemony.

In August 2005, Mr Black convened a meeting with his senior management team to discuss the issue of absence throughout the organisation. The Chief Executive's Office had released a league table detailing absence statistics by department. This league table signified that Excel Services was the highest on this list for both sets of performance indicators that reported manual and administrative labour. The Chief Executive instructed Mr Black to reduce absence levels. This empirical evidence illustrates the activities of centrifugal forces disrupting the centripetal forces that had historically maintained the latent hegemony of

absence management. The senior managers from Excel Services who attended this meeting discussed the nature of the problem. The discussion reflected upon the historical hegemonic narrative of absence management. The team aimed to develop a protective strategy, which insulated the idealised organisational identity from the threat of disruption as a consequence of the Chief Executive's Office. The meeting focused in on a coercive strategy to reduce long-term absence cases.

Hegemonic Metamorphosis

The essence of the strategy was to re-define long term absence cases from the status of 'illness' being interpreted as the underlying issue to that of the absence being perceived as a 'conduct' issue. This re-definition would involve a process of 'hegemonic metamorphosis' whereby an existing hegemonic theme or cultural theme is transformed into a contrasting hegemonic assertion. This re-definition meant that absence could be dealt with as a disciplinary issue. Mr Black stated that the department had the right to withdraw self-certificated absence notes from employees who were persistently absent from their work. Dismissal was also an option for recurring absence problems. However, Miss Pink stated that the exercise of this mechanism in the department was rare. In the previous 12 months not one dismissal had been enacted on the basis of repeated absence, nor had any self-certificates been withdrawn. The reason for this was that the hegemonic theme of conflict avoidance prevented managers from re-defining absence as a conduct issue rather than an underlying health issue.

Hegemonic Themes as Constraining Devices

A core managerial competence had developed within Excel Services such that the organisation employed managers who are highly sociable and customer focused, but who did not possess the skills to manage conflict effectively. Excel area managers were neither emotionally equipped nor technically skilled to apply coercive methods of 'organising'. Absence management at the micro level of interaction demands confronting individual levels of performance. The managers experienced a lack of confidence in dealing with conflict over the issue of absence. This was due to the reluctance of managers engaging in conflict with staff for fear of: (a) losing disciplinary appeals; and (b) being branded as poor managers because they engaged in staff conflict. These concerns were rooted in hegemonic themes which asserted that: (1) if a department lost an industrial tribunal appeal the Director was

heavily criticised; and (2) managers who engage in open conflict were labelled internally as *'poor managers'* and this negative identity limited their potential career advancement with Excel Services. A key issue that underpinned both of these hegemonic themes was the fact that elected politicians who were sponsored by the trade unions making staff representations at appeal chaired the appeal boards. The resultant impact of the constraining effects of the hegemonic narrative of conflict avoidance was that a unit-based culture of regular absenteeism developed over time.

Masters of Their own Internal Universe are Threatened with Hegemonic Disruption

The corporate centre threatened to send in absence management auditors to low performing departments and this was taken seriously by management because it threatened to disrupt their hegemony which asserted that the organisation was competent at managing a large scale manual labour force. The coffee gathering participants internal view as constituting masters of their own internal world was being threatened and potentially undermined. External identities such as *'absence management auditors'* had never before been in a position to threaten and disrupt the hegemony of the senior management team of Excel Services. The Chief Executive announced that the number of counselling sessions, warning letters and dismissals issued by Excel management would be considered as evidence of effective absence management. Interestingly the work-based experience that may influence absence levels was not considered for enquiry. The statistics reported absence levels at 8%. However, if one imputed unreported absence, the absence level was closer to 12%.

Excel Services Massages the Figures

As a result of Excel managers being neither emotionally equipped nor technically skilled to apply this method of coercive *'organising'*, the department *'massages the figures'*. However, the corporate centre threatened to reroute absence reporting to a shared service centre. The existing system was that employees reported in sick to their line manager who should have reported the absence to personnel staff based at Excel HQ who logged the absence. If the staff on absence were not replaced at unit level then there was no incremental cost to the unit. However, this implied that if there were above industry average absence levels that the units were over staffed. A budget of 4% was inplace, in line within industry averages to allow for absence. Relationship tensions between senior, middle, area and unit based management and trade unions started to emerge.

What manifested during the meetings to find a solution to managing absence was that the only actor who could exercise a proposed way forward was Miss Pink as Personnel Manager. This was because it was assumed and accepted by all other actors that absence management was the domain of the Personnel Department and therefore methodologies with regard to the management of absence would only be legitimate if Personnel Managers presented them. For example one actor proposed that the emphasis should be shifted from statistical analysis of absence figures to a process of interaction and engagement with work based teams in an effort to establish the social conditions within the unit based cultures that legitimised an absence culture. Further it was suggested that by focusing in on the experience of absence counselling and making it a more clinical affair that this might assist in the absence management process. Both these ideas were criticised by Personnel Managers and rejected by the group. This was the only time anyone in all the meetings offered a method that contrasted with historical practice and the group rejected the new proposed method. This may be because the actor did not possess legitimacy from a knowledge position and further that conceptually the idea was culturally alien to the groups existing repertoire of concepts and finally he had the wrong occupational identity. Mr Black and his team were restricted in their ability to tackle absence as an issue because they were ensnared within a system of expressive hegemony, which originated from within the coffee gathering.

The hegemonic theme of privileging '*image over substance*' influenced the decision of Mr Black and his team to pursue a strategy that involved two key concepts. The first involved the concept that absence could be managed by statistical analysis and that '*reality*' was presentable through a set of percentages on a league table. Secondly, that absence was fundamentally a health issue and not a conduct issue. This emphasis on image over substance when supported by the hegemonic theme of conflict avoidance prevented the team from conceptualising absence in ways that would allow the emergence of alternative forms of organising that might have benefited the organisation. This inability to re-conceptualise absence as a conduct issue rather than a health issue, threatened the very existence of Excel Services as a provider of manual labour services.

Hegemony is supported by authorised speech agents, for example Mr Black relied heavily on Miss Pink as the in house expert on managing absence. This assumption was based upon her occupational identity as a Personnel Manager. Because Miss Pink reported absence statistics

and provided administrative support with regard absence counselling it was assumed and readily accepted that she was an expert on managing absence. This knowledge assumption was derived from the allocation of knowledge rights to senior management posts regardless of the empirical evidence of the post holder possessing such knowledge. There was no basis to the assumption that Miss Pink was an expert on absence management. There was a substance to the claim that she was an expert on absence reporting, administration and statistical presentation but not absence management. Absence management as a concept was also never discussed because of the hegemony of the coffee gathering. No new knowledge claims entered the discussion as the participants did not feel empowered to contribute to the knowledge debate, and if they did they were usually told, unchallenged, by Miss Pink why what they were suggesting would not work. Thus hegemony constrained the emergence and expression of different ways to conceptualise and manage absence.

Hegemony stratifies speech agents throughout the organisation, allocates knowledge rights and determines legitimacy to declare reality assertions on certain subjects and in certain organisational domains. In relation to the problem of managing absence the Board Room was employed to host the meetings. Mr Black chaired the meetings. Miss Pink sat by his side and this arrangement established audience segregation. Mr Black enacted his identity as Assistant Director and reported the absence problem to his audience. Miss Pink expanded on the absence reports. The audience defended the absence culture by attacking the system that prevented direct conflict with organisational issues. Mr Black empathised with this point of view. Thus the cycle of a failure to: (a) conceptualise absence management differently; and to (b) exchange views on different ways to manage absence differently was constrained by the hegemonic themes that composed the hegemony.

Summary

The previous tale of the field demonstrated that the method for organising absence management was constrained by established hegemonic themes; in this case conflict avoidance and the theme of defining absence as a health issue rather that a conduct issue. Due to the hegemony produced within the coffee gathering, senior managers could not offer alternative methods to manage absence. Both critical reflection and serious discussion of the issue was not possible due to the language games established as the norm in the coffee gathering, as a result organisational paralysis set in. The following diagram illustrates,

empirically the conceptual elements of my model of the production of hegemony in relation to the absence tale of the field:

Figure 5.3:
THE STRUGGLE OF HEGEMONY
"Absence Management"
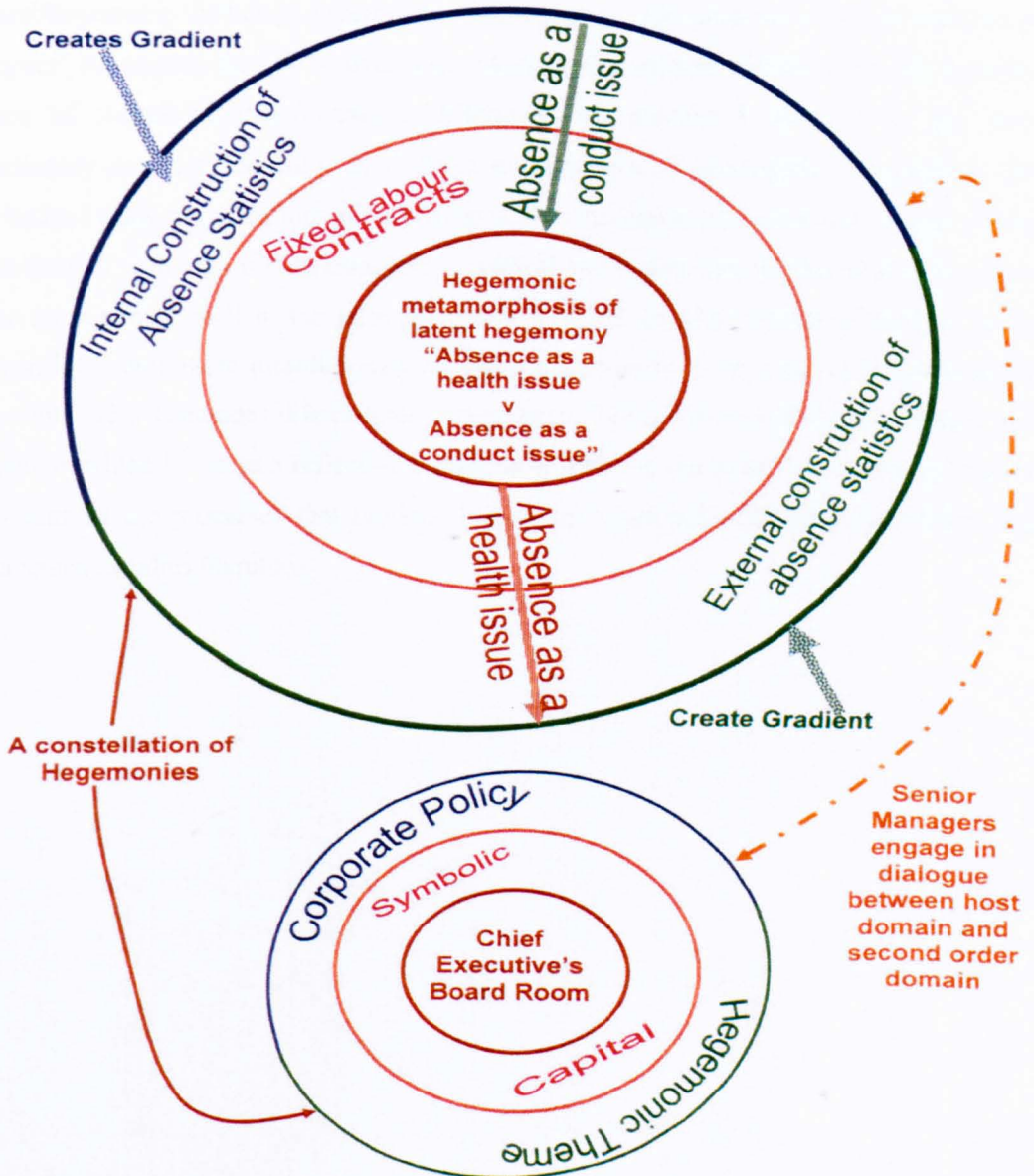
The main findings of the tale of absence management were that hegemonic themes can prove to contain the potential nemesis of the actors who intentionally or un-intentionally enabled the conditions for the hegemonic themes to emerge in the first instance. The findings also identified that established hegemonic themes or cultural themes may undergoes a process of

change that I have termed as 'hegemonic metamorphosis'. This process involves either cultural themes undergoing a process of cultural becoming and emerging as hegemonic themes or, alternatively, existing hegemonic themes may undergo the same process and emerge as quite contrasting hegemonic assertions. This process challenges existing power relations, established modes of organising and interpersonal relationships throughout the organisation. It is, because of these dynamics, very difficult for established cultural/hegemonic themes to undergo successful change. The process of change with regard '1st order' hegemonic themes evolves over a long period of time and therefore has a greater chance of successful transformation. Although this process I think is in the main evolutionary and not necessary as a direct consequence of management intentions. The conclusion I draw from this line of theorising is that organisational crises may trigger critical self reflection with regard both established cultural and hegemonic themes that have served senior management well in the past but which now are an impediment to their on going success. Interventions to establish new hegemonic themes in a short space of time may be impossible. This concludes this chapter of my thesis. What will now follow is chapter five throughout which I present a reflective engagement between my model of hegemony and the knowledge of the processes that produce hegemony contained with the Organisation and Management Studies literature.

