

**University of Strathclyde
Business School**

Department of Management

**The Nature of Influence Exercised by Participants
in
Inter-Organisational Collaborations**

A Four Dimensional Framework

By

Virginia Marschall Grant

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father William Melville Payne who is no longer with us but whose love of knowledge and great courage remain a constant source of inspiration.

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."*

T.S. Eliot (Four Quartets)

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents an investigation into the nature of the influence exercised by participants in inter-organisational collaboration. The outcome of the research is a four dimensional framework which is intended as a conceptual device to aid practitioners in developing their understanding of this focal phenomenon. The framework identifies four important dimensions of influence:

- Influence Processes that Build Credibility, Relationships and Reciprocity in Collaborations
- Resources for Building Influence in Collaborations
- Bases of Influence - a tension appears to exist between influence attempts that are either characterised by rational behaviour or by emotive behaviour.
- Contextual Features of Collaboration - characteristics such as interdependence and asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power that typically act as drivers that give rise to influencing behaviours among participants.

The framework is distinctive in nature because of its potential to aid practitioners in a practical way to explore the nature of influence enacted by participants specifically within a collaborative context. It is also intended to provide a structured approach to navigating the complex field of relevant extant literature.

The main dimensions of the framework could be presented as *handles for reflective practice* (Huxham and Vangen, 2005) and used to stimulate dialogue as to: how influence processes could be enacted; the types of resources that may enable the enactment of influence; the underlying tension between rational and emotive behaviour and the contextual features that may stimulate influencing behaviour. In

this sense the framework could be used both as a diagnostic tool and a developmental tool.

In this context the theoretical insights offered in the form of the conceptual framework central to this research may be considered as an extension of *the theory of collaborative advantage* (Huxham and Vangen, 2005).

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**CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH –
WHY IS COLLABORATION IMPORTANT?**

INTRODUCTION

Background

While the importance and value of collaboration between business organisations has long been recognised, it is now seen as a central part of the strategy of many organisations (Huxham and Vangen 2005). Globalisation – the integration of economic activity across borders, through markets – has accelerated and intensified this shift in perspective (Stiglitz, 2002; Nye 2004, Wolfe, 2005). Leaders are increasingly concerned with issues of a global nature; the title of the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos is the “power of collaborative innovation”. Ironically, the technological innovations facilitating the process of globalisation have both given rise to social advances and spawned new and complex economic and social issues. These issues have produced the need for widespread organisational change. Indeed as Hamel (2007 p45) suggests, while the century is still in its infancy it has already engendered *a sizeable brood of daunting management challenges* which are substantially different in nature to the ones previous generations of managers faced. Other writers concur (Ahmed, 2007; Nye, 2004; Stiglitz, 2002) highlighting the unintended physical and moral consequences of globalisation such as increasing asymmetry in living conditions, climate change, and racial tensions on a scale without precedent.

In this complex climate the leadership of organisations usually involves driving greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and introducing new forms of organising to tackle issues which demand the attention and action of multiple agencies (Pettigrew, 2000; Fenton and Pettigrew, 2003; Osborne, 1997,

2004). Although this wave of change has engendered an eclectic range of theoretical perspectives, Fenton and Pettigrew (2000 pp4) identify at least one point of convergence:

“the form, process and role of organisations on the brink of the twenty first century have fundamentally changed and continue to do so”

Fenton and Pettigrew (2000 pp4)

In the domain of both public and non-government agencies Osborne (1997 p317) suggests that the macro-level shift away from the old model of corporate provision and toward an approach based on *managerialism and pluralism* has had major implications for both strategic and operational management. This shift is largely a response to the increasing range of problems that demand new ways of managing, leading and organising. At the core these have been labelled as *wicked issues* (Rittel and Weber, 1973) and include deeply rooted societal issues such as poverty, deprivation, crime, social exclusion, social justice, and health inequalities. It is argued that these issues do not respect socially constructed order, they defy the parameters of organisation boundaries and disciplines and typically no single agency is fully equipped to tackle them in isolation (Huxham and Vangen, 1996; Huxham, 1996). In this thesis it is suggested that these issues not only drive the rising demand for new ways of working and new ways of organising but also new ways of leading, managing and more specifically new ways of influencing.

Hamel (2007, p51) argues that in the private sector companies increasingly find themselves *enmeshed in value webs and ecosystems*, these are relational and

transactional networks over which they have limited control. Structural and regulatory changes mean that firms have less control over their own destinies. The growth of collaborative projects, industry consortia and other multi partner structures is demanding a new approach and different kinds of organisational and managerial capabilities.

In a collaborative context those charged with leading change often encounter a distinctive set of challenges. They are likely to face the task of engaging and mobilising the capabilities of a wide range of stakeholders, over whom they have little or no formal authority (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Increasingly employers seek to recruit and develop within their organisations people equipped with the competencies, skills, attitudes and approaches which wield influence, shape collaborative relationships and deliver the desired outcomes of cross boundary working (Williams, 2002; Trist, 1983; Powell, 1998; Waddock and Post, 1995). These individuals are referred to in the literature on inter-organisation collaboration as *boundary spanners or reticulists* – people who have *learned the art of walking through walls* (Trist, 1983 p280) and *provide the glue that sustains the relationships between parties* (Powell, 1998 p237).

As a management consultant and formerly as a leader of a joint venture involving partners from both the public and private sectors, I have observed the behaviours of the *boundary spanner* in action and have witnessed, at first hand, the intricate problems, dilemmas, challenges and rewards encountered by practitioners in the process of leading and engaging in inter-agency collaborations. In writing this thesis

I have drawn on all of these experiences and in doing so my aim is to offer insights back to the field to which I owe a great deal of my own development.

Context

The outcome of the research reported in this thesis is the four dimensional framework shown in figure 1.1. While the framework is intended to have general application the majority of the empirical research was conducted in organisations belonging to the Scottish College sector. The research took place over a four year period and the empirical work centred on three case situations. The main case situations all related to the Scottish College sector; two of these were treated as principle cases and one was treated as a supplementary case. The context and features of these case situations are summarised in chapter 2 of the thesis.

In order to increase the extent to which the theoretical framework that emerged from the research would have a more generalisable application, attempts were made throughout the research to collect data, in methodologically consistent ways, in other public sector environments; specifically both in the health and economic development sectors. Additionally, a small number of interviews were conducted in private sector settings. Some of the supplementary interviews were conducted in organisations located in other geographic areas of the UK and two interviews were held in a private sector multi-national company.

The Original Contribution of the Thesis

The conceptual framework, shown in figure 1.1 below, summarises the principal contribution of the thesis and provides a guide to the direction in which the thesis progresses in subsequent chapters. The main dimensions of the framework are presented briefly in this section.

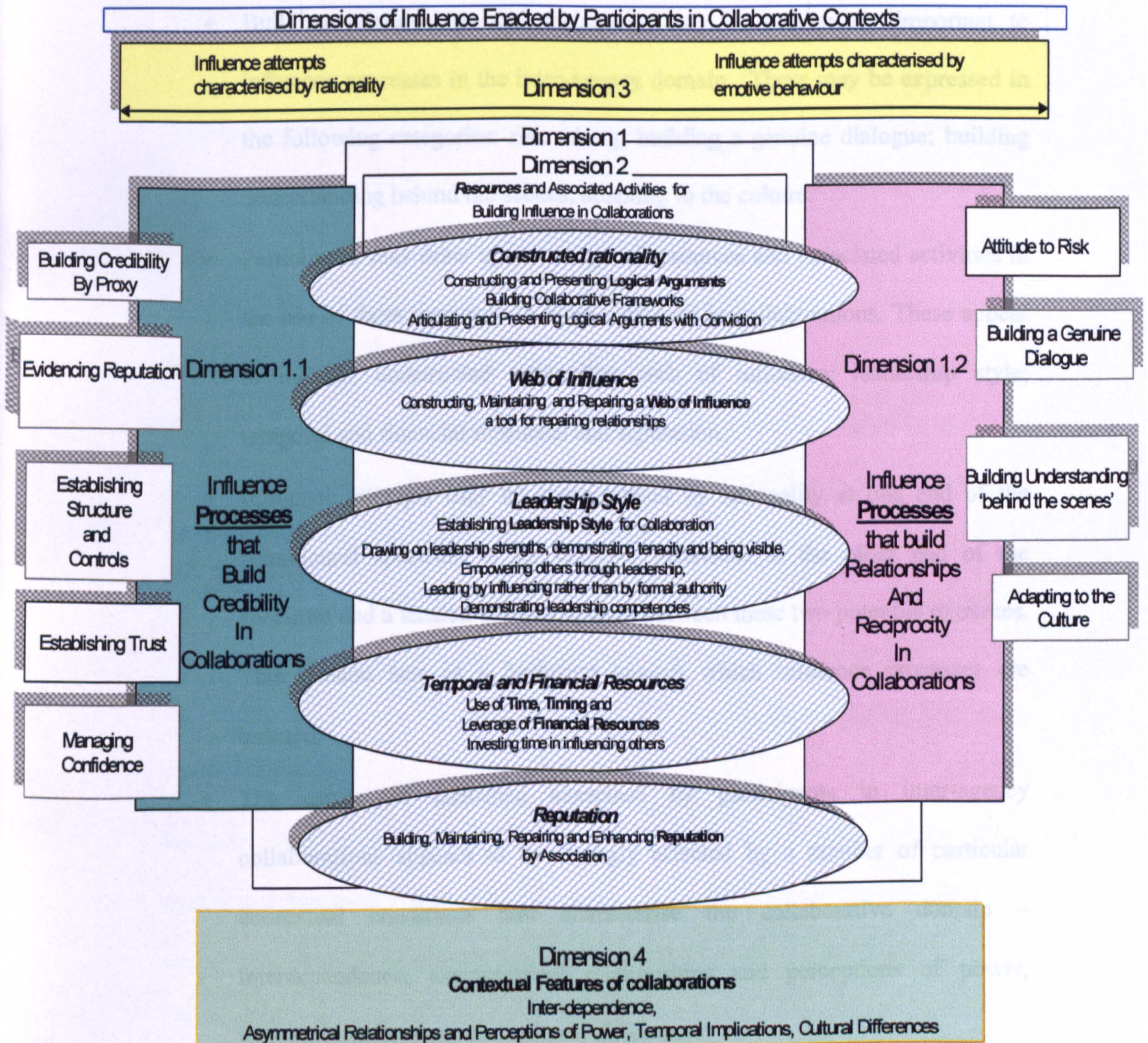


Figure 1.1: Elaborated conceptual framework reflecting the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations

A summary of the key concepts central to the framework is set out below:

- Building credibility may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. These may be expressed through the following categories: building credibility by proxy; evidencing reputation; establishing structure and controls; establishing trust and managing confidence.
- Building relationships and reciprocity may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. These may be expressed in the following categories: risk taking; building a genuine dialogue; building understanding behind the scenes; adapting to the culture.
- Participants may draw upon a range of resources and associated activities in the use of these resources to build influence in collaborations. These appear to include: constructed rationality; web of influence; leadership style; temporal and financial resources and reputation.
- Influence attempts may be characterised by rationality at one end of the behavioural spectrum or by emotive behaviour at the other end of the spectrum and a tension appears to exist between these two potential extremes. This tension acts as a backdrop against which influence processes are enacted.
- The nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations appears to be strongly affected by a number of particular contextual conditions that characterise the collaborative domain – interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences.

- The central concepts within the framework appear to be highly interconnected and interdependent.