CHAPTER SIX: REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter presents a critical engagement between my model and the current body of theory regarding the processes that are productive of hegemony. To provide a theoretical canvas to this chapter, Section One explores a summary review of the current knowledge of the processes that produce hegemony contained within Organisational and Management Studies and may be considered as a distillation of the main themes of the chapter on literature review. In Section Two I present a composite description of my model. In Section Three I discuss my model in detail and provide an account of my contribution to theory and practise. Finally, in Section Four I conclude with a closing discussion regarding the salient themes contained within the previous sections. This section will be supported by an empirical example of my model of hegemony in operation.

Section One: Current Knowledge

Much of the literature in Organisational and Management Studies argues that hegemony is primarily concerned with the acquisition of legitimacy to support leadership claims (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Boje, *et al*, 2004). It has been argued in the literature that legitimacy involves seeking the consent or acquiescence of followers with regard to the change agenda or organisational culture proposed by leaders (Alvesson, 1987; Rosen, 1985; Brown, 1994; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). A salient strategy that organisations employ and which is linked to the issue of legitimacy, states Willmott (1993) is the '*logic of the market*', which can be considered as a kind of '*grand narrative*' (Lyotard, 1984*)*. The means of establishing legitimacy was considered by Gramsci (1971) as involving drama as a key dynamic (Rosen, 1985; Bocock, 1986) in determining the outcome of hegemonic struggles.

Rosen (1985) studied how '*drama*' (Goffman, 1959) was employed as a device to legitimise leadership claims concerning the moral right of the ruling elite to enact leadership claims. Rosen's work was concerned with developing a theory of dramaturgical hegemony, which was predicated on the concept of '*symbolic capital*' (Bourdieu, 1991), employing '*theatre as a technology*' (Mangham, 2005), to privilege a particular perspective on reality as enacted in a social drama. Rosen (1985:1) defines social drama as: '*The processual unit through which power relations, symbolic action, and their interaction are played out, and through which*

social structure is made evident.' This concept (the processual unit) has been described by Spradley (1980) as an '*Organising Domain*', which is to be considered as a key site of the production of hegemony. Rosen's work was inspired by Goffman's (1959) theory of performance dynamics and is concerned with the function of drama with regard to the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Gramsci (1971) also argued that efforts to achieve hegemony should involve dramaturgical techniques such as presentations, ritual, art, media vehicles and the use of evocative symbols.

Boje (1995) studied the way in which the Disney Corporation employed the dramaturgy of story telling as a device to present the Disney culture in monolithic terms, a corporate project that Boje interpreted as an exercise in hegemony. Boje argued that organisations, far from being monolithic, are actually constituted by plurivocal interpretations of reality; an understanding of organisations advanced by scholars such as: Hazen (1993); Ford (1999) Beech (2000); and Humphreys and Brown (2002). Boje also argued that organisations could be considered as story telling enterprises. This paradigm enables a reflective space for understanding organisations as sites of hegemonic struggle; struggles that are mediated through both identification and narrative processes (Bocock, 1986; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004).

Under the rubric of corporate culturism, hegemony as a concept has been considered as '*cultural strength*' (Schein, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1992). Cultural strength can be considered as the empirical manifestation of a '*monolithic corporate narrative*' (Young, 1989) that arguably renders the organisation with one expressive collective voice or non-plurivocal. Humphreys and Brown (2002) claim that salient hegemonic processes are those of legitimacy mediated through the authorship of both self-narratives and organisational narrative. In this they make a similar point to: Gramsci (1971); Bourdieu (1991); Whetten (1993); and Alvesson (1994). It has been argued that power in a hegemonic sense should be predicated on the grounds of cultural legitimacy, which is dependent on identity cohesion expressed through narrative (Gramsci, 1971; Clegg, 1987; Alvesson, 2002). This concept of power has been defined by Schattschneider (1960:71) as: '*The Mobilization of Bias*' which constitutes a strategy that is mediated through narrative compositions. A hegemonic process, assert Alvesson and Willmott (2002), is the connecting of narrative to identification processes, a point made also in the work of scholars such as: Elsbach (1999), Czarniawska (1998); and Humphreys and Brown (2002).

Humphreys and Brown (2002) developed a theory of '*centrifugal*' and '*centripetal*' forces that create hegemonic tensions in organisations. These tensions are mediated through both narrative construction and performance activities. The outcome of the struggle between centripetal forces and centrifugal forces, the authors argue, influence which hegemonic narratives emerge as dominant and which do not. This concept can be considered as a salient hegemonic process. The theory of centrifugal and centripetal forces is similar to Opler's (1945) theory of cultural themes. Cultural themes may be considered as cultural constructs that are mediated through narratives which, through time, may evolve to the status of hegemonic themes that control both the identity and behaviour of actors. Cultural themes are also held in check and are constantly under review, argues Opler, by opposing cultural themes operating both for and against their maintenance, amendment and displacement. The development of dominant cultural themes can be considered a hegemonic process.

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) demonstrated that the regulation of identity is both a fragile and precarious business. Young (1989) illustrated how shop floor workers constructed '*anti narratives*' in response to the narrative of management. Kondo (1991) demonstrated how identity authorship, a process she termed as '*crafting selves*' re-produced gender-specific power relations in Japanese culture (Bourdieu, 1991). Kondo also illustrated how established hegemonic practices mediated through identity cohesion were resisted by younger generations who actively sought to author their own identities in Japanese organisations. Kunda (1992) studied how engineers constructed self-narratives that privileged home life over work life to resist the narrative of the company that work life should consume all aspects of self. Humphreys and Brown (2002) demonstrate how identification outcomes such as dis-identification (Elsbach, 1999) and the challenge of '*polysemy*', which involves the narrative expression of multiple interpretations of reality, function as barriers to corporate hegemonic efforts. The emergences of competing narratives, which serve to undermine hegemonic efforts of senior management were also identified in the work of both Currie and Brown, (2003); and Dawson and Buchanan, (2005).

The aim of cultural management, mediated through socio-ideological control (Willmott 1993; Parker, 2000), is arguably the attainment of identity cohesion between both the organisational identity the organisational self (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). Identity cohesion as a concept in relation to hegemony, involves developing a world-view (Gramsci 1971) that is predicated on the principle of the actor sharing in the philosophy of the organisation and identifying with the organisational identity (Elsbach,

1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Gramsci (1971) was also sensitive to the notion of identity cohesion as a key dynamic of hegemony.

Karreman and Alvesson (2004) introduce identity cohesion for consideration as a process which is based upon the psychological need of the self for self-advancement, ontological stability and security. Humphreys and Brown (2002) also focus upon the processes of identification as hegemonic processes and employ Elsbach's (1999) model of identification categories to analyse the impact of hegemonic narrative on the organisational self. Identification processes (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) and narrative processes (Boje, 1991, 1995; Ford, 1999; Currie and Brown, 2003) are now established in the literature as salient hegemonic processes. Finally, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) considered work-based socialisation procedures to be strategies aimed at controlling the subjectivity of the organisational self.

In further developing Gramsci's theme of identity cohesion, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) concur with the thoughts of: Dutton and Dukerich (1991); Whetten (1993); and Doolin (2002) when they claim that the link between organisational identity and self-identity are crucial with regard to social control. The authors assert that when the organisation becomes the significant other for the organisational self, then corporate identity processes may shape the identity construction of the self, an argument that is currently established in the literature (Dutton *et al*, 1994; Ford and Ford, 1994; and Hardy and Phillips, 1999). Alvesson and Willmott further claim that for an identity control method to influence the self-identity of the actor it must have '*cultural valence*' otherwise the self-reflexive process will not be activated and the identity control intervention may not work. It follows that one can consider cultural valence as a key hegemonic process. The authors provide a model which demonstrates the relationship between self-identity, organisational identity, and identity work in producing both intended and un-intended identity regulation outcomes, which they understand as a processual interplay that produces hegemony. Willmott (1993) argues that corporate hegemony is essentially concerned with crafting an organisational self through managing the actors sense of self-knowledge. This theory of social construction has been advanced in the work of scholars such as: Berger and Luckman (1966); and Kondo (1990). Alvesson (2002) also argues that attention should be paid to issues surrounding both agency and knowledge ownership as a key process in relation to identity cohesion.

Finally, from sociology, Bourdieu (1991) provides a theoretical route to understanding the key processes of hegemony. The three building blocks of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction are that of: symbolic capital; *linguistic habitus*; and linguistic markets. The significance of Bourdieu's theory with regard to hegemony is that it offers one of the rare models that incorporate: narrative; identity cohesion; dramaturgy; and legitimacy into its theoretical explanation of the way in which culture is stratified and reproduced throughout society. A process that I would argue produces hegemony. Bourdieu's theory of cultural structuralism (Turner, 2003) can be used to underpin an analysis of the nature of hegemonic processes and systems. Bourdieu's work is concerned with the processes that enable the '*cultural reproduction*' of dominant power relations to privilege the interests of the ruling elite in organisations. Cultural reproduction of power relations has also been reported in the work of scholars such as Ranson, *et al* (1980); and Oakes, *et al* (1998). Cultural reproduction may be considered as an exercise in hegemony. Bourdieu offers a conceptual framework through which to understand the processes that manifest as the cultural reproduction of dominant power relations in organisations. This concludes my brief summary of the current perspectives on hegemonic processes with which I will engage. What will now follow is a summary account of my emergent model of the micro cultural interactive processes that are productive of hegemony.

Section Two: Presentation of a Model of Hegemonic Production

Introduction

In this section I will discuss a proposition of a general model which provides a way of explaining at a micro level of analysis, how hegemony is both produced and protected, and how it migrates throughout organisations. I will argue that whilst narrative constitutes the dominant medium for this to happen (Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002), it is possible to add to this explanation. What authors do not discuss is how narratives are actually organised into hegemonic themes. The concept of the organising domain (Spradley, 1980) functioning both as an analytical device and as a theoretical concept will help to explain this process in more detail. To prepare the background for the detailed discussion of my research questions I will briefly discuss some theoretical fundamentals to my thesis.

Hegemony as a One-Dimensional Phenomenon

Much of the Organisation and Management Studies literature treats hegemony as a one-dimensional concept; as an expression of power on the part of the ruling elite to declare organisational meaning and to impose declared interpretations of reality on to the inter-subjectivities of the employee (Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986 and Boje, 1995). However, my model demonstrates that this is a narrow conceptualisation of the concept. Hegemony should be understood as a three dimensional concept: (1) as a form of power; (2) as a means of social construction; and (3) as a theory of social change.