The aim of this research is to make both a contribution to knowledge and to the practice of collaboration management. These areas of contribution can be summarised in the following ways:

Firstly, the theoretical framework set out in figure 1.1, seeks to make a contribution to knowledge by providing a rich theoretical framework bringing together a range of important concepts associated with the exercise of influence within collaborative contexts. In combining and presenting the concepts that arose consistently throughout the research, the research addresses what appears to be a significant limitation in the field. Yukl and Falbe (1990, 2002 p164) highlight the paucity of research on influence in general and in particular, in relation to combinations of approaches in different settings:

“The relationship between specific forms of power, specific influence behaviours and influence outcomes is not understood very well yet.”

Yukl and Falbe (1990, 2002 p164)

Secondly, this research treats influence as a multi-faceted phenomenon which demands a processual approach. I suggest that in this way the research makes a contribution towards addressing a second shortcoming of research in the field: (Yukl 2002 p169):

“Most researchers treat each influence attempt as an isolated episode, rather than as part of a sequence of reciprocal influence processes that occur in an evolving relationship between two parties. As a result we still have only a very limited understanding of influence processes in organisations and the implications for effective leadership.”

Yukl (2002 p169)

Thirdly, as Yukl and Falbe (1990) point out, most research into different forms of influence has been conducted primarily through the use of quantitative methods, therefore this research seeks to make a contribution by using qualitative methods to address some residual issues.

Finally, the research seeks to make a contribution to the practice of collaboration management by providing a conceptual framework for exploring and understanding the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-organisational collaborations. The framework is intended to offer practitioners a device for exploring and reflecting upon insights into the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-organisational collaborations.

Constraints

In the early stages of the research access to reliable informants was negotiated as part of my role as a management consultant, having been engaged in all of the above organisations to undertake consulting assignments. In these I was either contracted to them directly, as clients, or as organisations consulted as part of a wider client engagement. Therefore, an early constraint related to my initial role and the impact

of this upon respondents' perceptions of me, stemming from their experience of my intervention, initially as a consultant and later as a researcher. When the case situations were formally secured it was important to re-establish my identity as purely a researcher. I achieved this both through careful explanation of the shift in role and by ensuring that some time elapsed between the initial research interventions as a consultant and the later interventions undertaken as a researcher.

The other main constraint was the ability to gain access to a sufficient range of reliable informants, particularly in the later stages of the research when I was reliant on the respondents making time for research interviews over and above their normal duties. This constraint was overcome as far as possible by requesting for interviews with a range of participants, in each case setting, over a period of time and remaining extremely flexible about respecting the organisations' time constraints. Wherever possible I arranged interviews to coincide with particular events, for example I held interviews with key informants at critical stages prior to and following the merger of two colleges. This ensured that the impressions of the events were fresh in their minds. I was then able to refer to these events with subsequent participants and gain a sense of whether their perceptions were similar.

Impact upon the conduct of the research

It would have been possible to have overcome many of the constraints by conducting the research using positivist methods, based on survey methods. However the acknowledged paucity of research in this area based upon methodology which is consistent with the social constructionist paradigm suggests that the use of an

appropriate blend of qualitative methods, such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, research diaries and case studies would result in richer data. While the chosen methodology introduced constraints, in terms of access to respondents - and consequently had implications for issues of validity, reliability and generalisability - it produced rich discursive data. This, together with the analysis of existing theory, is the basis upon which the conceptual framework has been constructed. In chapters 2 and 8 the issues of validity, reliability and generalisability are discussed in terms of the approaches used to mitigate this area of constraint.

An introduction to the main theoretical influences underpinning the research

While it is important, by way of introduction, to provide a broad overview of the main theoretical influences that underpin the research and to situate the research in the context of existing theory it is also important to note that they will be discussed at various stages throughout the thesis.

For both the practitioner and for the researcher, the field of literature on inter-agency collaboration offers a rich source of theories which facilitate knowledge and understanding of the field. The theoretical strands have been well documented and include among others network theory (Trist, 1983; Denis, 2000; Thorelli, 1986). As Trist (1983 p270) argues:

“Inter-organisational domains are functional social systems that occupy a position in the social space between the society as a whole and the single organisation.” Trist (1983 p270)

This theory provides a frame within which to explore and examine the context, special nature and dynamics of the collaborative arena. However, it is important to note that the phenomena of interest in network theory are focused mainly at the level of the nexus of institutions involved, rather than at the level of the individual participants where this research is centred.

Similarly other theories have been explored for their potential to provide a theoretical frame to this research and while these are not entirely compatible with the nature of the research, aspects of the theories have contributed valuable insights as to the phenomenon of interest and have influenced the research. These are: resource dependence theory (Emerson, 1962; Emerson and Cook, 1978; Cook and Whitmeyer, 1992; Oliver, 1990; Brass, 1992; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977; Hickson et al, 1971; Medcof, 2001; Mizuruchi and Yoo, 2002), and expectancy theory (Oliver, 1990; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Farmer and Maslyn, 1999).

These theories strongly emphasise the interdependence of participants, a distinctive issue in the management of collaboration (Thorelli, 1986) and imply that the drive to enact influence is often linked to the expectation of benefits flowing from varying acts of influence and the relative distribution of perceived power in relation to the control of scarce resources. They are also instructive in terms of the potential motives behind enactments of influence. However, resource dependence theory (Emerson, 1962; Emerson and Cook, 1978; Cook and Whitmeyer, 1992; Brass, 1992), which assumes that A has power over B because he has control over resources

that B cannot obtain from elsewhere, is aligned to rational economic theories and is not wholly consistent with the phenomenological base of the social constructionist paradigm (Berger and Luckman, 1967) within which this research is rooted. Similarly, expectancy theory is a cognitive, rational theory and assumes rationality in behaviour and actions, an assumption that appears to be inconsistent with the subjective nature of the concept of influence.

The resource dependency and expectancy frameworks can be contrasted with two distinctive investigative approaches: the political influence (Ferris and Judge, 1991) and configurational approaches (Meyer et al, 1993; Farmer, 1999). These theories inhabit the centre ground between the rational, harmonious model of organisations and the arena of conflict projected by the Marxist model (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980) conforming to what Bacharach and Lawler (1980 p1) described as “a concept of organizations as politically negotiated orders.” Both the political influence theory and configurational approaches stress the importance of adopting a processual perspective in relation to the phenomena of interest. While this perspective forms an underlying principle in this thesis and is discussed and elaborated in later chapters, it also serves to reinforce a point that, according to Cook and Whitmeyer (1992), is frequently under emphasised in discussions on the relative merits of different theoretical approaches: no single perspective can explain all social and cultural phenomena.

Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1962; Emerson and Cook, 1978; Cook and Whitmeyer, 1992) which is based on the premise that individuals develop

expectations about reciprocity and equity in social exchanges which shape their behaviour also provides an important theoretical base. However as a theoretical frame it is somewhat limited, as Yukl (2002 p155) points out:

“social exchange theory emphasises expert power and authority, and other forms of power and influence do not receive much attention. For example the theory does not explain how reciprocal influence processes affect a leader’s reward and referent power.” Yukl (2002 p155)

The theory of collaborative advantage – a practice oriented theory

The challenges of navigating the landscape of theories in the field of inter-organisational collaboration is highlighted by the evident lack of consensus in the field as to how to define collaboration, for example, Hardy et al (2005 p58) define it as “a co-operative, inter-organizational relationship in which participants rely on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control to gain co-operation from each other”. Huxham and Vangen (2005) define inter-agency collaboration as any situation in which people are working across organisational boundaries towards some joint positive end. These authors state that the ultimate goal for all partnership initiatives is the achievement of *collaborative advantage*. This is the creation of value that results from the partners coming together. It is a form of advantage that could not have been achieved through the work of any single agency working in isolation. They also argue that, all too often the inverse state - *collaborative inertia* - is in reality the end result, and that positive outcomes are generated *despite the partnership rather than because of it* (Huxham and Vangen, 2000 p294). While they identify a number of negative influences, which tend to contribute to collaborative

inertia, they also suggest that success is often linked to, but not guaranteed by: the identification of priority issues, focus on a specific project, having a small number of partners, partners not being required to give much away and the involvement of a champion. The idea of nurturing is also given strong emphasis. This is because all of the activities related to working in partnership involve a great deal of sensitivity and attention to detail. The authors argue that collaborative work requires a sophisticated approach which cannot be entirely guided by a prescriptive or rule book approach. They have consequently developed a themes based approach for helping practitioners to understand the salient issues to consider and to be aware of, in the practice of managing collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005).

From the outset of this research it was important to ensure that the theoretical basis for the research was connected to a theory that reflected a genuine understanding of the world of the practitioner in inter-organisational collaborations. For this reason, Huxham and Vangen's theory of collaborative advantage (2005) has provided a strong source of inspiration for this research. The theory is built around a number of recurrent themes that emerged in the course of their extensive research programme as being strongly associated with either the rewards or the pain experienced by participants. The themes include areas of genuine concern for practitioners such as: identity, trust, leadership, power, common aims and membership structures. It is what Huxham and Vangen (2005) termed "a practice oriented theory". Their conceptualisations are presented as *handles for reflective practice* which are intended to have relevance for all those involved in collaborations. Without offering prescriptions on specific courses of action the work provides:

“a basis for consideration of how to manage (in order to) collaborate.”

Huxham and Vangen (2005 p135)

The theme of sensitivity to the needs of others and awareness of one's own source of power is central to collaboration practice that is capable of producing positive outcomes (Huxham and Vangen, 2001). Ultimately Huxham and Vangen (2005) argue that the purpose of exploring collaborative practice is to find ways to understand and influence effective approaches to collaboration. Concern for practice and practitioners is a distinctive and integral characteristic of the Theory of Collaborative Advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). It is also of central importance to this research.

Focusing as it does on both the phenomena of collaboration participants and the phenomena of the collaboration as a whole, this research is situated closest to the Theory of Collaborative Advantage. In broader terms it has links to other theories of collaboration, such as network theory that focus on developing deeper knowledge of the social space between society and the single organisation (Trist, 1983).

The rationale for the focus of this research – the influence of participants

A single but potentially salient conceptual thread that appeared to run implicitly through the themes that Huxham and Vangen (2005) have elaborated in their theory - and as yet has not been explored as the specific focus of research - is the issue of *participant influence*. This, as a potential phenomenon of interest in its own right,

appeared at the outset of the research to be relatively under-explored and as yet little understood (Yukl, 2002).

In the inter-organisational domain it appears often to be the case that particular individuals are singled out for their ability to *make things happen* or to shape a way forward, while taking others with them. This flair for collaboration practice has been acknowledged by many writers in the field (Williams, 2002; Trist, 1983; Powell, 1998; Waddock and Post, 1995). The strong curiosity that this phenomenon evoked in me together with an acute sense of the growing importance of collaboration, gave rise to the research that took place between September 2003 and August 2007, on the basis of the early reasoning that I now attempt to explain.

The nature of influence in the context of inter-organisational relations appears to be of increasing significance in view of three significant organisational trends. First is the diminishing acceptability of the indiscriminate use of formal, hierarchical authority in organisations (Keys and Case, 1990; Cohen and Bradford, 1991; Williams, 2002) and the growing sense among managers that expectations have shifted towards a more inclusive, consultative style of leadership and management (Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994). It is argued by Keys and Case (1990) that acceptance of formal authority alone as a legitimate basis upon which to gain co-operation in organisations is diminishing due to; the rapidity of change, the diversity of people, goals and values and an increasing sense of interdependence between members. It must be replaced by influence, a process of engagement, negotiation and persuasion. Mowday (1978) suggests that the ability to influence decisions is not entirely

dependent on formal position in the organisation and power and influence have been highlighted as critical variables for further research. Consequently research on the process of exercising influence is of interest since skilful political behaviour may represent one way in which those with less power can influence decisions.

Secondly, it can be argued that the need to work in partnership to achieve organisation goals is ineluctable given the complexity of the environment within which organisations now operate and the issues that they tackle (Webb, 1991; Thorelli, 1986; Rittel and Weber, 1973; Trist, 1983). Many writers in the field appear to signal that this interdependence increasingly demands a more subtle form of political effort, one which is characterised by engagement, persuasion, management of meaning, negotiation, management of conflict, attempts to reach consensus and the alignment of multiple partners behind shared goals (Webb, 1991; Lotia, 2004; Medcof, 2001; Williams, 2002; Pfeffer, 1994). Thus it seems that the notion of influence is of growing importance to practitioners.

The third trend arises from the imperative, experienced by an increasing number of organisations, to build capacity in order to respond to the growing need for partnerships. This has resulted in efforts to build the capability for leadership and collaboration by developing the competencies of those agents whose responsibilities lie across organisation boundaries (Williams, 2002; Buckley et al, 2002; Hamel et al, 1989). Hamel et al (1989 p108) suggests that collaboration requires a particular set of skills:

“the effective management of relationships to build collaborative advantage requires managers to be sensitive to political, cultural, organizational and human issues”. Hamel et al (1989 p108)

In a similar vein Williams (2002 p106) points out that new capacities are needed in the inter-organisational domain and rather than being professional or knowledge based these will:

“rely more on relational and inter-personal attributes designed to build social capital. They will build on cultures of trust, improve levels of cognitive ability to understand complexity and be able to operate within non-hierarchical environments with dispersed configurations of power relationships.” Williams (2002 p106)

In the context of globalisation Fu and Yukl (2000) assert that the ability to exercise influence in cross cultural networks is now regarded as an essential competency of the global manager.

BACKGROUND TO THE CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

The predominant methodological trend in the body of literature on influence has been based on positivist approaches, specifically through the use of surveys. This approach is particularly evident in the work of writers such as: Kipnis et al (1980); Mowday (1978); and Schilit and Locke (1982). Yukl and Falbe (1990) highlight both the scarcity of research on influence behaviour in managers and the need to conduct research using different qualitative approaches such as diaries and participant observation. The heterogeneity of perspectives on the notion of influence, evident in

the extant literature, reinforces the appropriateness of adopting a methodology that is consistent with the particularly subjective nature of the phenomenon of interest. As elaborated in chapter 2, the initial scan of literature in the field indicated a paucity of literature with a focal interest on the influencing behaviour of players in a collaborative setting. There was no evidence of research in this area undertaken using qualitative methods. Therefore the prospect of conducting the research using qualitative methods signalled an opportunity to make a contribution to the field both through the focus of the enquiry and through the methodology employed.

As many writers on research theory suggest (Easterby Smith et al, 2002; Silverman, 2004; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) the effectiveness and robustness of any research methodology is predicated by its suitability for the purpose for which it is intended. In sympathy with the subjectivity that surrounds the notion of influence, the methodology underpinning this work conforms to the social constructionist paradigm (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Tedeschi, 1972), which is based on the belief that individuals construct social reality. The approach to examining the phenomena of interest from the outset was therefore subjective, being built out of perception rather than based on concrete evidence. This approach had implications for the methodology employed - the focus of discussion in chapters 2 and 3.

METHODOLOGY

As will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of this research, a combination of two main methods has been used to ensure consistency and compatibility with the important

ontological and epistemological issues that are integral to the focal area of interest. These are action research and semi-structured interviews. In line with the social constructionist paradigm (Berger and Luckman, 1967), the approach to examining the phenomenon of interest from the initial stages of the research was subjective, being built out of perception rather than based on concrete evidence.

In the initial stages of the research the action research paradigm (Eden and Huxham, 2006) was used while in the later stages of the research the main method was an approach to semi-structured interviewing which reflected many of characteristics of the post-modern approach (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003).

The perspective of individual subjectivity is of particular importance to this research given the predominant focus placed upon conversations as a medium for constructing social reality and for revealing perceptions of social reality (Alvesson, 2000). This perspective was a characteristic consistent to all stages of the research methodology.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The sequence of research activities undertaken throughout the four year period of this research programme and discussed and elaborated in chapters 2, 3 and 5 of this thesis is briefly summarised in the section that follows, which outlines the main components of the research process.

The four main stages of research are illustrated by figure 1.2 below and are elaborated in the section that follows. This figure will be elaborated and discussed in

detail in chapter 2 of the research, which provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology used throughout the research. At this introductory stage the figure is used to provide an overview of the various stages of the research process.

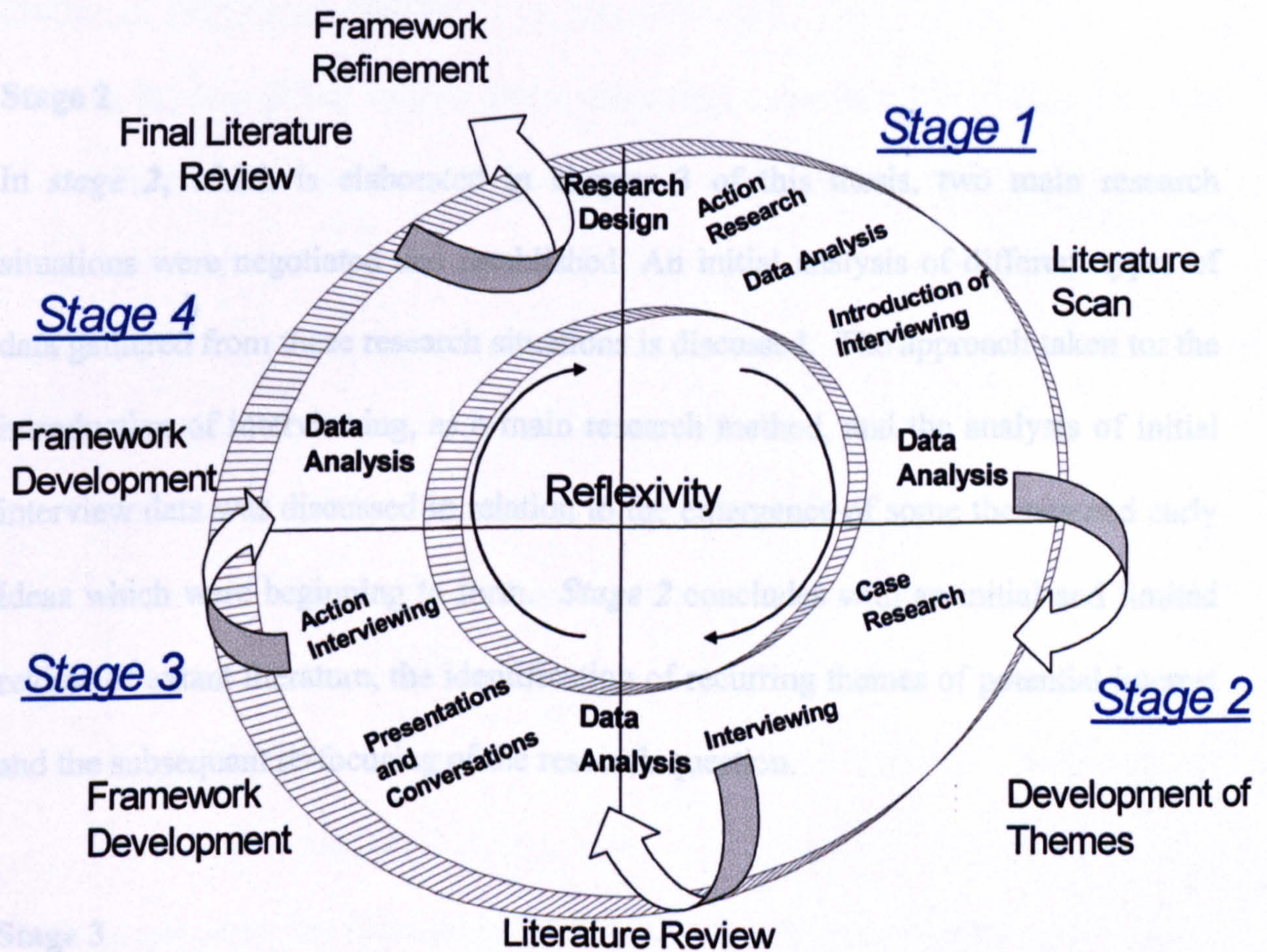


Figure 1.2: Overview of the research process

Stage 1

Stage 1 of the research is elaborated in chapter 2 of this thesis. Action research was used as an exploratory methodology to identify potential themes worthy of research. Some initial data was collected and analysed using action research methods which led to the development of some initial issues of interest. Interviewing was introduced as a second main research method. In chapter 2 the case situations are outlined. Some initial examples of data collected in the interviews are provided and the

approach to analysis is discussed. A summary of emerging themes is set out. A limited analysis of extant literature followed in order to gain an understanding of existing theory and to develop the research question.

Stage 2

In *stage 2*, which is elaborated in chapter 3 of this thesis, two main research situations were negotiated and established. An initial analysis of different types of data gathered from these research situations is discussed. The approach taken to: the introduction of interviewing, as a main research method, and the analysis of initial interview data was discussed in relation to the emergence of some themes and early ideas which were beginning to form. *Stage 2* concludes with an initial and limited review of extant literature, the identification of recurring themes of potential interest and the subsequent re-focusing of the research question.

Stage 3

At the beginning of *stage 3* of the research an extensive literature review was undertaken which gave rise to the construction of an emerging conceptual framework (chapter 4). The framework was then developed iteratively through a process of adjustment and further development and a final series of interviews based on *action interviewing* (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) was undertaken (chapter 5).

Stage 4

In *stage 4* the data from the *action interviews* was used to elaborate the conceptual framework (chapter 6). A final review of the literature was undertaken to situate the

framework in relation to existing theory (chapter 7). Finally the implications of the research were summarised and future research directions were identified (chapter 8).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bell and Brymen (2006) suggest that management researchers face ethical questions of a different nature to those most frequently confronted by other social science researchers and argue that contextual factors should be acknowledged more explicitly. These authors have established categories of ethical principles, some of which are particularly important to this research (Bell and Brymen 2006 p71):

- ❖ *Informed consent* – the need to ensure that the researcher has secured the consent of all research participants and that all participants are informed of the nature of the research
- ❖ *Confidentiality* – the requirement to ensure confidentiality of all the types of research data used
- ❖ *Anonymity* – the protection of the anonymity of the participants
- ❖ *Honesty and transparency* - the need for openness and honesty in communicating information about the research to all interested parties, including the need for trust
- ❖ *Reciprocity* – the idea that the research should be of mutual benefit to researcher and participants
- ❖ *Misrepresentation* – the importance of ensuring that misleading, misunderstanding or misrepresentation of research findings is avoided

In a similar vein Easterby-Smith et al (2002) identify two main ethical considerations which frequently concern organisational researchers. The first relates to the researcher making research intentions clear to those within the research setting and ensuring that those involved have an adequate understanding of the nature of the research. The second relates to the control and use of data obtained by the researcher. In most cases it is assumed that it is the researcher who has this control and ownership and that therefore she or he must exercise due ethical responsibility by not publicising or circulating any information that is likely to compromise individual participants and ensuring confidentiality.