Hegemonic Processes

It is established in Organisational and Management Studies that: identity cohesion; legitimacy; narrative; and dramaturgy, can be considered as the substantive theoretical categories that underpin the current knowledge of the processes of hegemony (Boje, 1995; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) add to our understanding of hegemonic processes with their idea of 'cultural valence'. Following my review of the literature, it appears that in the current moment the function of both dramaturgy and cultural valence are relatively underdeveloped as research themes with regard to their function as hegemonic processes. Further, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) call for more research into identity processes that inform identity regulation. In addition to those evident in the literature I have identified five hegemonic processes. These are: (1) mystification; (2) acquisition of symbolic capital; (3) dramatic realisation; (4) hegemonic insulators; and (5) hegemonic metamorphosis.

Narrative as Drama

The distinction between my explanation of narrative as a micro process of hegemony, and the way in which it is conceptualised in organisational theory is that in my thesis the process of narration will be predicated on the dual concepts of both linguistic and non-linguistic narratives (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985). This conceptualisation of narrative enables the development of the idea of a 'theatre of dramaturgy'. Just as mime artists perform narrative in silence, the interrelationship between the corporate artefacts that constitute a corporate front may perform a hegemonic narrative. Ford (1999:484) defines this concept for us in an illuminating fashion: "A broader view of conversations as 'a complex, information- rich mix

of auditory, visual, olfactory and tactile events includes not only what is spoken , but the full conversational apparatus of symbols, artefacts, theatrics , etc, that are used in conjunction with or as substitutes for what is spoken." Ford argues that all bodily expression of signs may constitute speaking. Therefore all forms of narrative, be they linguistic or not, mediate the ways in which people become aware and conscious of, or present *the world.*

A theory of drama as a hegemonic process was implicit in the work of Rosen (1985), who explicitly focuses on how *'theatre as a technology'* (Clark and Mangham, 2004) is used as a medium for presenting and enacting hegemony (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). A purported contribution of this thesis is to extend the line of enquiry on drama as a process of hegemony that was pioneered by Rosen (1985).

Hegemony as a Dimension Power

Hegemony, from my perspective, is understood not as the narrative itself, but rather as the combined effect of narratives with regard to constraining the expressive capacity of the self. The success of hegemony is defined as the establishment of a hegemonic system that prevents actors from having any way to conceptualise, express and enact the culture of the organisation in ways which conflict with the dominant hegemony (Chomsky, 1992). This definition was articulated by Lukes (2005:11) who declared that power is often used to shape actors: *'perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things.'* and by Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998:56) who claimed that: *'Power is embedded in the very fabric of the system; it constrains how we see, what we see, and how we think, in ways that limits our capacity for resistance'.*

Organisations as Sites of Hegemonic Struggle

Humphreys and Brown (2002) theory of centripetal and centrifugal forces asserts that organisations are not constituted by a monolithic narrative; rather, that they are *'polyphonic'* (Hazen, 1993; Ford, 1999). Building upon Humphreys and Brown's work, in my thesis, I introduced the idea that organisations may be defined as *'sites of hegemonic struggles'*. This paradigm is predicated upon the theory that organisations are defined as being constituted by intertextual and polyphonic discourse (Czarniawska, 1998; Ford, 1999; Smith 2001; Oswick and Richards 2004; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005). The idea of a hegemonic system does not exclude competing hegemonies. It merely if successful, creates a hegemonic system that is

populated with '*latent hegemonies*', which may be activated through the process of '*cultural valence*'. I shall now summarise the key properties of the model that I have developed to explain the processes involved in the production, migration and protection of hegemony in organisations.

Model of Hegemony Discussed

It is my assertion that certain narrative compositions experience a process of metamorphosis, whereby they are transformed into hegemonic themes. These hegemonic themes are produced from organisational narratives within an organising domain (Spradley, 1980). Hegemonic insulators protect both during formation, and once formed hegemonic themes. These insulators protect the hegemonic production occurring within the organising domain from disruptions. This concept of disruption has been termed '*centrifugal forces*' by Humphreys and Brown (2002) and '*performance punctures*' by Goffman (1959). The concept of hegemonic insulators adds to current explanations of why some hegemonic themes emerge dominant whilst others do not (Gramsci, 1971; Currie and Brown, 2003).

Once formed, hegemonic themes primarily travel throughout the organisation in narrative. Key participants to the organising domain act as ambassadors and re-present the hegemony in second-order domains throughout the organisation. However, the migration of hegemony is not unproblematic and has to manoeuvre social gradients throughout the organisation. These social gradients are as a result of the mobilisation of both centripetal and centrifugal forces, which dictate the degree of resistance a hegemonic theme experiences as a consequence of the efforts of hegemonic ambassadors at exporting it throughout the organisation. This concludes my summary description of my model of hegemonic production. What now follows is a detailed discussion of the theoretical properties of my model.

Section Three: Research Questions Explored

The primary question that has guided this research project is stated as: '*What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?*' This question has a number of sub-questions. The following sub-questions are not in a temporal order; it is not that each part of the hegemonic process explained by each question should happen before the other. This is because hegemonic processes and outcomes are constantly interacting, and from a Symbolic

Interactionist perspective one cannot be sure which one would come before the other. Neither are they are in an order of importance. The ordering of presentation is simply the order in which they occur in my theorising process. The ordering of the questions is based on a sequential logical developmental process. The sub-questions are stated as follows:

1. What function does an organising domain have with regard to the production of hegemony?

2. What activities are undertaken within the organising domain, from which hegemony is produced?

3. How does hegemony migrate throughout an organisation?

4. What function does cultural valence have in the process of producing and enabling the migration of hegemony?'

5. To what extent is it the case that hegemonic processes are un-intentional acts, not just intentional acts of managers or individuals?

6. What factors influence the outcome of hegemonic struggles throughout organisations?

Before I provide answers to the sub-questions I will provide an answer to my primary question, namely:

1. What are the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony?

Within the field of Organisational and Management Studies six relevant processes have been established: (1) legitimacy (Gramsci, 1971); (2) dramaturgy (Rosen, 1985; Boje, 1995, Boje, *et al.* 2004); (3) narrative (Czarniawska, 1986; Humphreys and Brown, 2002); (4) identity cohesion (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, (2004); (5) cultural valence (Alvesson and Willmott, (2002); and (6) the interplay between centripetal/centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). My study has produced findings that indicate that these are indeed salient hegemonic processes. However, in the literature these processes are not presented in one research paper as a

synthesis to show how hegemony is produced in a micro setting. What is different about my work is that it presents a model of hegemony that encapsulates all six processes at the micro level of analysis and adds to these.

My research, informed by literature review, has identified five additional processes that are critical to the production of hegemony. These are: (1) mystification; (2) acquisition of symbolic capital; (3) dramatic realisation; (4) the manifestation of hegemonic Insulators; and (5) hegemonic metamorphosis. My model of the micro cultural interactive processes that produce hegemony is therefore a synthesis of these eleven processes. Further, I have sought to explore how these processes are actually organised and privileged in relation to competing hegemonic narratives. My model explains this with the proposition that hegemonic processes are organised within an organising domain (Spradley, 1980). Finally, I have identified that the primary processes through which these eleven processes are organised is by application of Symbolic Interaction (Blumer, 1969). The first sub question to be addressed is concerned with the concept of the organising domain; namely:

2. . *What function does an organising domain have with regard to the production of hegemony?*

My research findings indicated that hegemony is primarily concerned with constraining, enabling or guiding the expressive agency of actors (Rosen, 1985). The coffee gathering functioning as an organising domain (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001) is, in one way, concerned with constraining or enabling the agency of actors to author, or culturally reproduce identity narratives (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Another function of the organising domain is the cultural production or reproduction and the crafting of institutionalised forms of talk to produce a corporate linguistic habitus, a particular linguistic market. This social construction process (Berger and Luckman, 1966) at a primary level occurs within the organising domain.

For the sub processes that produce hegemony to be organised through the primary process of Symbolic Interaction (Blumer, 1969) this requires that actors meet collectively, on a regular basis, over an extended period of time in an interactive setting (Spradley, 1980; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). The place that facilitates this interactive process between actors is the *‛organising domain*'. The organising domain is an empirical site that functions, at one level, as an analytical device for the study of hegemonic processes. We can also relate to the

organising domain at both an empirical and a conceptual level, as the salient enabler of the processes that are productive of hegemony. The coffee gathering as an organising domain functions as the symbolic nexus where micro cultural interactive processes both produce and re-produce hegemony.

The organising domain facilitates dramatic realisation (Goffman, 1959), a process which privileges the performance of certain hegemonic themes that are mediated through narrative (Spradley, 1980; Boje, 1995; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). The coffee gathering as an organising domain may also be considered as a kind of '*front*' (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985), behind which a range of different narratives are organised. This front has a number of purposes. For example, it is used as a source of both legitimacy and symbolic capital on the part of senior management. It is one of the few stages where the collective of the senior management team meet on a regular basis. Therefore, the cumulative symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of the senior management team is amplified in this setting.

As an organising domain, the coffee gathering offers the opportunity of collective sense making over time for its full participants (Weick, 1995; Ford, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Balogun and Johnson, 2004). The coffee gathering functions as an interaction device through which the participants socially construct and affirm their individual and collective reality perspectives. This organising domain also functions as a kind of comfort zone for the participants whereby they can re-orientate, affirm, amend and re-construct their cultural perspective (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001), through immersing themselves in the daily interaction (Wolcott, 1973; Spradley and Manne, 1975; Jackall, 1988; Watson, 2001) that constitutes the coffee gathering. It is this process of dense, repeated, symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969) that produces cultural themes (Opler, 1945) that undergo a process of metamorphosis emerging as hegemonic themes that subsequently migrate throughout the organisation at the micro, the meso and macro level of analysis.

The organising domain (*the coffee gathering*) also functions as an instrument of social control (Spradley and Manne, 1975; Rosen, 1985; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). This is the key corporate location where the social structure of the Excel Services management team is crafted (Rosen, 1985; Alvesson, 1994). It also is the salient symbolic domain (Schultz, 1991) where the apparent levelling of status takes place. This organising domain also serves as an important interaction device that links organising at the micro, the meso and the macro (Young, 1985; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This linkage is

mediated through cultural or hegemonic themes that migrate throughout the organisation embedded in narratives (Opler, 1945; Spradley, 1980; Boje, 1995). As an organising domain, the coffee gathering contributes towards the development of hegemonic themes. These hegemonic themes may control the agency of the organisational self in relation to selecting or considering alternative modes of organising (Schein, 1996). They also privilege established modes of organising and constrain or enable the expressive capacity of the organisational self (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). As a result of these cultural phenomena, it appears that there exists a need amongst the participants of the coffee gathering to co-author the hegemony being both produced and re-produced within the coffee gathering (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

The coffee gathering as an organising domain may also be considered as a site of '*identity work*' (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). The ethnography demonstrated that the coffee gathering functions as a stage upon which the identity of the other is authored (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). This is an influential stage, upon which the identities of organisational selves and others, including projects and ideas, are systematically undermined or advanced, through negative or positive identity constructions (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). The coffee gathering represents a high source of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991). This phenomenon results from the amplification of the '*dimension of contrast*' (Spradley, 1980) between the status of insiders versus outsiders to the coffee gathering.

Actors may also use the coffee gathering as a corporate language-learning centre. The coffee gathering can be used to teach the participants the emerging and existing language of the corporate world (Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This is important so that the participants can act as executives by talking like executives (Goffman, 1959). This performance work (Gramsci, 1971; Rosen, 1985; Mangham and Overington, 1987; Mangham, 2005) is critical to understanding the source of management legitimacy to lead as perceiving may be considered as believing. If, through the process of drama, one can influence how the other perceives a situation then one can more easily claim legitimacy to lead. Finally, its participants use the coffee gathering as a place for gathering corporate intelligence and as a language learning centre.