Taking these important principles into account, within the context of this research, a number of measures have been taken to address these issues. Firstly full consent was gained from senior figures, normally the chief executive or senior director in the organisations that are the subjects of the case situation research. All informants were fully informed of the purpose and nature of the research and gave permission for the interview material to be used for research purposes. While none of the participants explicitly requested that they remain anonymous, in order to safeguard the interests of the participants and to avoid compromise, all participants are referred to by codes i.e. A,B,C. No information is disclosed that would be in danger of compromising individuals or organisations that have contributed to this research.

CONCLUSIONS

The central aim of the research is to enhance understanding of the nature of influence exercised by those participating in inter-organisational collaborations. The ultimate

aim of this research is to make a contribution to knowledge by developing a rich conceptual framework on the nature of influence in inter-organisational settings. Having set out the ontological and epistemological base upon which this thesis is constructed, the nature of its structure and some important ethical considerations, the discussion now turns to methodology and the first stage of the research.

**CHAPTER 2 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY STAGE 1 –
EARLY EMPIRICAL ENGAGEMENT USING ACTION
RESEARCH, THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERVIEWS
AS A RESEARCH METHOD AND THE EVOLVING
NATURE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the ontological and epistemological issues that gave rise to the development of the research question. The central aim of the chapter is to provide an account of the research methodology that was used in the initial stage of the research. It also provides *an overview of the research situations* and the methodology used throughout the research. Examples of data collected in the early stages of the research are shown and the approach to the analysis of data is elucidated. A short summary of the outcomes of the first step in the analysis of data is set out, in terms of recurrent themes. This is intentionally brief as the main discussion of key themes is reserved for later chapters. Additionally, the implications of a preliminary phase of engagement with the extant literature are discussed in relation to the iterative approach taken to the development of the research question.

The next section of this chapter gives a brief account of the iterative way in which the research question was developed and the implications of the emerging line of enquiry for research design and methodology. Following this an overview of the research process is set out. The remainder of the chapter discusses the methods that were used in stage 1 of the research and demonstrates examples of the data gathered and analysed. The methodology used in later stages of the research is detailed in chapters 3, 5 and 6.

THE EMERGENT NATURE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The focus of interest in the early stages of the research arose from an observation, made throughout a number of consultancy engagements, involving inter-agency

collaboration. This was that certain individuals appear to be particularly instrumental in moving collaboration forward. Their approach was characterised by conditioning and shaping the opinions and perspectives held by other participants, helping other participants to reach consensus and mobilising collective effort behind the declared goals of the collaboration, towards what Huxham and Vangen (2005) term *collaborative advantage*. An exploration of these types of capabilities lay at the heart of an initial line of enquiry for the research.

As is consistent with the way a number of writers advocate approaching qualitative management research, the focus of the research question evolved gradually (Robson, 1993; Silverman, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The sometimes untidy process of evolving the research question is considered by Eden and Huxham (2006) to be a characteristic consistent with Research Oriented Action Research (ROAR):

“Whereas much management research demands the advanced identification of a precise research question, RO-AR demands a fuzzy research question that is changed and elaborated through the research cycle – sometimes called the ‘hermeneutic cycle’.” Eden and Huxham (2006 p397)

Robson (1993) also suggests that the process of focusing the research question is often non-linear and typically involves: iterative steps, working with uncertainty and employing intuition. Although this approach is less clean and tidy it is likely to yield a valuable research proposition.

In exploring possible themes to adopt for the research, Robson's (1993 p26) factors for successful research provided a useful frame of reference. These include: activity in the field, convergence of interests, intuition that the work is *timely or right*, concern for theoretical understanding and that the research has potential to have "*real world value*".

Initial Research Question – an evolving research proposition

The concept of managerial competence has become central to understanding the characteristics or attributes that distinguish individuals who perform particularly well in certain roles and contexts. This was the initial stimulus of the exploratory phase of the research and gave rise to the initial research question. The term competency defines a combination of the skills, knowledge and behaviours applicable to producing a positive outcome in a specific context (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002 p6; Boyatzis, 1982; Sandberg, 2000). The concept of competency is described by Boyatzis (1982 p21) as:

“ an underlying characteristic of a person in that it may be a motive, skill, aspect of one's self image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses” Boyatzis (1982 p21)

The definition immediately draws attention to the subjective nature of this area of research. As a number of writers suggest, for example: Alvesson (2003) and Sandberg (2000), interpretation of behaviour varies depending on the actors. The aim of the research was therefore to understand peoples' interpretations and perceptions of an act, intervention or behaviour to establish what behaviour, in a collaborative

setting, produces outcomes consistent with the objectives that have been set (Sandberg, 2000). It is argued by a number of writers in the field that evaluative dimensions of behaviour such as competence, performance and capability are socially constructed rather than objective realities (Ferris and Judge, 1991; Sandberg, 2000; Alvesson, 2003). On the basis of this perspective it could be argued that the use of qualitative methods, consistent with the social constructionist tradition, would be appropriate for the proposed research.

Also consistent with the social constructionist paradigm, the focus of interest for the research was at the level of the individual rather than at the level of the institution. In the early stages of the research programme this focal interest was expressed in the following research question:

“What are the competencies or the skills, attitudes and behaviours of participants that are required to create and sustain effective inter-organisation collaboration in public and private sector settings?”

While in the initial stage of the research the concept of influence was regarded as a competency of interest among many others, influence was later singled out and explored as a competency of particular interest. As the research progressed it became clear that the focus on competencies was limiting the scope of the research. The next attempt to focus the research was inspired by the approach Huxham and Beech (2003) took to exploring *points of power* in collaborative contexts, which led to an interest in exploring the notion of *points of influence*, as discussed in chapter 3. As a result of a limited analysis of extant literature it became apparent that there was

a need to consider other recurrent issues such as: influence tactics, strategies and processes, while retaining a particular interest in the attitudes, behaviours and skills of participants. In the later stages of the research an emergent conceptual framework was developed on the basis of a more extensive review of extant literature and was used to: refine the research focus, to support the empirical work and to re-engage with the extant literature.

Before an explanation of the research methodology is provided a brief overview of the research situations from which the data was collected will be provided. These will also be referred to in chapter 3 which focuses on the introduction of the research situations.

Context and Overview of the Research Situations

The three research situations were rooted in the Scottish Further Education sector and were studied during the period 2003 – 2006. One of the cases involved two colleges going through the process of merger. The second involved a joint venture between a college and a university and the third was concerned with a newly created directorate of the Scottish Funding Council, which was set up to improve collaboration in the sector.

The research was conducted during a period of transition for the Further Education sector as whole. The Scottish colleges sector was being actively encouraged by the Scottish Executive through the Funding Council to engage in collaborative relationships and to minimise the competitive behaviours that had characterised the

response to the incorporation of Scottish colleges following their independence from local authority control in the early 1990s. Additionally many colleges were facing a period of intense change due to: technological advances in learning and teaching, the fast changing needs of learners and the imperative to improve the fabric of ageing estates. In August 2002, the Scottish Further Education Council (the Council) created the FE Development Directorate (FEDD) as a response to a cluster of well publicised cases involving the severe financial and management issues experienced by a small number of colleges in the sector which had a negative impact on the way in which the sector as a whole was perceived. The phrase 'underperforming tail' was used to describe the problem. This cluster of cases was appropriate for study for the following main reasons:

- the broad context of collaboration was common to all cases,
- the variety of local contextual factors represented by each of the cases was distinctive
- there were clear linkages between the cases.
- each case involved a different form of collaboration,
- as a researcher, I was afforded access to the settings and to reliable informants largely due to my previous career in the sector and my extensive involvement in sector related consulting assignments
- each of the cases represented an opportunity to examine collaborative practice in a different but linked context.
- the combination of cases facilitated opportunities to examine phenomena both within and across cases.

Table 2.1 below provides a short summary of each of the case situations.

Case 1 overview - The Further Education Development Directorate (FEDD)

The purpose of the FEDD was to provide an innovative bridging structure to strengthen the capacity of the Council to help colleges develop and improve their financial stability, the quality and adequacy of provision, their effectiveness and efficiency and their governance and management. It was designed to complement the Council's role by drawing upon sector experience and relevant management support from the FE sector. The philosophy of the new directorate is to work with colleges in a spirit of mutual co-operation and collaboration by offering support, advice and mentoring services. The directorate was for the first three years of its existence headed by a current college Principal. FEDD staff are drawn from experienced current or recent FE practitioners with a track record of achievement in relevant disciplines. Interventions by secondees are undertaken on a project basis by secondment from their 'home' college, or short term employment for those recently retired from the sector.

In June 2003 the Council commissioned an evaluation of the first year's operation of the FE Development Directorate. The evaluation demonstrated that the FEDD had become an effective and innovative means of helping colleges to deal with practical issues such as financial security, quality, governance and management. The process of evaluation highlighted the observation that, in drawing expertise from the sector, significant value is added, delivering real benefits to those colleges engaging FEDD services and to the development of the individuals involved in FEDD activity. The Council agreed to continue to develop the FEDD as an effective and efficient means of providing support to colleges.

A notable distinction between FEED's first year of operation and its second year is the growing number of voluntary requests from colleges for FEDD services. This suggested that the value that FEDD offered was more clearly understood by the sector and that the stigma initially attached to receiving FEDD services was being replaced by a keen appetite for its service and approbation for all that it had achieved.

In its second year of operation FEDD extended two of the engagements which commenced during 2003. It also undertook a number of new engagements, which added to its portfolio of services. One of the colleges to which it provided services in 2004 was a college engaged in a joint venture with a university over a shared campus, shared services and joint provision project. This relationship forms the third case situation in which the empirical investigation was centred.

The main challenges which the FEDD faced and therefore those that formed the agenda for influencing change in the sector were: to engender a spirit of collaboration between the Council and the sector, to establish a method of working with the sector that would give the council confidence that the key issues were being addressed and to provide the appropriate level of support from other sources in the sector to the colleges experiencing difficulty. While the FEDD had an organisational mandate from the Council to intervene with colleges, success in brokering the right solutions and winning acceptance of the planned interventions depended largely upon the skills of influence demonstrated by the key participants.

Case 2 Overview - The Colleges Merger

Joint work between Fife College of Further and Higher Education and Glenrothes College grew and extended over a period of seven years. Decisions taken by the two Boards and by the staff of the colleges were based on a client-centered view of how the effectiveness of their services could be enhanced through joint working. At each stage of the process towards merger in 2006 lessons learned were used to inform and shape the next stage.

Early joint work involved the investigation of the possibility of collaboration in curriculum areas. The identification of further extensive possibilities for collaboration led in 1998 to the conduct of an options appraisal examining options for the future relationship and structure across the colleges. This study recommended that merger would be premature at that stage but that more formalized collaboration should be carried forward. As a result a formal Memorandum of Agreement was signed in early 1999, committing each college to increased collaboration.

Thereafter, under the auspices of a collaboration steering group, drawn from the Boards of Management of both colleges, collaboration deepened significantly. 1999 saw the first steps towards the creation of the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) and the establishment of a single senior finance post. These very successful developments fuelled the appetite for deeper collaboration. Further discussions by the Boards drew on this collaborative experience to set the foundation on which a Federal Model for collaboration was established. This model envisaged the creation of a set of vocational Institutes, where the provision of each college is integrated and each institute is focused firmly on the training needs of a particular industry or sector. The next Institute that was formed was the Institute of Business Management (ib+m). It brought together the colleges expertise in business, human resource and financial management.

Plans were later put in place to make further progress with the expansion of the Institutes model based on the experience gained in the launching of the IAT and ib+m. These envisaged the creation of a further 6 Institutes, in which the vocational training and resources of both colleges would be combined to provide a "one-door" solution to customers' training needs. At this stage the considerations of the two college Boards focused on determining the most appropriate management and governance structures which would enable the colleges to interact with client groups, serve students and deliver value for money. An evaluation of the existing situation highlighted a number of concerns about the practicality of sustaining separate management and governance structures for the future. By contrast the perceived advantages of combining the management and governance structures were seen as providing the basis of a compelling case for merger.

The main challenges which the senior managers faced and therefore those that formed the agenda for influencing progress towards the merger of the colleges were: the development of a framework and detailed plans for progressing towards merger, influencing acceptance of the framework, process and plans at board level and among stakeholders, obtaining the resources to implement the merger process, helping the staff of the two colleges to participate in shaping the new organisation and adapting to the new ways of working. While there was a strong organisational mandate for the changes from both the council and the boards of the two colleges, the smooth transition from single institutions to merger was largely as a result of the approaches that were adopted by the senior management team to influence change systematically at all levels.

Case 3 Overview - The University and College Joint Venture

Borders College is the largest provider of post compulsory education in the Scottish Borders. The college has been working closely with Heriot Watt University since 2001 towards structured collaboration based on articulation of provision. All the college's higher education provision is delivered out of the Heriot Watt campus at Galashiels. In 2001 the college undertook a strategic review of its estate premises and facilities with a view to improving its deteriorating buildings. The review highlighted the need for a significant capital investment. Since Heriot Watt also had plans to improve student facilities, the option to combine the projects was then explored through a series of projects. At a critical juncture in the developmental process the college received the support of FEDD in developing its approach to collaboration and improving its business case for capital investment. Since 2003 the college and university have been participating in a collaboration with the specific aim of co-locating the two organisations at a redeveloped Netherdale Campus of the university in Galashiels. This has included the creation of an outline management structure plan based on the work of a joint strategy committee and a project co-ordination group. The underlying principles of this structure are:

Commitment to coherence in tertiary education – a non competitive approach

Truly appraised options

Consolidation offering benefits of a sustainable curriculum, space, services, staffing

Working with fundamental asymmetries in the partnership

Core team with mutual confidence, respect and commitment to the project

In June 2006 the Scottish Funding Council confirmed the necessary resources along with investment from the two partners to enable the funding package to support the development programme including co-location along with the creation of a new college campus in Hawick. After a period of in depth planning 2007 saw Borders College and Heriot Watt University embark upon the implementation stage of a major estates redevelopment programme in the Borders.

The main challenges which the senior managers faced and therefore those that formed the agenda for influencing progress towards the co-location of the colleges were: developing a process for working together by building on initial joint work on articulation of provision, winning support from a wide range of stakeholders for the development and the implications that this project would have on current provision, securing the necessary level of resources and support from the council and the partners, strengthening the process for collaborative working, ensuring that both partners were confident that the changes would benefit their student populations and would deliver a sustainable outcome. In this case organisational mandate for the joint venture was established relatively early at the level of the institutions but was not gained from the council and other key stakeholders until later in the process. This delay in influencing acceptance of the proposals from the full range of stakeholders was largely attributed to the lack of the appropriate influencing processes being established at an early stage in the collaboration.

Table 2.1: Case Studies Summaries

The data that was gathered from these research settings, over a period of three years, was further supplemented by data gathered from four other research settings all involving inter-organisational collaborations: a National Health Service Trust in Scotland, a Strategic Health Authority in England, a multi-national paper manufacturing business and a division of an economic development agency in Scotland. I gained access to these collaborative settings due to my earlier involvement with them as a management consultant. To ensure consistency, interviewing was used as the main method. I also ensured that the participants understood that my role was purely that of researcher rather than management consultant. Additionally I allowed enough time to elapse between my interventions with them as a consultant and my data collecting activities as a researcher.

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH AND RESEARCH PROCESS

Given that the methodological approach to the research developed organically throughout the four year period of research, it is important to provide an account of the initial stages of the research which formed the foundations upon which the later stages were constructed.

The broad objectives of the initial phase of the research programme were therefore to: conduct an initial scan of relevant literature, to explore some relevant examples of existing theory, to identify the most appropriate research methods and to gather some initial data with the intention of exploring the relationship between competencies and effective collaboration practice and management.

From the outset of the research the methodology adopted was emergent and resonated, to some extent, with what Silverman (2004) describes as characteristics of ethnographic research; the need for an empirical approach, the need to remain open to elements that do not immediately have particular significance and a concern for grounding the phenomena observed in the field. It also bore many of the hallmarks of phenomenology, a fundamental principle of which is the notion that all meaning and knowledge is embedded in the subjective view of the individual; the phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced by the individual in relation to the phenomena of interest (Gummesson, 2000).

While the approach to empirical engagement bears some of the characteristics of grounded research, it also holds to the premise that pre-conceptions and pre-understandings are both inevitable and desirable (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As many writers on qualitative research suggest (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Robson, 1993) developing a firm understanding of the extant literature in the field is important to the quality of the research. For example Strauss and Corbin (1998 pp52) hold that:

“bringing literature into the writing not only demonstrates scholarliness but also allows for extending, validating and refining knowledge in the field”

Strauss and Corbin (1998 pp52)

Throughout the research strong emphasis was placed on the process of familiarisation with prior research and extant literature and using structured processes to draw upon existing knowledge to make sense of the data. In this sense literature is used as “an analytical tool to foster conceptualisation” as well as a means of strengthening the emerging concepts (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 pp53).

While the specific methods used for the research evolved in line with the changing focus of the research, the methodology was characterised by a concern for ensuring a balance was maintained between *objectivity and sensitivity* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Objectivity gave a sense of confidence that the findings represent a reasonable account of the nature of the phenomenon, by ensuring that appropriate links are made to existing theory. Sensitivity enables creative processes to generate new theory, or extensions of existing theory from data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The process of moving between empiricism, reflection, engagement with the literature and the development of an emerging conceptual framework formed the basis of the methodology, reflecting some of the characteristics described by Eden and Huxham as central to a cyclical process of theory building, in *research oriented action research* (Eden and Huxham, 2006).

“Theory building as a result of RO-AR is incremental, moving through a cycle of ‘extending theory-to-action-to-critical reflection-to-developing theory’ from the particular to the general in small steps.”

Eden and Huxham (2006 p397)

Conversations – a process of sense making

Throughout the research, the methodology was broadly characterised by engaging in extensive conversations with individuals closely involved in the context in which the research was located, supported by observations and access to documents relevant to the research context (Easterby Smith et al 2002; Silverman; Gubrium and Holstein). While the approach to the use of the main methods such as interviewing developed through the research, the conversational nature of the research methods is a thread that runs throughout and strongly influenced: the research design, the research activities and the data gathered. This approach seems wholly consistent with the social constructionist paradigm in which the aims of the researcher are to understand how people make sense of what is happening around them (Easterby Smith et al, 2002). Consequently a great deal of attention is given to the use of language and conversations as the platform upon which individuals create their own meanings. Additionally the recognition that the observer can never be considered to be removed from the sense making process means that the researcher is also intimately involved in the creation of meaning (Easterby Smith et al, 2002).

At the outset of stage 1 of the research the method was closest to action research (Eden and Huxham, 2006). Reflexivity played an important role in revealing the

personal impact the researcher has on the research situation. This can be detected through the relationship with participants and the effect that this has on the engagement with participants. Ultimately it determines the significance of the data captured and how it is analysed, interpreted and used (Alvesson, 2003; Gummesson, 2000; Easterby Smith et al, 2002). The primary preoccupation of the researcher was to make sense of what is observed and continuously link the sense making to existing theories.

As the research progressed, data collection interventions were positioned as semi-structured interviews which conformed to many of the post modern characteristics described by Gubrium and Holstein (2003). This perspective of the interview holds that individuals construct social reality and that there is a blurring of the boundaries between interviewee and interviewer. Participants are seen as collaborators in constructing narratives and managing issues of representation (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). The approach to conducting interviews and the use of data gathered and analysed will be discussed and illustrated in a later section of this chapter. It will also be discussed in later chapters (3 and 5) which will show how the approach to interviewing was adapted in line with the changing nature of the research question.

A SEQUENTIAL OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODS USED

The diagram in figure 2.1 was introduced briefly in chapter 1 to provide a map of the research process. Here it is introduced more specifically to provide a sequential overview of the research, to highlight the iterative nature of the process and to illustrate the various stages involved. The section that follows is dedicated to

explaining the structure of the model, the sequence of activities involved in the research process and the methodology used at key stages throughout the research.

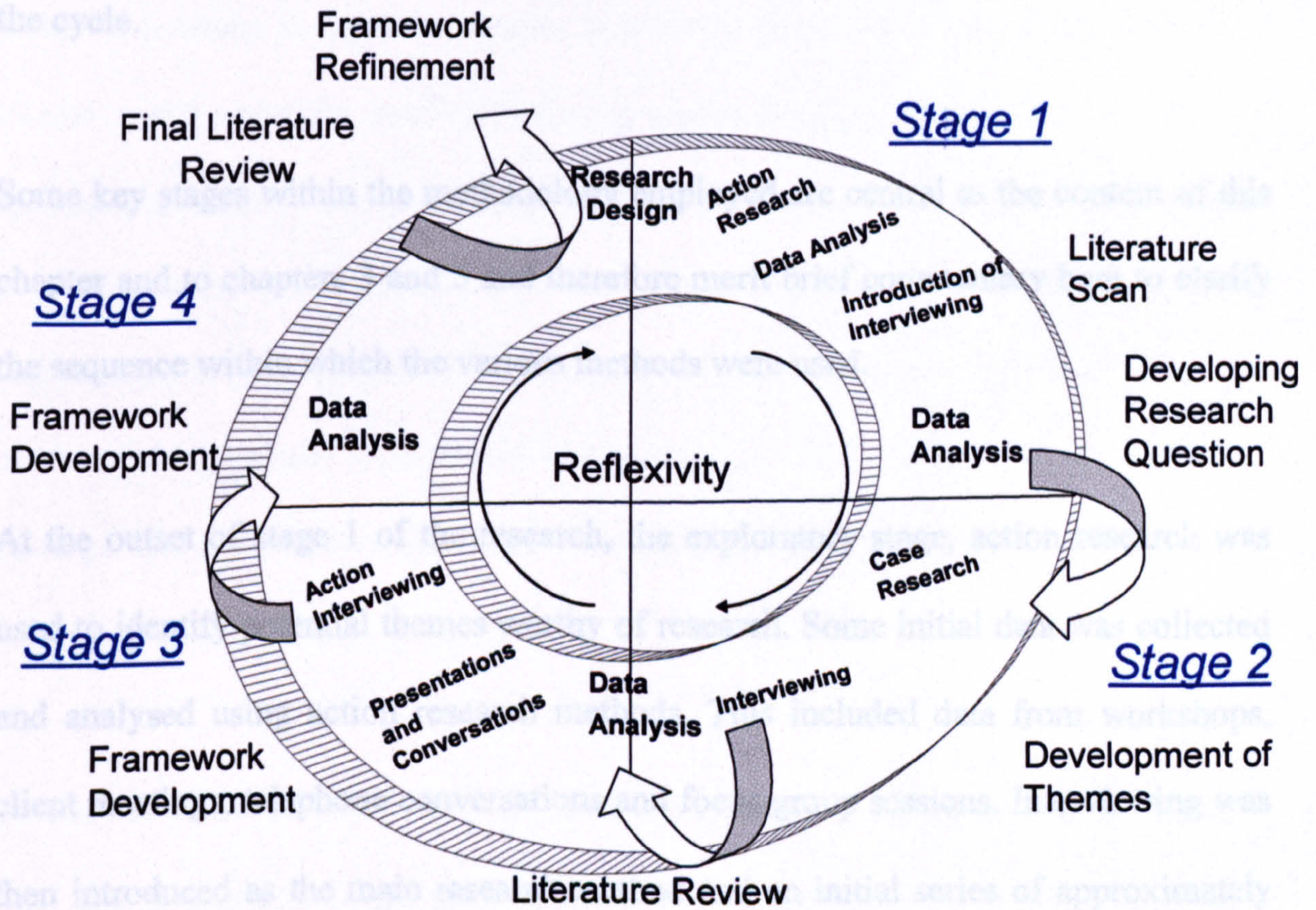


Figure 2.1: Research Methodology – A sequential overview of the research process

The core of the diagram illustrates the central role that reflexivity played in the research process. The internal ring indicates key stages of data collection and analysis. The outer area of the diagram shows the iterative approach taken to: engaging with the literature, and creating, developing and elaborating the emerging conceptual framework. The influence of reflexivity and the various stages of empirical engagement, on the development of the emerging conceptual framework, is highlighted by the shading emerging from the porous edge of the core, outwards through the internal ring, to the outer area. The arrows show how each stage of the

research contributed to the subsequent stages culminating in stage 4. At stage 4 in the research process, the final arrow pointing away from the diagram suggests that the research has reached a more advanced state of maturity and thus progresses beyond the cycle.