In summary, the coffee gathering as an organising domain provides the conditions for the participants to construct their own linguistic market and to craft a monological linguistic

habitus, (Bourdieu, 1991; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). What results from this process of linguistic development, is the propensity for the participants to develop their own individual self-narrative or alternatively they may adopt existent narrative. I will now consider in more detail the activities that take place in the organising domain that are productive of hegemony. The question that will guide this line of enquiry is stated as:

3. What activities are undertaken within the organising domain, from which hegemony is produced?

This question is concerned with the symbolic interplay of social construction processes at a micro level in the organising domain that enables it to function as a hegemonic framing device (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). As discussed earlier, the organising domain is considered to be the symbolic nexus where cultural processes combine to produce hegemony. The organising domain provides the social setting where actors are taught the rules of corporate engagement with regard to which language can be used; what are the established means of organising; what is considered important in the organisation and the crafting of a social structure (Spradley and Manne, 1975; Young, 1985; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). This domain functions as a site of both key identity work and knowledge production. This teaching process may be considered as '*inculcation*'- a process that produces a desired '*corporate habitus*' (Bourdieu, 1991). The outcomes of this process of inculcation are the institutionalisation of hegemonic themes, which are both embedded in and performed through narrative (Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003).

The interactions in this setting produce certain outcomes, an important outcome being concerned with acquiring legitimacy to lead (Rosen, 1985; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Legitimacy is used to feed back and strengthen a particular identification position (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) within the organising domain, which is then employed beyond the organising domain in '*second order domains*' to sanction assertions on the part of the key participants. Legitimacy is rooted in the process of acquiring symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Symbolic capital results from the process of acquiring cultural, social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The coffee gathering as an organising domain is the site of the greatest density of the three forms of capital in the client organisation and, therefore, constitutes the wealthiest depositary of corporate symbolic capital available to organisational members.

Symbolic capital is amplified through the process of *'dramatic realisation'* (Goffman, 1959) within the organising domain which in the case of the coffee gathering, serves as a dramaturgical setting which produces what I have termed as *'the theatre of hegemony'*. The process of the dramatisation of hegemonic narrative is important because the question of how certain frames of reference are privileged over competing hegemonic frames of reference has not been adequately explored within the field of Organisational and Management Studies. The concept of dramatic realisation (Goffman, 1959), when conceptually employed as a hegemonic process or as a meta process i.e. a process that alters or works on a primary process, can help to answer this question. It explains, within the context of the organising domain, the way in which certain hegemonic themes are dramatised and others are not dramatised; and it explains the empirical conditions under which some performances are recognised as legitimate whilst others are defined as not being legitimate (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001).

The performance activities that were highlighted by the research findings within the organising domain offer a way of explaining the privileging of frames of reference, drawing on a theory of dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959). The process of dramatic realisation, which serves to amplify both symbolic capital and hegemonic themes, is enhanced through the meta process of *'mystification'* (Goffman, 1959). By shrouding the organising domain in secrecy, a process mediated through both *'social segregation'* (Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985) and *'identity exclusion'* (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) the key actors are elevated to the level of *'Pastoral Leadership'* (Chan and Clegg, 2002), which produces conformity amongst actors and reduces their power to resist the hegemony of the ruling elite. This form of leadership establishes social conditions whereby employees become increasingly dependent on the leadership to function as *'sense makers'* in complex organisations. This is the form of leadership that Gramsci (1971) associated with the success of the hegemony of organised religion.

In summary, the coffee gathering as an organising domain provides a performance stage that engenders all kinds of performance. It produces a number of fronts behind which both self and organisational identities are authored. This is a key site of both individual and corporate identity work (Karreman and alvesson, 2001) and where hegemony is produced. Within this organising domain, the participants in the coffee gathering socially construct hegemony and craft the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001) of the organisation. This hegemonic process is facilitated by the relationship between the various

cited hegemonic processes which combine to produce legitimacy for participants to socially construct meaning. The organising domain is conceptualised as the setting that establishes the dramaturgical framework which determines what kinds of narrative, language, identities, and conceptual ideas that can be both produced and performed in the organisation by senior and middle managers. The next question is concerned with understanding how hegemony migrates throughout organisations:

4. *How does hegemony migrate throughout an organisation?*

It is established in the literature that hegemony migrates throughout the organisation through the media of narrative (Boden, 1994; Boje, 1995; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). The model developed here offers an explanation of how such narratives are carried. The research findings identified that the principle carriers of hegemonic themes are actors who fulfil the role of hegemonic ambassadors. For example, actors, functioning as ambassadors, go away from the coffee gathering and perform their reading of the hegemony to audiences within the social situations that they encounter, equipped with symbolic capital (Rosen, 1985; Bolton, 2004). This process generally involves a hegemonic performance within second order-organising domains. A second order-organising domain is any domain, which is secondary to the primary organising domain, which produces the hegemony. Actors who emerge from within the coffee gathering function as ambassadors who perform the role of both narrators and storytellers of the hegemony throughout the organisation. This concept whilst not defined in such terms as 'hegemonic ambassadors' was illustrated empirically in the work of scholars such as: Kondo (1990); Kunda (1992) and Boje (1995). Their roles are to both present and enforce hegemonic themes within these second order domains. This process is not simply that it is just a narrative that is produced in the primary organising domain, and re-introduced to the second order domains; there is an important symbolic translation process that occurs between both the ambassador and their audience. For ambassadors to coherently link together hegemonic themes through a process of narration, the hegemonic narrative requires to be organised and differentiated from non-hegemonic narrative (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). This problem has to be solved, otherwise, how would the hegemony migrate if it could not be coherently separated out and expressed from within a field of general organisational discourse?

Hegemonic themes operate in accordance with Opler's (1945) theory of *'Cultural Themes'*, by functioning as censoring/privileging devices, a function that is mediated through the inter-

relation of the processes of identity cohesion, dramatic realisation and symbolic capital. The key narrative vehicles for hegemonic themes are: '*stories*' (Boje, 1995; Boje *et al*, 1999); '*rituals*', (Trice and Beyer, 1984); '*espoused corporate values*', (Schein, 1985); '*corporate presentations*', (Rosen, 1985); '*staff induction programs*', (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002); '*organisational myths*' (Johnson, 2000); and '*corporate architectural arrangements*' (Kunda, 1992).

Opler argues that both the expressive form and structure of a culture may be located in both the '*expression*' and '*interrelation*' of cultural themes. This same logic applies to understanding the structure of a system of a particular hegemony. The translation of hegemonic themes into commonly accepted behaviour within a '*cultural scene*' (Spradley, 1980) may be understood as an '*expression*' of the content of the hegemonic theme itself. This may help to explain the empirical social impact of hegemony. It follows that as cultural expression may be based upon expressive categories such as self or group identity, linguistic, conceptual or knowledge production, that hegemony should be concerned with targeting these forms of cultural expression. The research findings provide evidence that support Opler's theory of cultural themes, albeit he did not make a distinction between cultural themes that were hegemonic and those that were not hegemonic. I am making this distinction. However, Opler, hinted strongly towards a distinction between categories of cultural themes, implying in his writing that certain cultural themes were hegemonic. For example Opler (1945:199) claims that: "*a concept that is embedded in Apache culture is that men are physically, mentally, and morally superior to women.*" This cultural theme, Opler argues is deeply rooted in the Apache culture and serves to culturally re-produce a male hierarchy and to centralise male power. This, I think, constitutes an example of a hegemonic theme in operation. The migration of hegemonic themes, aided by hegemonic ambassadors throughout the organisation, is not unproblematic, a theme that I will now discuss with the aid of the theory developed by Humphreys and Brown, (2002) with regard centripetal and centrifugal forces.

The research findings indicated that centripetal forces (for the hegemony) and centrifugal forces (against the hegemony) results in the establishment of social gradients, which shape the problematic migration of hegemony throughout organisations. The concept of social gradients illustrates the empirical consequence of dynamic tensions that occur between centrifugal/centripetal forces, hegemonic themes and the resulting identification outcomes (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003). These phenomena

may be understood by the concept of a downward/upward slope *that hegemonic narratives* travel over in organisations. These counter forces may be mobilised through a critical self-reflexive process, which can be activated by fragmented and disparate symbols that have cultural valence for actors (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). It is important to note that centrifugal and centripetal forces exist both inside and outside the organising domain. The way that corporate hegemonic reproduction occurs is by those social forces being privileged or suppressed within the organising domain then re-presented and symbolically privileged in second order domains throughout the organisation.

Cultural forces can be categorised as either for the hegemony or against it depending on the hegemonic narrative isolated for analysis. This process is mediated through *'identity work'* (Young, 1985; Kodo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Bolton, 2004), and is further explained by the tension between conflicting linguistic habitus, linguistic markets, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The realisations of cultural forces for and against hegemony involve a process of critical reflection on the part of actors with regard to the hegemony that is culturally important to them. This process is explained by the concept of cultural valence (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This process depends on the nature and outcome of identity processes (Elsbach, 1999). The concept of cultural valence will be discussed in more detail by the research question that deals specifically with its role as a hegemonic process.

The key to understanding how hegemony migrates is not just explained by narrative expression mediated through language and text. There are three other salient factors that influence the migration of hegemonic themes. Firstly, what is critical is the identity of the actors who are performing the narrative, i.e. are they legitimate carriers and presenters of the hegemony? Secondly, how well is the hegemony protected from performance punctures (Goffman, 1959); a line of theorising which introduces the concept of hegemonic insulators; and, thirdly; and most crucially, in what domain is the hegemony performed within and to which audience? This line of theorising introduces the concept of audience receptivity within second order organising domains, a concept which is linked to the concept of social gradients. This theorising is predicated upon the role of the ambassador, who is both the narrator and/or presenter of the hegemony. This theory is arguably underplayed in the current literature.

The processes that produce hegemony and which occur in the primary organising domain does happen again in other organising domains, but crucially to the successful migration of hegemonic themes, one notes that the ambassadors who are from the primary organising domain must be seen as legitimate, in the '*multiple second order domains*' that they migrate to. This is an empirical phenomenon and not a theoretical abstraction. The audience learns the hegemony from the ambassador. This involves a group learning process that Bourdieu (1991) terms as '*inculcation*'. The ethnography demonstrated these phenomena through the '*tales of the field*' that discussed the: '*Management Route Way Program*'; '*1 Business*'; and '*Managing Absence*'.

In summary, within the client organisation there exists a network of organising domains (Schultz, 1991) that actors from within the coffee gathering interact within and perform the role of the translator, ambassador and narrator of hegemony, usually to standard audiences. This repetition of audience is critical in developing hegemony. Central to this theory building is the idea that this performance is legitimised in the minds of the audience (Mangham and Overington, 1987), which constitutes a process of identity cohesion (Gramsci, 1971) that is dependent upon the symbolic capital synonymous with the actor (Bourdieu, 1991). Of crucial importance and related to the concept of symbolic capital, the legitimacy of the ambassador is dependent on the setting (Rosen, 1985; Bocock, 1986).

It is my view that the network of organising domains within organisations are not a straightforward ensemble at the centre of which is located the coffee gathering. I reject the idea that the realisation of an intended hegemony is an unproblematic exercise. It is not the case that from the primary organising domain (*the coffee gathering*), senior management can take the hegemony to their respective teams and cascade it down through the ranks and thus the hegemony will prove to be dominant. In contrast to this overtly rational perspective, which relies on senior management authority to declare meaning as a given, what actually occurs is a process of translation and symbolic re-organisation of the hegemonic narrative within the different domains. Therefore, organisations may be conceptualised as '*sites of hegemonic struggle*' (Bocock, 1986) some of which are latent, some of which are in direct confrontation, some of which are in covert confrontation and some of which are ambivalent to one another. This concept may be explored by Elsbach's (1999) model of identification outcomes. The next question addresses the function of cultural valence with regard the production of hegemony.