Some key stages within the methodology employed are central to the content of this chapter and to chapters 3 and 5 and therefore merit brief commentary here to clarify the sequence within which the various methods were used.

At the outset of stage 1 of the research, the exploratory stage, action research was used to identify potential themes worthy of research. Some initial data was collected and analysed using action research methods. This included data from workshops, client meetings, telephone conversations and focus group sessions. Interviewing was then introduced as the main research method and an initial series of approximately six interviews was conducted. A limited analysis of extant literature followed in order to gain an understanding of existing theory and to develop the research question.

In stage 2 of the research the principal research situations were negotiated and established and a second series of interviews was undertaken. This involved approximately twelve interviews. The outcome of this stage of the research contributed to the re-focusing of the research question. An extensive literature review was then undertaken which gave rise to the construction of an emerging conceptual framework (chapter 4).

In stage 3 of the research the conceptual framework was developed iteratively through a process of adjustment and further development, as a result of the feedback that was provided during a series of presentations to a range of audiences. A final series of fourteen in-depth interviews was undertaken. These interviews were more intensive and normally conducted over a period of approximately two hours. The approach to interviewing at this stage was more developed and is reported in chapter 5 of this thesis. It was based on *action interviewing* as proposed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995, in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). *The data from these interviews was analysed using tabular formats* and was used to elaborate the framework (chapter 6). In stage 4, a final scan of the literature was undertaken to situate the framework in relation to existing theory (chapter 7).

Turning back to the exploratory stage of the research, a discussion of the methods used and examples of data gathered and analysed are provided in the next section. The discussion will then be concerned with the introduction of interviews as a main research method. The approach to conducting interviews and the analysis of the data generated in the initial interviews is discussed. The final part of the chapter is dedicated to exploring the implications of an initial limited review of the literature in relation to the focus of the research question.

EXPLORATORY PHASE OF STAGE 1 - DATA GATHERING USING ACTION RESEARCH

Figure 2.2 below aims to specifically highlight the methodology used in stage 1 of the research, while subsequent stages are deliberately faded.

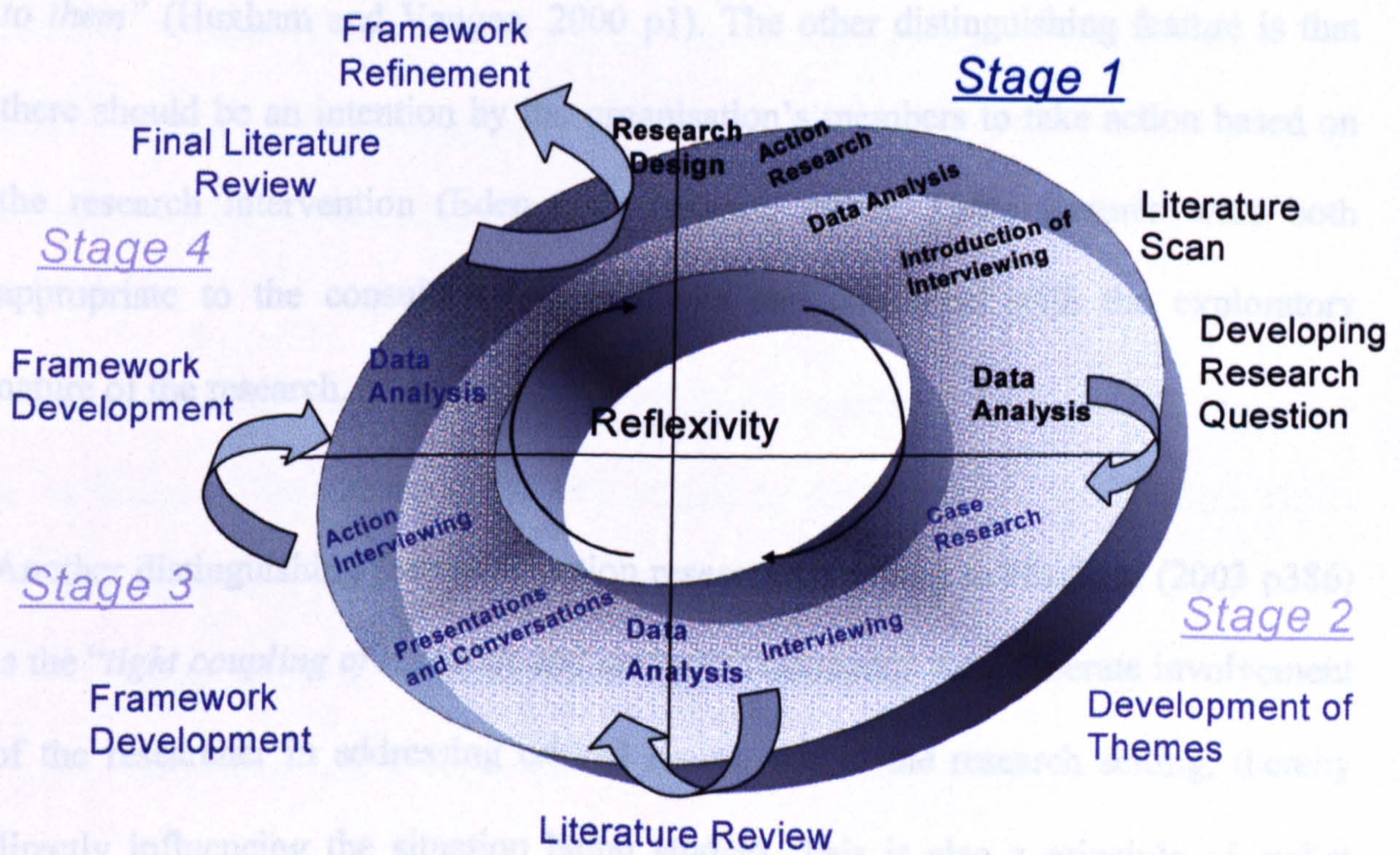


Figure 2.2: Methodology for Stage 1 of the research

The approach to the exploratory stage of the research was strongly influenced by Eden and Huxham's (2002, 2006) characterisation of action research and its use in researching organisations. As with other forms of qualitative research, action research has become a prominent paradigm in the study of organisations and management (Eden and Huxham, 2002, 2006; Gummesson, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The action research paradigm, and more specifically *Research Oriented Action Research*, as elucidated by Eden and Huxham (2002, 2006), provided a particularly appropriate approach for a number of reasons. Not least of these reasons was circumstantial, in that the initial opportunities to gather data arose from a number of consultancy assignments. In particular, what distinguishes action research as a research methodology is that one of its key requirements is that the researcher actively intervenes in the research setting and

engages with members of the organisation in a “*matter which is of genuine concern to them*” (Huxham and Vangen, 2000 p1). The other distinguishing feature is that there should be an intention by the organisation’s members to take action based on the research intervention (Eden and Huxham, 2006). These features were both appropriate to the consultancy assignments and consistent with the exploratory nature of the research.

Another distinguishing feature of action research according to Huxham (2003 p386) is the “*tight coupling of research and action*”. This means the deliberate involvement of the researcher in addressing critical issues, within the research setting, thereby directly influencing the situation being studied. This is also a principle of realist action research, according to Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000 p16) who suggest that events can be shaped by intervention:

“Realist action research will involve not simply attempting to change situations within limits set by a preset desired outcome, but by testing the extent that typical generative mechanisms can be changed by re-engineering the outlook beliefs and attitudes of participants”

Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000 p16)

Eden and Huxham (2006) distinguish their approach to action research from that of others by the fact that the action agenda and the research agenda are regarded as interdependent but separate. Thus one could intervene as a consultant in an organisation in order to deliver a specific agenda for a client, while concurrently delivering a research agenda that is concerned with wider issues relating to change.

Eden and Huxham also state that the outcome of the research should demonstrate potential to have relevance well beyond the research setting. For these reasons the action research approach appeared to offer a pragmatic solution yet one in which creativity would not be compromised.

When conducting research in the action research paradigm it is especially important to be aware of the impact of the role played by the researcher, as Huxham (2003 p386) suggests this will affect:

“what data is available and the history, context and politics of the intervention will be important to the interpretation of that data.”

Huxham (2003 p386)

For this reason reflexivity underpinned the approach to gathering, organising and analysing data and played a central interpretative role in this research context. Many writers, for example, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) and Alvesson (2003), who uphold the phenomenological tradition, point to the importance of encouraging conscious, reflexive thinking about ideas and on-going critique of our preconceptions and their affect on research. They suggest that through active reflexivity we should recognise that we are part of the social events and processes that we observe and capture.

The approach to data collection and analysis from the early stages of the research was designed to ensure standards of rigour, as proposed by Eden and Huxham (2002, 2006). The empirical research centred on gathering *naturally occurring* data. It was characterised by deliberate, systematic, structured approaches to collecting,

managing and analysing data which would ordinarily have been collected as an organisational process or data that is collected in parallel as part of the researcher's process (Eden and Huxham 2002, 2006). Through the collection of *naturally occurring data* (as distinguished from data produced as a result of artificial interventions by the researcher – e.g. interviews, surveys etc) in organisation settings where the researcher is actively involved, there is potential to work with more subtle, rich and significant data than that which is easily accessed through more traditional forms of research (Eden and Huxham, 2006).

Data collection activities included structured opportunities to collect data such as: client workshops, scheduled conversations, telephone conversations and meetings with clients and participants. Ad hoc opportunities to gather data also arose providing unexpected access to valuable sources of data such as, unscheduled client meetings, telephone conversations and 'chance meetings' with individuals, in which issues of importance to the organisation were discussed in a spontaneous manner.

Despite its acknowledged potential for generating valuable research, action research, as a genre of management research, has been criticised for its perceived lack of rigour in generating reliable evidence, an attribute traditionally associated with positivism. However Eden and Huxham (2006) argue that rigour can be maintained by being conscientious about the careful management of research data and in reflecting on the data gathered. In planning the approach to the exploratory investigation a key concern was thus to develop appropriate methods for conducting research in consultancy settings. This meant managing the interface between client

expectations and the evolving research agenda. It also meant working with data, which consisted principally of material captured from client interventions, within the context of engagements delivered over an extended period of time. The act of engagement in the client setting demanded considerable pre-planning and negotiation. For this reason, the exploratory stages bore some of the hallmarks of ethnographic observation, where immersion in the research setting and wherever possible, becoming part of the group under study would allow for note taking, collection of workshop materials such as flip charts and working papers as well as correspondence and diary entries (Huxham, 2003).

Consistent with *Research Oriented Action Research* (Eden and Huxham, 2006) the approach to theorising was inductive rather than deductive and the research methodology was based primarily on data collection methods, supported by continuous reflection and reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2005) about the nature of the research, the context within which the research was located, the role of the researcher in the research setting and the impact of the researcher on the participants.

Research Diary – reflection and reflexivity

The use of the research diary was central to the process of reflection and reflexivity. Diaries were kept throughout the four year period of the research programme and provided a basis for: the spontaneous capturing of ideas, reflection on events, recording and analysis of discussions and thought processes and the development of diagrams and models.

Reflection and, in the later stages of the research, reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2005), enabled the process of clarifying the relevance and importance of the emerging research topic, positioning the role of the researcher in the research setting, understanding the impact of the researcher upon the participants and interpreting the data with the objective of finding new avenues which bore potential for exploration.

The data at this exploratory stage was gathered in the capacity of consultant, engaged to work with the client on a specific set of issues, rather than in the interests of academic research. It was collected from a number of consultancy assignments. The following example of reflective practice is taken from a conversation that was written up in the research diary. The purpose of the exercise was to capture fragments of conversations which occurred during the course of consulting meetings in which managerial competencies were a focus of interest. Following the meeting the research diary entry was used to conduct exploratory analysis to identify themes that may be of potential interest. A simple approach based on highlighting and underlining potential themes of interest was used. The data and initial analysis illustrated in table 2.2 below was taken from a conversation with a participant who contributed to a consulting assignment within which competencies for collaboration were discussed. It provided an early insight into and an opportunity to reflect upon the competencies that are perceived to be important to collaborative settings, and revealed some potential areas to explore:

"The greatest challenge was the board meeting – I was not prepared for selling this to the board in terms of the high level political stuff - leading on the vision was fine but the board was asking questions which were out of my frame of reference - I am not sure I understood their perspective - that is the industry members - the debate with the board was challenging – after all it is set up to protect the interests of the college – looking back that competency needs to be strengthened – it is about political astuteness, lobbying in advance of the meeting undertaking a process with stakeholders. The new principal at Glenrothes College, X, hooked onto the business case and it was put to the two boards. At Fife college it went through on a nod while Glenrothes viewed it as a more significant risk –at that point there was an electric board meeting, there were some real concerns about sovereignty and territory - the new principal truly became a principal at that meeting, he managed to influence the thinking- we finally got a yes.

Table 2.2: Excerpt from Research Diary - some early analysis - October 2003

Sources of data – Consultancy Assignments

In the exploratory stages of the research, before the research situations were established, as discussed earlier in this chapter, data was collected from a range of contexts within which I was involved as part of my employment as a management consultant.

The data at this exploratory stage was gathered in the capacity of consultant, engaged to work with the client on a specific set of issues, rather than in the interests of academic research. It was collected from a number of consultancy engagements.

One particular assignment involved working with the management team of an NHS Trust to identify leadership competencies for senior managers working within a collaborative context and to produce a competency framework for the management team. The interventions involved in this assignment included: client meetings to agree the brief, discussions at management team meetings, work shops, meetings with board members, telephone calls and individual competency based interviews.

Another assignment, which in the later stages of the research became a principal research case, referred to earlier in this chapter and in chapter 3, was the review of the effectiveness of the Further Education Development Directorate (FEDD), a directorate of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), as outlined in chapter 3.

Some excerpts of data collected in relation to these consulting assignments, and my initial analysis of its implications to the research, is set out in table 2.3 below.

Data Source	Consultancy - NHS Trust – data gathered from meetings with senior managers and board members, workshops and focus groups	Observations/Implications
One to one Competency Development meetings with members of the senior management team	<p>Political awareness and influencing are required to leverage the support of others in the organisation to effect change - we need to build a common approach to working with other agencies this is particularly important and the consolidation of joint working internally is critical before moving on to work more closely with other agencies (IM)</p> <p>We need to bring people up to speed and give them the knowledge they need we have all made jumps we need to operate as a whole team at this higher level – the important dimensions are: integrity, really playing, political awareness and influencing skills, decision making, emotional competencies, coming to the table with good will and giving your all to the team, adopt a style that suits the context, inspire trust and respect others.....(EM)</p> <p>The BMT must be more like facilitators (MB)</p> <p>The BMT need to have strengths in political awareness in a multiplicity of political contexts.. local leaders also need to be strong on political influence (TT)</p> <p>This will involve the BMT in becoming more influential ...we talk a good game but sometimes fail to make it happen....Leaders need to be open and receptive (TT)</p>	<p>Important leadership competencies in a collaborative context; political awareness and influencing</p> <p>Building a common approach</p> <p>Being good at collaborating internally before taking collaboration external</p> <p>Political awareness, influencing skills, emotional competencies,</p> <p>Facilitation skills</p> <p>Political awareness</p> <p>Political influence</p> <p>Being influential is about making it happen</p>
Data Source	Consultancy - Review of FEDD	Observations/Implications
Pre workshop briefing notes	<p>We need to re-brand FEDD, change people's perceptions</p> <p>The leader of each consulting team is very important - behaviour is important (JB)</p>	Perceptions and behaviour are important
Notes – Recurrent themes captured during the Workshop for FEDD secondees	<p>Succession planning for Director's post</p> <p>Leadership, Mutuality, Culture, Mindset, Attitudes , Role Clarity, The Will to change, Level of Permission, Coaching and Mentoring</p> <p>Focus on revising the modus operandi and</p> <p>Honing the consultancy skills of secondees and particularly leaders of consulting teams</p> <p>Phrases: Training with live ammunition, High noon, death by issues, significant moments, the strategy plan lacked strategy, battle fatigue, some of the initial interventions were characterised as combative general consensus that a "consulting style" was required as opposed to "auditing style" (JB)</p>	<p>Opportunity to observe JB as FEDD director – the quiet, confident, unassuming style – when he spoke he carried everyone's attention for a softly spoken person seemed to have a great deal of impact – worked behind the scenes to ensure everyone felt comfortable with the developments – strong emphasis on the need to position the support as an offer and not imposed – "a marriage broker between colleges and the council – a facilitation role" often uses the term mutuality</p>
Focus Group notes And workshop presentation Materials	<p>The director of FEDD is seen to be one of its greatest strengths – seen to be a "tricky role – CEO in own organisation and a Director in FEDD reporting to another CEO</p> <p>Credibility of the Director is linked to the Director retaining a leadership role in the sector</p> <p>A solution would be to offer development in consulting skills for future FEDD members</p> <p>The sector providing "self help" will bring greater credibility to the offering</p> <p>Recommend a review of the overall approach re consulting style</p>	<p>Opportunity to observe FEDD secondees responding to the themes emerging from the review process – consensus that a consulting style approach is important rather than an auditing approach</p> <p>Reflections on how secondees responded to the issues paper</p>
Interview with FEDD secondees as consultant	<p>It's the relationship you establish and the trust you build up if that's not right it just won't work (BC)</p> <p>John created a bridge if the bridge is broken we can repair it (DL)</p> <p>John was able to position the FEDD far better in terms of relationships e.g. between FEDD and ASC(JL)</p> <p>The current director is very honest and competent and a lot has to do with the independence of mind and the calibre of person (JT)</p> <p>The culture of FEDD has been shaped by JB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - persuasive , objective, diplomatic, quietly confident, commands respect, influential , experienced track record (TC) <p>FEDD could have more influence in training board members FEDD is a good influence between FC and Colleges (CT)</p> <p>I put it down to JB's style and persuasiveness he is seen as influential – he is listened to by the FC - at times he is one of them but also a Principal – a lot of it is about the way he has gone about it</p> <p>It was about style and touch – John's framing of the conversation (RM)</p>	<p>Relationships important</p> <p>Building bridges</p> <p>Positioning and improving relationships</p> <p>Seen as competent</p> <p>Persuasive, influential</p> <p>A culture shaper</p> <p>Influence of the organisation linked to influence of the leader</p> <p>Perceived as influential</p>

Table 2.3: Example of data collected in Stage 1 of the research

The use of the table to organise and present the data and to conduct an initial analysis of the data is adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) under the general approach described as *sequential analysis*. In its purest form this involves identifying key terms, restating key phrases, creating clusters, reducing the clusters and labelling them, generalising about the phrases in each cluster, and finally generating *minitheories*. However in this example the table was used primarily to aid the identification and interpretation of potential emerging research themes.

Coding and Analysis of Data

The approach used to coding followed some of the principles set out by Silverman (2006) in that the raw data, usually in the form of: workshop materials, handwritten notes from client interventions, written notes, or transcripts of interviews would be sorted into coded units of data and allocated reference numbers and page numbers. It was read carefully line by line, then highlighted to reflect recurrent themes. The themes were then reviewed.

Data mapping software (Decision Explorer) was used to aid analysis and interpretation. This data mapping software proved to be particularly helpful in the analysis of data, both in terms of aiding interpretation and in drawing out meaning (Huxham, 2003). The method used is based on the approach to emergent theory development promoted by Huxham (2003) as follows:

- Reviewing data collected and identifying relevant pieces of data
- Clarifying the meaning of the data fragments

- Confirming the wording of the description of the original comments, actions or events and the reasons why these could be interpreted as relevant to the focal area of interest
- Establishing the linkages between each data item
- Allowing clusters of data to gradually emerge
- Reviewing the clusters and the linkages between them with a view to creating a conceptual framework.

Sections or blocks of data were initially identified as being of potential interest by highlighting phrases in the text. These were then selected as individual data fragments and entered into the Decision Explorer software. The data fragments became numbered data items created by the software. Narrative interpretations were drawn from the data items placed on the map. These were expressed as individual narrative fragments. They were distinguished from the raw data through either the use of italics or, in some cases, the use of coloured font.

The data maps were built up through a gradual, iterative process of reflection and interpretation. This consisted of: identifying and highlighting potential themes in the collected data; isolating fragments of data from the text that reflected these themes; entering them into the software; adding these to the map in numbered sections; drawing interpretation from the fragments and identifying categories from clusters of data fragments. As the process unfolded and a picture of ideas was gradually built, certain categories emerged from the narrative interpretation, as being of particular interest. These were identified through a lengthy process of: reflecting on the

meaning of the data fragment and experimenting with interpretation and analysis. This process was enhanced through debate with fellow researchers at research tutorials, during which the maps were discussed in detail. The process was concluded by returning to the data and the maps to confirm emerging patterns. Emerging categories were highlighted in bold, as shown in the concepts numbered 36 and 74 in the figure 2.3 below and particularly important themes were isolated in a box.