5. *What function does cultural valence have in the process of producing and enabling the migration of hegemony?*

Alvesson and Willlmot, (2002) argued that cultural valence triggere the critical self-examination of a hegemonic theme by actors. Cultural valence is dependent, as a concept on its theoretical linkage to the idea of the *'theatre of the mind'* (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Mangham and Overington, 1987). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) demonstrated how cultural valence functions as a symbolic trigger to activate critical reflection with regard to hegemonic themes. They argue that an understanding of this process is vital to a hegemonic strategy being effective. The paradox this line of theorising presents is that cultural valence also may result in actors blocking, as well as facilitating, the flow of hegemony in the organisation. Humphreys and Brown (2002) demonstrate that emotional effects, which Alvesson and Willmott (2002) claim are triggered by cultural valence, drive both identification process and outcomes. It is the emotional impact which constitutes the key determinant in establishing the identity outcome for the actor who is the target of hegemonic efforts e.g. identification or dis-identification (Elsbach, 1999).

The research findings demonstrated how important emotion was with regard to influencing identification outcomes within the context of an organising domain. This is interesting because the function of emotion as part of the process of symbolic interaction is not acknowledged in the literature. Cultural valence is a broad overarching concept, which refers to any cultural artefact that is symbolically significant enough to the actor that it triggers critical reflection towards the signifier. The study presented by Alvesson and Willmott (2002) was concerned with the role that cultural valence performs in relation to identity control in organisations. However, the concept of cultural valence can be transferred to this thesis, to help to explain the critical role that the phenomenon performs with regard the production of hegemony and in particular the *'triggering'* of critical reflection on the part of actors towards a particular hegemony. This triggering process is important to understanding how actors may realise *'latent hegemony'* as was demonstrated by the tale of the field concerning *'absence management'*.

In summary, the research findings illustrated the role of cultural valence in determining the *'slope'* of social gradients. Cultural valence therefore is to be understood as an important input to the hegemonic process. Cultural valence triggers an emotional response that results in critical engagement in relation to part of, or all of, a particular hegemony on the part of

actors. Under certain circumstances it is easy for hegemonic production and migration to happen if actors positively identify with it and provide hegemonic receptivity. For example, if the hegemonic ambassador exhibits high legitimacy; if the hegemonic discourse exhibits high market value; if actors are emotionally attached to those persons and positively identify with them, then all of these variables possesss cultural valence that makes the hegemonic gradient down hill. Alternatively, if the hegemonic ambassadors lack legitimacy, a phenomenon which also constitutes the manifestation of cultural valence, then the hegemonic gradient becomes steeper. I will now consider to what extent hegemonic production may be unintended consequences of identity work. This theme is addressed by the following question;

6. *To what extent is it the case that hegemonic processes are un-intentional acts, not just intentional acts of managers or individuals?*

This question sets out to explain to what extent the actors within the coffee gathering are aware of the hegemony that they are producing. There is arguably a gap in the literature with regard to an understanding of the potential for hegemony being produced as the unconscious result of Symbolic Interaction that occurs within the '*theatre of the mind*' of the actor (Alvesson, 2002 and Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This self-internalised interactive process involves the hegemonic narrative being imaginatively performed by the self to itself, either in the absence of the other or in direct conversation with the significant other (Mead, 1934). Managers may take advantage of this sense making to aid their own hegemonic productions, even though they may not have set out to achieve such outcomes. The research findings illustrated that the production of hegemony is an interactive process that may be informed by accidental hegemonic production as well as the actors deliberate attempts to produce hegemony. This conceptual theme may be considered as both the '*organised and dis-organised*' structure of hegemonic production, a theme that I would argue is underdeveloped in the current literature contained within Organisation and Management Studies (Alvesson, 2002). Hegemony as a three dimensional phenomena is thus conceptualised as a product of a symbolic melting pot of structured/unstructured/ intended/unintended hegemonic processes, practices, structures and outcomes.

The research has demonstrated that some hegemony is intended, some is accidental and some is simply opportunistic. Much of the literature reports research findings of highly deliberate attempts at producing hegemony on the part of the ruling elite (Gramsci, 1971;

Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986; Kunda, 1992; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003; and Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). The research findings that have informed this thesis challenge the established view in the literature that suggests that the production of hegemony is necessarily an intentional act. The findings strongly suggest that sometimes, hegemonic systems naturally evolve and once evolved they then ensnare the organisation. The study of Young (1989) is one of the rare studies that explore this perspective on hegemonic production as an evolution of accidental design. Young argues that the occupational hegemonies of production employees in an engineering firm actually evolved over a long period of time. In my study, the evidence suggested that the production of corporate hegemony resulted from the un- predictable interplay of the micro cultural processes previously detailed. As Young (1989:201) perceptively points out: *"the mundanity of the everyday is an illusion, for it is within these details that the dynamics of organisational culture come into being and use."* This is the same for the production of hegemony when considered as a cultural production (Parker, 2000)

In summary, hegemonic outcomes may be deliberate and both communicated and constructed from the self to the other, and from the other to the self, but some of them are actually not deliberate, many are symbolic resonances that occur for a myriad reasons (Alvesson, 2002). My assertion is that hegemonic themes become manifest though a process of cultural becoming (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). These phenomena can best be explained by considering the theory of hegemonic metamorphosis. Hegemony can also be considered as a process of organic self-renewal. This process involves each new hegemonic theme serving to support existing hegemonic themes that are expressed through narratives to complement or reinforce hegemony. This theory explains how hegemony can pre-date managers intentions, and how apparently mundane acts can symbolically reinforce established institutionalised hegemony (Young, 1989). As layer upon layer of cultural narrative undergoes hegemonic metamorphosis, to emerge as hegemonic themes, a particular hegemony will be produced through time which will stand against the actors subjectivity as a colossal inter- subjective objectification (Berger and Luckman, 1966). This kind of hegemonic production I will call *'ingrained and institutionalised hegemony'*. This hegemonic phenomenon appears to be so real that it exists at a level of taken-for-granted everyday assumption on the part of actors as pragmatic reality whereby critical reflection becomes improbable as a means to: (a) indicate and describe its presence; and (b) to change it. The final line of enquiry that I will pursue is

to consider the conditions that facilitate the outcome of hegemonic struggle in organisations. This theme is addressed by the following question:

7. *What factors influence the outcome of hegemonic struggle throughout organisations?*

My answer to this question involves a theoretical synthesis of the concepts of: hegemonic themes; insulators; gradients; and ambassadors. Ambassadors of a particular hegemony both protect and insulate the hegemony from disruption, as a consequence of critical examination by their audience. Hegemonic themes also influence the outcomes of legitimacy struggles between competing narratives (Spradley and Manne, 1975; Boje, 1999, 2001). For some hegemonic themes to be privileged over others there has to be some kind of protection device that *'insulates'* a particular hegemonic theme with regard to its: construction; amendment; and crystallization, from the disruptive influence of counter narratives or centrifugal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The idea that best explains these phenomena is that of *'hegemonic insulators'*. The coffee gathering as the key site of hegemonic production (the organising domain) is both insulated and protected against counter hegemony. The ambassadors, as they migrate throughout the organisation also enjoy the protection of hegemonic insulators. My research findings have identified seven salient hegemonic insulators. These are: (1) front; (2) audience segregation; (3) symbolic mystification; (4) social distance; (5) corporate legitimisation; (6) linguistic market; and (7) linguistic habitus. All of which have been fully discussed in the chapter that reported the research findings previous.

There are ways of breaking through the hegemonic insulators, although this is a very difficult thing to do in practice. Referring to my model for a successful hegemony to enjoy a downward slope is reasonably un-problematic; however, an up-hill slope is far more difficult. This is because hegemonic struggle operates within the broad cultural context of the organisation, which I conceptualise as being constituted as sites of hegemonic struggle; a theory that is supported by Young (1989:190) who argues that organisations are characterised by: *'a shifting constellation of meanings, more or less connected to various interests which seek to formulate and express them.'* Organisations as sites of hegemonic struggle (Bocock, 1986), are therefore characterised by sustaining a *'discursive melting pot of polysemy'* (Boje, 1995). Polysemy is defined by Humphreys and Brown (2002:426) as *'the proliferation of socially uncontrolled meanings'*. The work of both Humphreys and Brown, (2005) and of Currie and Brown (2003) demonstrate how narrative is a pluralistic

phenomenon in organisations involving multiple vocal exchanges that occur simultaneously and sequentially (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Therefore, in organisations actors experience a persistent symbolic bombardment, which threatens to upset the equilibrium that maintains the structure of hegemony. This symbolic bombardment has to be insulated against and these hegemonic insulators do this.

Closing Discussion: An Empirical Example

I shall now, with the aid of a tale of the field, draw the main theoretical themes of my model together for consideration. The following tale of the field provides an example of hegemony in operation. This data has been selected because it makes explicit the processes that produce, protect, challenge and facilitate the migration of hegemony in the organisation. The data resulted from my observations of actual events, conversations with staff, management, trade union officers and elected politicians and my participation in the coffee gathering.

An Epic Tale of the Field: The Equal Pay Claim.

Background

Following an equal opportunities wage claim, 8,000 female workers employed by Excel Services, were offered by their employer five years back pay averaging £9,000 tax-free together with a new pay rate, comparable with their male counterparts. The background to this claim was that a Law Firm operated by a Mr X had won a test case for equal pay against a Local Authority based in England. Mr X won this case on behalf of employees of this Local Authority. In the test case, Mr X argued that male manual labour should not be paid more than female manual labour. This claim challenged a hegemony that privileged male labour in economic terms over female labour.

The test claim presented by Mr X, was based upon the argument that a 'catering assistant', an 'office cleaner' or a 'domestic help', posts that tend to be occupied by females, should be paid the same as a 'street cleaner' or a 'building labourer', posts which tend to be occupied by males. Mr X successfully argued that if there were disparity in terms of remuneration between male and female manual labour, this equalled sex discrimination. He won his case and the Local Authority had to settle with each female employee represented by Mr X for 5

years back pay. They also had to agree to a new pay schedule for the future. The back pay average settlement for a 35 hour employee was estimated at £30,000.

Mr X Attacks Excel Services

Mr X then proceeded to target other Local Authorities in the UK for equal pay claims and his initial target was Bloomford City Council which incorporated Excel Services. Mr X adopted a strategy of direct correspondence with Council employees. He presented to the employees a narrative that claimed that they were victims of sex discrimination in the work place. The narrative of Mr X aimed to break through the hegemony of the employer to both disrupt it and to raise the consciousness of the female employees with regard to an issue that had cultural valence for them, an issue that had historically been suppressed by the hegemony of management. The female staff had been historically aware of this inequality but felt powerless to do anything about it.

Mr X employed dramaturgical techniques such as newsletters, which were sent direct to Excel employees. These newsletters profiled employees from within the test case organisation and outlined the hegemony of the employer and explicitly challenged the hegemony. Mr X claimed that he would not charge the employee directly. He further claimed that his earnings would be recovered through legal charges to be paid by the employer when he won the case. Mr X also maintained a campaign of regular correspondence with employees advising them of the Council's attempts to suppress their individual rights. Further, Mr X organised road shows so that he could meet with the employees direct to present his narrative.

Hegemonic Disruption

The hegemony that Mr X was attempting to disrupt implied that domestic manual duties were to be performed by female staff that was usually recruited from economically deprived areas. These female staff were to receive the lowest pay grade available. Male labour was considered superior in terms of social value in relation to female labour and was to be paid at a higher rate. The history, which underpinned the male dominated hegemony, was that the male employees had been represented by powerful trade unions that had negotiated excellent base pay and bonus rates for their members. The female employees had not enjoyed such representation. In fact over the preceding years the trade unions had co-operated with

management to suppress the potential earnings of female manual labour. This union was a result of a shared narrative that such services could be out sourced easily and that to avoid this scenario costs were to be kept at a level that were '*affordable*' to the organisation. Initially, the Senior Management of Bloomford City Council disregarded Mr X as an opportunist. However, this denial soon evaporated and the issue exploded onto the corporate landscape of the organisation as a strategic threat to its very survival. The estimated settlement cost of the case was projected at £350 million with additional labour costs of approximately £70 million per annum thereafter. As Excel Services employed 8,000 female employees as domestics, catering assistants and cleaners this issue was to dominate the coffee gathering for months.

The Coffee Gathering Develops Protective Hegemony

Within the coffee gathering the participants developed a strategy to support the hegemony of the employer to counter the emerging hegemony of Mr X. This involved a process of developing a narrative that provided legitimacy for a managerially inspired hegemony. Part of this process was to work in partnership with the trade unions to support the emerging hegemony of Bloomford City Council. This was secured with ease because ironically the trade union feared being sued by Mr X acting on behalf of their union members for both negligence and discrimination. This fear was based upon the fact that the trade unions had advanced the employment terms of male workers to the detriment and disadvantage of female workers. What was to emerge was an alliance between both the Trade Unions and the Senior Management teams to support a hegemony that suppressed female employees, privileged male employees and which attacked the claims of Mr X for equal pay on behalf of trade union members. The coffee gathering participants, the trade unions, elected members and the Executive Management team of Bloomford City Council considered that they could counter the hegemony of Mr X and reduce the potential economic cost of the pay claim. This required a simple but effective hegemonic narrative that would appear morally legitimate to all stakeholders, inclusive of the female staff.

Central to the hegemonic strategy developed by Mr White and his team within the coffee gathering was to present the pay issue as a staff problem that was threatening the economic life of the organisation. Willmott (1993), referred to this strategy as constituting the employment of '*the logic of the market*' to support managerial hegemony. This narrative was performed through the media of staff magazines, briefing notes, council intranet, local news

papers and staff presentations held in lecture theatres throughout the city. The narrative was always the same and was performed by senior figures recruited from the coffee gathering, the trade unions, elected members and the Executive Management of Bloomford City Council. The narrative emphasised that this issue threatened the very survival of the council and that Mr X was intent on exploiting the employees. It was further emphasised that Mr X had inflated the sum of monies staff may be due and that he would charge staff 20% for his services. Further that there was no guarantee that Mr X would win his case in Scotland as the law interpreted the Equal Opportunities Legislation produced by the European Parliament differently from the English legal system.

Sowing the Seeds of Future Discontent

Aproximately 8,000 female workers employed by Excel Services, were offered by their employer five years back pay ranging from £4,000 to £9,000 tax-free dependent on the contracted hours worked by each employee. The employees were also to be offered a new pay rate comparable with their male counterparts. This offer was presented at a series of planned road shows held in community centres throughout the city. The employees were seated theatre style in large halls. Senior Managers supported Elected Members and Trade Union Officials in presenting, with the aid of power point technology, the offer of compensation to the staff. Once again, the senior management hegemonic strategy was to present the pay issue as a staff problem that was threatening the economic life of the organisation. The narrative presented at these road shows was that the staff could reject the offer and pursue their individual claims through private lawyers. If they opted for this choice, management emphasised that they could incur expenses, run the risk of losing the claim, whilst simultaneously putting other colleagues as well as their own jobs at risk as the organisation could, if the deal was rejected be rendered bankrupt. The additional strategy employed was to promise to pay out the money during December, just before Christmas, if and only if, the staff accepted the offer. Questions were then invited by the senior managers from the staff audience, although a statement usually preceded the invitation that suggested that: *"We know that most of you would now just like to get your money, however if there are any questions we have a few minutes left"*. After the odd question had been answered the staff were then ushered out of a side door, where a team of lawyers, employed by management, were waiting to provide both legal advice and the paper work that the staff had to sign in order to accept the offer. The result of this exercise was a 90% uptake with regard to managements offer and the exercise was declared a success by management.

However, this was not the end of the story. Approximately ten percent of the staff had refused the offer. Twelve months later the council settled out of court with Mr X for this section of staff. The cost of this settlement per employee was two hundred percent greater than the sum that management, with the full support of the trade unions and elected members, had offered originally and which was accepted by ninety percent of employees. Mr X leaked this detail into the media. The staff that had held out boasted to their colleagues of their settlement figure. The following newsletter sent out by the office of Mr X to 7,000 female workers who had accepted the earlier offer:

Bloomford & EQUAL PAY
A mesSage from Action 9 Equality

In December 2005, Bloomford City Council *deceived thousands of low paid staff into giving up their equal pay claims, aided and abetted by the trade unions.* But the good news is that people can now fight back – by starting up a fresh claim! In December, the council said it hadn't enough money to pay people what they were really due in terms of equal pay. Yet two months later, Bloomford set a 0% council tax increase for 2006! Or to put things more plainly, all of a sudden the council had plenty of cash – the coffers were full – despite what it said at Xmas.

If you are one of the thousands of workers who feel let down by the council, you can re-start a claim from December 2005. You have already built up a sizeable claim over the past 6 months (see table) and these figures will steadily increase in the months ahead. New cases will take a year or so to complete – so here's what yours is worth over the next two years.

FEEL CHEATED AND LET DOWN AFTER XMAS?

DON'T GET MAD – CLAIM WHAT'S REALLY YOURS

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE – AND LOTS TO GAIN

*MANY PEOPLE ALSO HAVE A CLAIM AGAINST THEIR TRADE UNION –
BECAUSE THE TRADE UNIONS ENCOURAGED THEIR MEMBERS TO
ACCEPT THE COUNCIL'S ROTTEN DEAL!*

Contact David Main and Action 9 Equality on;
0141 637 7936 or 08937 785 212

Resentment gripped the work force and trust between management, the organisation, the trade unions and the female work force was critically undermined. The relationships between unit based staff and unit based management were also fundamentally changed. The Unit Managers, also predominantly female, did not gain a penny from this pay settlement and witnessed their manual staffs benefit from financial windfalls ranging from £4,000 to £30,000 and a subsequent pay award of 23%. Manual female staff are now more active and

self-conscious of their economic worth and they assert their positions in relation to management more demonstrably than they did in the past. The legitimacy of management to declare reality assertions has been weakened considerably. This has rendered the management of what historically was deemed as a passive and submissive female work force as a far more problematic and challenging exercise. The whole drama has also undermined the principles of the commercial management of catering services within the council. The internal client historically relied on profits generated for inward investment. These profits were now extinct. As the unit and area managers were now no longer operating a profit making business this struck at the very identity of the organisation as a commercial entity. If profit, the driving force of the organisation, was no longer available, then what was its rational for existence? What were management employed for? These questions unsettled management at all levels of analysis and plunged morale into a deep and dark abyss.

Summary

This example has provided an illustration of the operation of hegemony from its point of production (the organising domain). The data demonstrated the vehicles that facilitated the migration of hegemony. The tale of Equal Pay illuminated the role of the participants of the coffee gathering as they performed the role of ambassadors for the hegemony. The active role of legitimacy in both protecting and insulating the managerial hegemony from disruption by Mr X was highlighted. Despite conserted attempts by management in their attempts to silence the counter hegemony of Mr X, ultimately this exercise failed. This demonstrated the difficulty that hegemony can experience as it migrates through organisations and meets other hegemonies. It may travel smoothly, almost down hill, in the absence of any counter hegemony. However if counter hegemony or a latent hegemony is activated then the managerial inspired hegemony had to travel up hill. This introduces the concept of social gradients. The example also demonstrated the critical role as hegemonic processes that narrative, cultural valence, dramaturgy, mystification, symbolic capital and identity cohesion fulfilled in the struggle for hegemonic dominance. The hegemony which suppressed female staff economically, was eventually rendered as not being perceived as legitimate. Extant power relations were changed for good. The trade union was unmasked, in the eyes of some staff, as a pawn of management. Finally the Council embarked upon a Pay and Grading Review in an attempt to balance the books and avoided future claims that would threaten to bring the organisation to the brink of wide scale industrial conflict that could have crippled the City. This concludes this chapter. What will now follow is the concluding chapter to my thesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Introduction

What use is a good theory? Lenin (1902) may well have considered this question when he argued for a '*theory of praxis*' (Bocock, 1986), a stance which asserted that social theory was only of any value if it could be used in a practical sense to understand the social world and to help reform societies in general. As both a manager and researcher, I recognise that management involves practical activities such as providing leadership, establishing teams, building consensus for change, facilitating sense making and relationship management. I hold the view that such practical activities are informed by what might be described as '*lay man*' theorising based upon managerial life experience (Berger and Luckman, 1966).

It is my view that once developed, a good organisational theory should enable both practitioners and organisational theorists to consider aspects of management practice e.g. cultural change, so as to inform their own social construction of the organisational issue. This informing process should be intent on facilitating a broader understanding of an organisational phenomenons conceptual and empirical properties. This expanded theoretical repertoire could enable paradigm juggling within management teams, thus, hopefully, avoiding a paradigm trap (Johnson, 2000). In contemporary terms, a theory of praxis enables the potential scope for wider approaches to the practice of management within organisations aided by the encouragement of conceptual dialogue between management teams. It is the hope of the author that the theory generated by my research meets the criterion of a Theory of Praxis.

The Contribution

As a researcher I wish to understand how the organisational phenomenon comes into being, why managers do what they do and how they are enabled or constrained with regard to their selection of modes of organisational expression. I have studied these phenomena through the analytical device of an organising domain which I employed to both search for hegemonic themes, and to understand the processes that produce and protect hegemony. The process of developing such an understanding may be termed as emergent theorising (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Therefore, this thesis has been concerned with contributing towards an

understanding of the processes involved in the production, reproduction, migration and protection of hegemony.

To what extent is the theory generated by my research relevant to other organisational contexts? I think that it is potentially relevant, although this optimism is hedged with some precautionary observations. For example, I acknowledge that from a Symbolic Interactionist (Blumer, 1969) perspective one would not provide prescriptive methods for managing hegemony in ways characteristic of the corporate cultural management literature (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1992). However, I may generate a set of generative questions that, with the support of my model, could be applied diagnostically to other hegemonic situations. This approach is similar to that of Johnson (2000) and his cultural web, a model that may be used to diagnose cultural themes that constrain both management thinking and action. Both my model, and Johnson's cultural web, could be used together to initially diagnose the main cultural themes that constitute the culture of the organisation, followed by a micro level identification and study of the dynamics of hegemonic themes.

Both researchers and practitioners in organisations could employ my diagnostic model, supported by key research questions, as a mode of analysis to determine the symbolic and social structure of a particular expressive hegemony. There are a number of reasons why they would do this, for example, they may wish to inform the design of change programmes with a pre-developed understanding of hegemonic themes that may inhibit or energise the change initiative. Alternatively they may wish to employ my model for emancipatory reasons, for example to support work based projects, aimed at targeting reform of the work place (Alvesson, 2002). This was very much the way that Gramsci (1971) understood hegemony as a theory of social change being applied at a macro level in society in a pragmatic way (Bocock, 1986). Whilst these questions do not provide generalised answers, they do provide guidance for reflective thinking. Examples of such questions are:

(1) What are the dominant hegemonic themes that constitute the hegemony?

(2) What is the key site of hegemonic production?

(3) What are the centripetal and centrifugal forces for and against a particular hegemony?

(4) What are the second order organising domains that can influence the hegemony?

(5) Who are the significant hegemonic ambassadors?

(6) What are the key hegemonic insulators that protect the hegemony?

The findings indicate that constraining and enabling influences on self-expression occur when actors experience hegemony. Hegemonic themes are initially formed in the organising domain and exported throughout the organisation by hegemonic ambassadors, who employ a myriad narrative and dramaturgical expressions to communicate, protect, privilege, enforce and teach the hegemonic themes they are advancing. These findings support the findings of Opler (1945) regarding the role of cultural themes as constraining forces with regard to human expression.

The hegemony then migrates throughout the organisation, embedded in the identity narratives of hegemonic ambassadors. These ambassadors have to manoeuvre social gradients if they are to impact on the social construction of reality of actors within the organisation. Humphreys and Brown's (2002) concept of centripetal and centrifugal forces illustrate how opposing social forces dictate the nature and slope of the social gradients. The hegemonic themes, produced by the process of metamorphosis are protected both pre and post production by insulators such as: audience segregation; organisational silos; and symbolic capita'. In addition to the established importance of processes such as: narrative, (Humphreys and Brown, 2002); cultural valence, (Karreman and Alvesson, 2004); identity cohesion, (Kunda, 1992; Alvesson, 2002); dramaturgy (Rosen, 1985); and legitimacy, (Currie and Brown, 2003) my research findings have identified five additional hegemonic processes. These are: (1) mystification; (2) acquisition of symbolic capital; (3) dramatic realisation; (4) hegemonic insulators; and (5) hegemonic metamorphosis. This conceptualisation of hegemony provides a full sense of these social phenomena at both ends of the Gramscian scale.

Throughout this thesis I have made a distinction between the macro level of analysis in which hegemony operates within a culture, which in a sense sees hegemony as part of the process which produces a national culture (Bourdieu, 1991; Maclean et al, 2006) and the micro level of analysis by studying the interactions that produce, reproduce and protect corporate expressive hegemony. My study demonstrated that hegemony is both an outcome

of, and an input to, the processes that re-produce itself (Bourdieu, 1991). In a sense hegemony is involved in a perpetual cycle of self-renewal or cultural reproduction (Maclean, et al, 2006). Hegemonic themes are continuously involved in a dynamic interplay with one and other. This concept was explained by Opler (1945) as a cultural equilibrium created and sustained by opposing cultural themes.

Hegemony as a Three Dimensional Concept

Hegemony as a three dimensional concept may be understood as: (1) a form of social construction; (2) a theory of social change; and (3) as a dimension of power. This three dimensional quality of hegemony, contrasts with the current one-dimensional view of hegemony that is common within Organisation and Management Studies. Hegemony, in the final analysis, is primarily concerned with the social construction of reality. It is from its distinctive ability to be employed to construct, frame and privilege a version of social reality that enables hegemony to be defined as an expression of power. This kind of power may be used either to serve the narrow interests of a ruling elite or it may be used in the interests of a broader majority. Central to Gramsci's model was the assertion that only by all sub-groups achieving positive identification with the fundamental hegemonic themes that organise a society can authentic hegemony be realised. This line of theorising supports the research findings of Humphreys and Brown (2002), which asserts the importance of identification outcomes in the struggle between hegemonies. Hegemonic themes remain hegemonic, regardless of whether they are employed for profit or for social reform. Hegemony, post Gramsci, has been generally understood as an oppressive form of socio-ideologicalpower (Chomsky, 1992; Boje, 1995; Lukes, 2005). Whilst Gramsci wrote extensively about the hegemony of capitalism, he always intended that hegemony should be understood as a form of power that could be employed for large-scale societal emancipation projects (Bocock, 1986). In Gramscian terms, the fundamental utility of hegemony was as a theory of social change.

Within the context of organisational theory it was largely because hegemony was interpreted by corporate culturism as a means to secure identity cohesion with corporate goals (Kunda, 1992), employing the logic of the market (Willmott, 1993) that it has been interpreted mainly in terms of its function as a form of covert power or domination (Lyotard, 1984; Willmott, 1993; Boje, 1995; Schein, 1996). This narrow interpretation of hegemony in a practical sense is primarily concerned with attempting to manage the subjectivity of employees (Alvesson,

2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). Gramsci's theoretical concerns were driven by an enquiry into the way in which mass consent in response to the capitalist system was manufactured within democratic societies

In Gramsci's view consent for the capitalist system was secured through socio-ideological control methods mediated through the production of cultural values and/or ideology (Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986; Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Lukes, 2005). It was this line of theorising that has formed the foundation of the conceptual repertoire of corporate culturism; a point made by scholars such as: Willmott, (1993); Schein, (1996); and Chan and Clegg, (2002). Gramsci noted that it was through the control of the conceptual production in a culture, as well as material production, that capitalism secured the 'appearance' of consent (Willmott, 1993). By establishing capitalism as a form of natural order, Gramsci asserted that this constituted a form of oppressive hegemony based upon socio-ideological control. Individuals, he argued, were born into a capitalist order which pre dates their birth; and subsequently they were then indoctrinated or socialised into its value system, and as a result, were to a greater or lesser degree, unconscious with regard to the socially constructed nature of the capitalist hegemonic system and its uneven *distribution* of privilege under which they lived (Bourdieu, 1991).

However, Gramsci did not view hegemony only as a coercive means of social control. He argued that hegemony required the active consent of those within its sphere of influence to maintain hegemonic control (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Although he recognised that if the hegemony of capitalism, when supported by the ideological apparatus of civil society, the state and the economy failed, then the coercive apparatus of the state, in terms of the police or the army could be employed to support the capitalist state (Bocock, 1986). When Gramsci refers to the '*State*' he was referring to a capitalist funded government. However, Gramsci argues that if this coercive mechanism had to be introduced then the system of control is no longer hegemonic, it is explicitly coercive (Chomsky, 1992). Hegemony, according to Gramsci, results from constructive dialogue between '*organically*' and '*state*' produced intellectuals and the ethnic identity groupings that constitute society. Therefore, Gramsci situates legitimacy, identity and dialogue as central hegemonic processes. Within the organisational theory literature, it is arguably the work of Lukes (1975, 2005) that is most relevant to Gramsci and his theory of hegemony.

Lukes (1975; 2005) third dimension of power, I would argue, was fundamentally a description of hegemony as a source of subjugation or domination. He defines his third

dimension as constituting: *"the power to prevent people, to what ever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things"* (Lukes, 2005:11).

Symbolic Violence

The findings discussed the role of symbolic violence with regard to both the production and reproduction of hegemonic themes. Bourdieu (1991) describes symbolic violence as: *" a gentle violence that is almost imperceptible and invisible even to its victims"* (Cited in Lukes, 2005:98). The role of identity narrative with regard to the operation of symbolic violence may be revealed if one can interpret and describe the system of hegemonic themes that constitute hegemony. The ethnography has demonstrated the symbolic violence manifested in the *'theatre of hegemony'*, which was constituted by the relationship between the senior management corridor and the coffee gathering.

Hegemonic Insulators

Bourdieu's concept of *'symbolic capital'* has been employed throughout my thesis to make a contribution to understanding how the coffee gathering operates as an organising domain to produce, protect and to reproduce hegemony. Maclean *et al*, (2006) illustrate the use of elite universities as organising domains to culturally reproduce the hegemony of the ruling elite in both France and the UK at an international level. The concept of symbolic capital also helps to understand how the hegemony, once produced, is protected from performance disruption by performing the role of a hegemonic insulator. The idea of *'hegemonic insulators'* emerged as part of this emergent theorising process. The research demonstrated that hegemonic insulators such as: *'front'*; *'mystification'*; *'dramatic realisation'*; and *'legitimacy'*, interrelate with symbolic capital to form an overarching hegemonic insulator that may be best described as *'social distance'* (Goffman, 1959). Social distance, the research findings indicated, might be derived from the demonstration of symbolic capital that enables hegemonic ambassadors to perform hegemonic themes unchallenged both in first order and in second order domains. This process is supported through the maintenance of *'audience segregation'*, which results from the dramatic realisation of symbolic capital.

Hegemonic insulators may manifest as forms of symbolic capital, which facilitate both social distance and audience segregation, and enable the creation of what Bourdieu (1991) terms *'stratified fields of power'*. The struggle of opposing hegemonic narratives is over the contest

for unequally distributed symbolic capital required to legitimise reality assertions through identity authorship. This symbolic capital ultimately is of significance because it enables the participants to the coffee gathering to author the identities of others; it legitimises their role as speech agents on all matters deemed to be important within the organisation. It provides measured control over conceptual, knowledge and identity expression. This micro level understanding complements the theory of hegemony advanced by Gramsci at the macro societal level.

The coffee gathering was seen to be a domain *with a density of* cultural, social and economic capital in the organisation. It is arguably symbolic capital that provides a hegemonic theme its most valuable resource, i.e. legitimacy. The importance of legitimacy as a hegemonic process, has been advanced by scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Humphreys and Brown (2002); and Currie and Brown (2003). Hegemony is concerned, in the last analysis, with the struggle over identification outcomes (Humphreys and Brown, 2002) or, in Lukes terms, over *'classification schemes'*, which requires legitimacy to declare authored identity impositions. Bourdieu terms this phenomenon as *'the classification struggle'*. This is why I have, in my model, defined organisations as sites of hegemonic struggle. What is at stake in this process of hegemonic struggle is the realisation of power over the classificatory schemes and systems, which are the basis of the *'net'* hegemonic representations of competing hegemonic ambassadors. What is at stake is legitimacy to be a part author in the construction of reality.

It is the conflict over identity authorship that dictates the nature of the slopes and curvatures of the social gradients in and around organisations. My findings would support the view that much of this struggle and the resulting production of hegemony occur mainly unintentionally (Bourdieu, 1991; Alvesson, 2002). This is not necessarily a planned strategic hegemonic struggle. This is in the main a struggle that is the product of historical class relations that have evolved over time leaving a cultural legacy that continues to be culturally reproduced by future generations of opposing class groups. This is a theoretical position advanced by scholars such as: Gramsci (1971); Bourdieu (1991); and Maclean, *et al* (2006). Therefore, in the final analysis, it is more than possible that the hegemonic ambassadors are partially if not wholly oblivious to the act of hegemony that they perform, protect, represent, produce and reproduce. This is why hegemony is so effective because it is embedded in the symbolic fabric of the organisations culture.

The Migration of Hegemony

My findings considered the process of the migration of hegemony. Hegemonic ambassadors provide the primary vehicles for the migration of hegemony. The hegemony is transported as hegemonic themes that are embedded in the self-identity narrative of the hegemonic ambassador or alternatively within the cultural fabric of the organisation. This theory was implicit in the work of: Rosen (1985); Young (1989); Kondo (1990); and Kunda (1992). Hegemony, as was demonstrated, has to manoeuvre social gradients. These gradients may be conceptualised as being formed by contrasting centrifugal and centripetal forces (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown; 2003). As hegemony migrates it is organically both producing and re-producing itself. Importantly, at the macro level when one hegemonic discourse becomes dominant over a competing hegemonic discourse, it is both because of, and enabling of, the interplay of micro cultural interactive processes. This micro cultural interactive process within organising domains, when aided with the support of hegemonic themes performed by actors with high legitimacy may influence the outcome of hegemonic struggle. Therefore, hegemony is understood not as the narrative itself but rather as the combined effect of the narratives authored and performed by ambassadors, who have apparent legitimacy as speech agents to declare affirmations on reality at the micro, the meso and the macro level of analysis.

Hegemonic themes can exert an influence on the outcomes of identification process (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Currie and Brown, 2003; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) or the struggle over classification schemes (Bourdieu, 1991; Lukes, 2005). This results from the process of cultural valence (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004) and the linking of power relations at the micro, the meso and the macro level of organisations, is through '*host narratives*'. These host narratives have hegemonic themes embedded in their text, and occur through different kinds of talk, both written and oral and through the arrangement of non linguistic symbols such as organisational rituals, procedures and the physical lay out and style of organisational front, both backstage and front stage. Hegemonic themes are privileged and thus invested with significance, through their dramaturgical presentation. Techniques such as dramatic realisation, idealisation, mystification, manipulation of front, face work and interaction constraints, combine to influence the definition of a given situation and to impress the significance of certain hegemonic themes against alternatives (Opler, 1945; Goffman, 1959; Rosen, 1985; Young, 1989; Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992)

Against the Monolithic Narrative Argument

When one accepts the idea of hegemonic struggle and the polysemy that is characteristic of organisations (Ford, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) then the idea of an organisation being able to develop, let alone sustain, a monolithic narrative is both theoretically and empirically dubitable. This means that we have to re-conceptualise our current understanding of hegemony. It also implies that the theoretical basis upon which cultural strength (Schein, 1985, 1996; Willmott, 1993) is predicated, which is defined as the distinct absence of a fragmented or differentiated narrative (Chan and Clegg, 2002), and the organisational wide perception of a singular corporate narrative is disputed.

Narrative as the Primary Vehicle for Hegemonic Themes

Humphreys and Brown (2002) conceptualise narratives as tools for making sense of events and claim that they assist organisational actors to map their *'realities'*. They argue that narrative identities i.e. identities authored by the self and the other, are embedded in hegemonic narratives that may function as power effects. This phenomenon the authors call *'the hegemony of discursive practice'*. I would argue that the availability of narratives to actors, in the final analysis, is constituted by both the nature and form of linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1991).

Ford (1999) argues that socially constructed realities require a set of linguistic agreements, understandings, and vocabulary for their existence. This manifests as a socially crafted linguistic market. My model of the processes of hegemony explains how these linguistic agreements, conceptual understandings and vocabularies are produced and sustained at the level of micro analysis. These categories are initially formed in the organising domain and exported throughout the organisation by hegemonic ambassadors, who employ a myriad narrative and dramaturgical expressions to communicate, privilege, enforce and teach the hegemonic themes for which they are ambassadors. Ford (1999:480) asserts that: *"Reality is interpreted, constructed, enacted and maintained through discourse'* and poses the question. *'What if our knowledge of reality is itself a construction that is created in the process of making sense of things?"* This question strikes at the very heart of my thesis because it orientates a study of the production of hegemony towards a language-based investigation. Ford argues that organisational change is a result of a process of narrative that enables the

construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of existing realities to facilitate different performances.

Ford points out the importance of *'language games'* in the social construction process. He states that: *"different language games will give different constructions, understandings, and testing of reality"* (482). My finding demonstrated that a function of the organising domain is to enable hegemonic ambassadors to dominate the language game to produce *'forms of talk'* (Goffman, 1981) that produce hegemony. It is through this process that actors establish, maintain and amend hegemony. Ford argues that the attributions of meaning produced as a result of the language games, create empirical outcomes of both a *'personal and societal nature'*, i.e. people act on the basis of their interpretations (Blumer, 1969; Spradley, 1980; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). My findings indicated that this interpretative process is constrained within a network of hegemonic themes which impact on actors ability to select modes of organising. Ford makes the substantial point that *'representation drives interpretation'*. This is one of the guiding principles of Symbolic Interaction as posited by Blumer (1969). This phenomenon, Ford suggests, may be understood as a *'net presentation'* of reality, an idea that can be reworked to consider the role of hegemonic ambassadors as the primary actors who are engaged in the net presentation of hegemony. This net presentation of hegemonic themes, my thesis has argued, both inform and shape interaction. Therefore, hegemony as a form of power may both constrain and enable action and the production and/or reproduction of social structures (Bourdieu, 1991; Maclean *et al*, 2006).

Finally, Ford (1999:483) further argues: *"that socially constructed realities are rarely constructed solely by direct personal experience, but are inherited in the conversational backgrounds (e.g. cultures, traditions, and institutions) in which we are socialised"*. This theoretical claim supports my theory that the role of the organising domain, second order domains and hegemonic ambassadors is to provide a story telling framework that serves as a conversational background that supports hegemonic themes. This process provides organisational actors with instructions on how to interpret the organisational narrative and as a result actors operate as if the organisation were a *'hegemonic colossus'* that is an objectified reality as fixed within the net presentation of hegemony.

Oppressive Hegemony versus Emancipatory Hegemony

Oppressive hegemony may be considered as being concerned with the cultural cleansing of competing narratives. This is important as narratives provide the expressive apparatus for conceptual ideas, knowledge and identity constructions. Therefore, both oppressive and emancipatory hegemony can be considered as being involved in a struggle between opposing actors to: dominate the linguistic market; organisational conceptual library; knowledge claims; and identity assertions that constitute the expressive and symbolic context of the organisation. Both primary and second order organising domains provide the dramaturgical vehicle and performance stages for this cultural cleansing of narrative to take place. The legitimacy of the narrator of the hegemonic theme, relative to their audience is, I think, the most important surface level attribute or dynamic of successful hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). The research findings emphasised that legitimacy as an outcome of hegemonic struggle is, to a large extent, dependent on the nature of identity work that shape process identification outcomes such as: Identification; Dis-identification; Schizo-identification; and Neutral identification (Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The difference between oppressive and emancipatory hegemony is arbitrary and ultimately a cultural question that is linked to legitimacy. The argument of this thesis is not that there exists two quite separate forms of hegemony as an application of power e.g. 'good' or 'bad' hegemony, but rather to advance the concept that hegemony does not, as Gramsci originally understood the concept, have to be seen in oppressive terms it can also be used in the pursuit of emancipatory projects (Gramsci, 1971; Bocock, 1986; Alvesson, 2002).

Theoretical Summation

As earlier argued, hegemony, in the final analysis, may be considered as a social theory, or as a dimension of power and finally as a form of social construction. The social constructive processes that produce the hegemonic themes that constitute the structure of hegemony produce the power effect. However, as Gramsci (1971) argued, hegemony has both an enabling function as well as functioning as a form of socio-ideological control. Hegemony enables the production of cultural consensus in organisations and therefore could be employed as a social theory with emancipatory intent. Hegemony can be employed both as an analytical model, and as a facilitator for social change, that liberates organisations from the oppressive weight and suffocating consequences for human expression and personal

growth that is a consequence of the excessive subjugating impact of a managerially inspired oppresive discourse (Alvesson, 2002).

Much of the research into the processes that produce hegemony in the literature of organisational management studies either hints at or directly refers to the established idea that management are defined as the 'authors' of both hegemonic narrative and organisational identities (Smircich and Morgan, 1982; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). However, precisely where and how hegemonies are processually developed still remains ambiguous. In my research, I identify the site of hegemonic production as the organising domain, whilst at an empirical level the organising domain is constituted by places of interaction such as the coffee gathering. Potentially any regular social event whereby actors meet over time may function as an organising domain. Finally, my model links the interplay between the micro interactive cultural processes previously listed and the production and reproduction of hegemony into a host domain, (the organising domain) for subsequent export throughout secondary organising domains throughout the organisation (Schultz, 1991).

Much of the Organisation and Management Studies literature treats hegemony as a one-dimensional concept; as an expression of power on the part of the ruling elite to declare organisational meaning and to impose declared interpretations of reality on to the inter-subjectivities of the employee (Rosen, 1985; Czarniawska, 1986 and Boje, 1995). My model could be employed by future researchers to more fully understand the structure of hegemony through the analysis of its components as they enable a more targeted micro study of the operation of hegemony in organisations.

Further Research

Further research could look at the different learning processes that occur in multiple second order domains regarding hegemony presented by hegemonic ambassadors. This further research would involve a process whereby the principle organising domain is observed, and then researchers would follow the actors into other second order domains and study the translation process. In addition, further research could explore the efficacy of the proposed model as an explanatory theory in other empirical settings. The nature of social gradients could be examined to see if they differ in alternative social contexts. It would also be possible to elaborate the model by researching the different learning processes that occur in multiple second order domains regarding hegemony presented by hegemonic ambassadors.

A further area of research into hegemony that could be embarked upon is to investigate whether the processes of construction are different in 'thin' and 'thick' hegemony (Lukes, 2005). This research would examine the degree to which the appearance of a dominant hegemony is a result of a contrived performance of the actors allegedly subjugated by the hegemony. The apparent compliance of actors to the hegemonic discourse may disguise an awareness of, and discomfort with, the hegemony thus making it seem as if the hegemony was both legitimate and dominant. This line of research could examine the relative strength/weakness of the legitimacy of the operation of hegemony. Lukes (2005:126) cites Scott (1990:72) who stated that: "The thick version claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination. The thin theory of false consciousness, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation." The distinction between thick or thin is concerned with the degree of identity cohesion felt by actors with regards to the composition of the themes that constitute the hegemonic system that envelops them. These research phenomena may be examined as a research project related to Elsbach's (1999) model of identification outcomes and could build on the research of Humphreys and Brown (2002). The research methodology could be ethnographic and study the organising domains of both elite and sub-dominant groups to penetrate the official text and context of subordinates and elites in order to uncover 'covert' narratives of resistance to the hegemony.

Closing remarks

The presence of an organising domain within organisations is hinted at in the literature on hegemony, which understands the phenomena as being mediated through both narrative control (Humphreys and Brown, 2002, Currie and Brown, 2003) and identification processes (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). However, studies that focus upon a repeating event to research the ways in which actors socially construct expressive hegemony at the micro level of interaction are not commonly found in the literature contained within organisational and management studies. The research of Karreman and Alvesson (2001) investigating the way in which News Makers both produce and re-produce their own hegemony within a regular editorial meeting and of Rosen (1985), who investigated the dramaturgical hegemony produced by the annual breakfast meeting of a Marketing Agency, provide rare examples. Karreman and Alvesson (200:60) claim that: "Our understanding of specific processes of reality construction in, between, and around organisations is poor. As many authors have

pointed out, there is a lack of in-depth studies of specific acts, events and processes." I would suggest that these remarks are still relevant in the current moment. The methodological choice of selecting an organising domain for intense ethnographic study aims to contribute towards encouraging micro level research into social construction processes that produce social phenomena such as expressive hegemony.

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Appendix One

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THE DYNAMICS OF THE COFFEE GATHERING

1. What is the purpose of the morning coffee gathering in Fergus's office each day?

2. Could you describe to me who sits where during the coffee gathering?

3. What is the significance to you of the preferred seating arrangements?

4. Are there any examples of consistent behaviour that you could describe take place during the social gathering?

5. What types of conversations are conducted between the managers present each morning?

6. Is there any significance in the dress code adopted by the managers present each morning?

7. What value do you place on having rights of admission to this daily social gathering?

8. In your experience how would you describe each of the participant's behaviour in this particular social setting?

9. What do you use this social gathering for each day?

10. For what purpose are the newspapers used for each day during this social gathering?

11. If the newspapers were absent from this social gathering how do you think this fact would effect the social dynamics of the event?

12. In what ways do you think that the experience of the daily coffee sessions in the Executive Director's office influence or guide your behaviour as a manager?

IDENTITY FORMATION

13. Which managers do you think influence the collective perceptions of other managers with the senior and middle management team?

14. Could you describe to me an example of how this reputation building amongst managers is achieved?

15. In what ways do you influence reputation shaping, resource allocation or policy making throughout DACS?

16. In what way do you think operational or administrational initiatives are given priority importance within DACS?

17. Could you describe the way in which this message is socially communicated throughout the department?

18. What do you think your purpose in the organisation is?

19. In what ways is knowledge given status within DACS?

20. Do you think the design and layout of the main reception; Executive Director's corridor and the Executive Director's office was by default or by design?

21. In what way would you describe the senior management team's attitude towards service within the context of task, strategy and a concept?

22. Where do you think management decisions are taken?

23. In what ways do members of the senior management team sensor behaviour throughout DACS?

24. In what ways do members of the senior management team promote behaviour throughout DACS?

25. In terms of DACS culture what do you think is its biggest strength?

26. In terms of DACS culture what do you think are its biggest weaknesses?

27. In what ways do you think each member of the senior management team regards Organisational Development within the department?

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

28. How would you describe the department's general approach to conflict management?

29. Can you please give me an example?

30. How conflict is usually resolved in DACS?

31. Can you please give me an example?

32. What kinds of conflict do you experience in DACS?

Who sets the standards for management behaviour in DACS