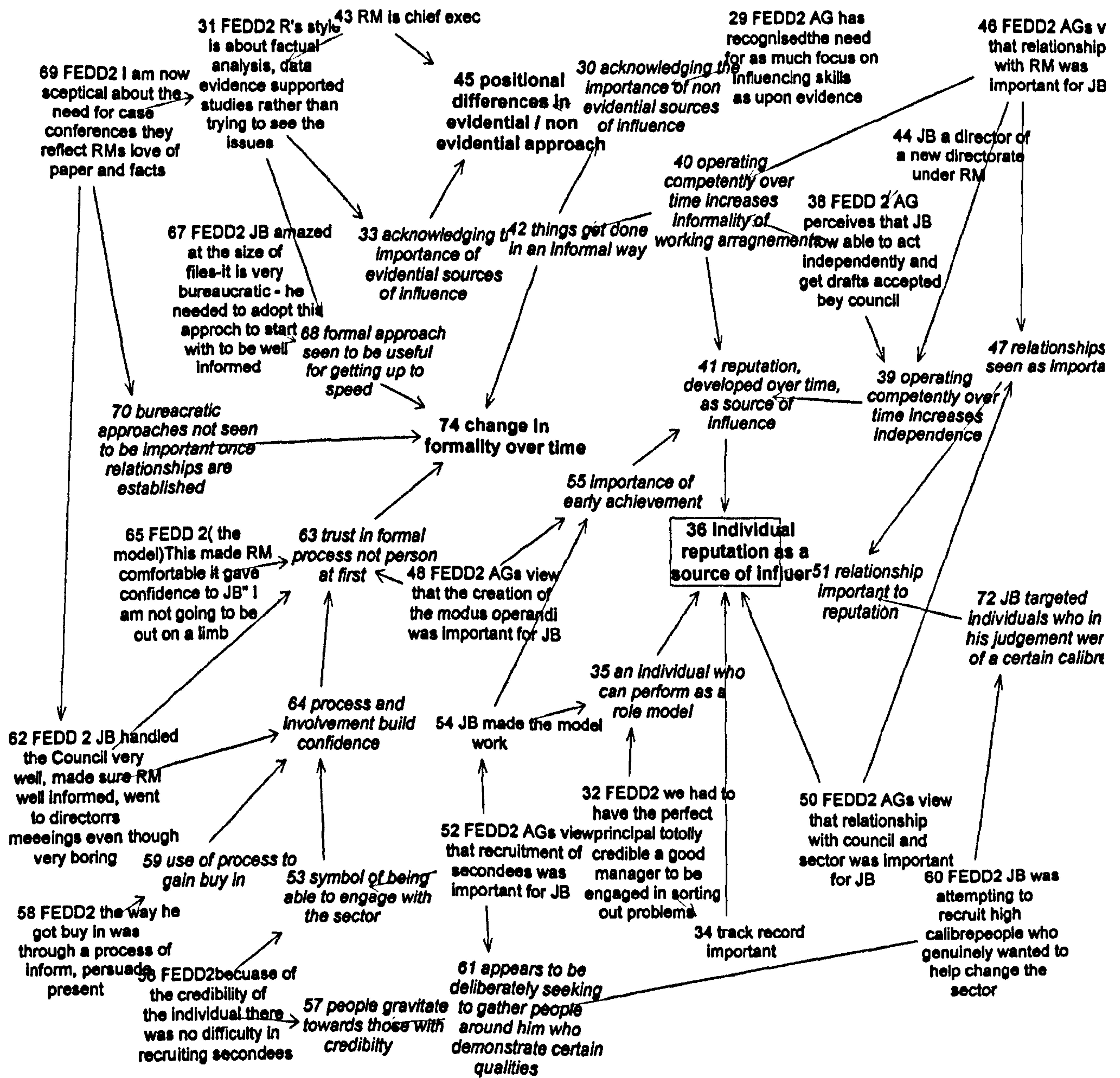


Figure 2.3: Analysing data using the Data Map

Key:
 Italics = interpretation of data.
 Bold = emerging themes.
 Non Italics FEDD2 coded concepts = data

Figure 2.3 above shows an example of the approach to the analysis of data gathered through *research oriented action research*.

Interviews were first introduced as a main method in stage 1 of the research. The decision to adopt interviewing as the main method rather than the action research approach taken in the initial stages of the research was based on a number of reasons; it also had some important implications for the research. Firstly I wished to obtain data that would provide richly discursive responses from informants as to why they perceived certain approaches, behaviours or methods to be influential in collaborative settings. During the earlier action research phase, while intervening as a consultant I had experimented with collecting some observational data. This was useful data to compare with the early interview data. However for pragmatic reasons related to the reduced level of access I had as a researcher to the research settings, interviewing proved to be the most practicable solution in all cases. The consequences of the shift to interviewing as the main method were fully considered and understood in terms of the implications for the conceptual framework; I would be collecting data that reflected individuals' perceptions of issues that they believed to be important to influencing in the collaborative domain, rather than observational data that would provide observed rationales for building the framework. Despite the impact of this shift I believed that given the opportunities I had to interview respondents who were widely perceived to be influential in each case situation and in the supplementary contexts, that the decision to adopt interviewing as a main method would yield rich discursive data.

In the section that follows a similar approach will be illustrated and discussed in relation to data gathered during the initial interviews.

APPROACH TO INTERVIEWING

The initial approach taken to interviewing, as a main research method, is explicated and illustrated through examples of data and the analysis of interview data, set out in this section of the thesis.

The chosen substantive methodology for the research, following the early empirical engagement, was the semi-structured interview. In line with the social constructionist tradition and with many of the principles of what is termed *post modern interviewing*, interviews were treated as occasions for constructing social reality, in that they become valid opportunities for capturing shared cultural understandings and enactments of the social world (Silverman, 2004; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003). Advocates of interviewing argue that the approach provides scope for the capturing of a rich account of the interviewees' experiences, knowledge, ideas and impressions (Alvesson, 2003; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). However there are also a number of drawbacks associated with the use of interviews that must be considered. Alvesson (2003) suggests that by viewing the interview as a potential source of rich data, the researcher is in a danger of neglecting the interview situation as a socially and linguistically complex phenomenon.

One of the limitations of interviewing is the very subjective nature of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. This gives rise to potential problems relating to the validity of the interview, as a site for gathering reliable data. Because

it is almost impossible for either interviewer or interviewee to respond in a purely objective way to the experience of the interview, the reliability of the data is questionable. The data gathered is often open to the criticism of being *contaminated* by the subjectivity of the account provided by the interviewee (Alvesson, 2003). Gubrium and Holstein (2003) suggest that because of the problematic status of interview data, the actual referential value of interviews is questionable, while Silverman (2004) points out that interview data should not be approached from the point of view of truth, distortion nor remedying incomplete observations. Instead interviews should be seen as generating data that has intrinsic properties of its own and that the data should be analysed in the light of those properties.

It is argued that in interviews, researchers tend to concentrate too much on the content issues, tending to under emphasise the inter-active narrative procedures of knowledge production (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5 of this thesis, it is suggested that paying more attention to the biographical, contextual, historical and organisational elements that are brought to the interview and used by both parties, will enhance the value of the interview as a research method.

Rather than trying to privilege one method over another a more productive approach, suggested by Atkinson and Coffey (in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003), is to think of what we observe, the act of observing and the contents of interviews as incorporating social actions of different kinds and yielding data of different forms. This perspective of the interview characterised and underpinned the approach taken to the use of the interview as a main research method. Initially it was proposed that

meetings, although generally on a one to one basis, should be regarded as conversations rather than interviews, in order to avoid artifice as far as possible (Alvesson, 2003). By positioning the meetings as mini workshops, participants were invited to engage in the process of interpretation and of generating emergent theory, through discussions centring on ideas that were forming both from the literature and the data. The data gathered in interviews was complemented by forms of naturally occurring data such as documentation, printed material and notes from ad hoc, unplanned conversations and meetings.

Interviews as conversations – a reflexive approach

In stage 1 of the research, interviews were introduced purely as a type of *extensive conversation* held with participants involved in the consulting assignments. From the outset of the research, considerable thought and analysis was given as to how to treat the data collected during client conversations, which were positioned either as one to one meetings or interviews. As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, reflexivity (Alvesson, 2003, Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2005) formed an important feature of the exploratory phase of the research methodology. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005 p39) assert:

“There is no one-way street between the researcher and the object of study; rather, the two affect each other mutually and continually in the course of the research process.” Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005 p39)

Because of the subjective nature of the phenomenon of interest, it was particularly important to maintain a constant awareness of the consequences of working with

subjective data, based largely on the perceptions of others (Alvesson, 2003; Sandberg 2000).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005) make a distinction between *reflective* research and *reflexive* research. Reflective research has two basic characteristics: *careful interpretation and reflection*. The first of these implies that all references to empirical data are the results of interpretation, which comes to the forefront of the research work. The second element focuses inward towards the individual persona of the researcher, research community, society, norms and language in the research context. Systematic reflection on different levels can enrich interpretation and increase the value of empirical work.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005) contrast the focused and specialised nature of reflection with the multi-dimensional and interactive nature of what they term *reflexivity*. By investigating four aspects or levels of interpretation: interaction with empirical material, interpretation, critical interpretation and reflection on text production and language use, the authors suggest that:

“Reflexivity arises when the different elements are played off against each other. It is in these relations and in the interfaces that reflexivity occurs.”

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005 p249)

As many writers suggest, (Silverman, 2004; 2006; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Gummesson, 2000) the issue of how interviewees respond to the interviewer based on how the interviewer relates to them and how aspects of the interviewer’s identity

affect them is a practical concern as well as an epistemological one (Silverman, 2004).

An example of how I strived to develop a reflexive approach is demonstrated by an early attempt at analysing the data, using Alvesson's (2003) approach to interpreting the interview or conversation, shown in table 2.4 below. The analysis was undertaken in the spirit of reflexivity that:

"stimulates interplay between producing interpretations and challenging them" Alvesson (2003 p14)

The analysis shown in table 2.4 illustrates an attempt in the early stages of the research to practice reflexivity. It was intended as a basis upon which to explore the implications of the data gathered from the initial interviews by considering a variety of possible meanings based on three of Alvesson's metaphors. These metaphors were constructed to encourage a reflexive approach to considering the impact of both the interviewer and the interviewee on the situation, given its context, and consequently to reflect upon the significance of data gathered.

The role of the interviewer in collecting the data, displayed in table 2.4 below, was analogous to that described by Gummesson (2000 p37) as one of *process consultant* in which the client enters an interactive relationship with the researcher/consultant. The process consultant attempts to release the client's own resources through self diagnosis and self intervention. The researcher/consultant is referred to as an *interventionist* or *facilitator*. This perspective acknowledges that a social role is

being played and that this is important to achieving a productive dialogue. As Gummesson highlights:

“The consultant’s personality is part of the quality of the consultancy service”. Gummesson (2000 p37)

Alvesson’s (2003) theoretical framework, based on eight metaphors for the research interview was drawn upon to conduct the analysis shown in table 2.4 below. The framework was created to suggest some theoretical ideas on the research interview. Central to this are metaphors for the interview situation and interview accounts. These encourage the researcher to re-conceptualise the interview to encourage openness to complex patterns and in depth thought processes. Alvesson proposes *reflexive pragmatism*, a view of the interview based on working with alternative lines of interpretation, encouraging the consideration of a variety of possible meanings in an open and self-critical way. Alvesson suggests that these considerations lead to a more modest and more reflexive approach to interviews. Three of Alvesson’s eight metaphors were used in an exploratory exercise, in an effort to appreciate the implications of the data generated. The three metaphors are as listed below:

Metaphor 1: The interview as a product of context

Metaphor 3: The interview as a site for identity work

Metaphor 6: The interview as political action.

These three metaphors were chosen for their particular relevance to the interview that was the focus of this exercise. Metaphor 1 was chosen because I was particularly conscious that one of the implications of electing interviewing as a main research methodology would be that the accounts provided by respondents may be seen as

outcomes of the complexity of the interview scene more than a reflection of the respondents actual experience of the phenomena of interest. The interplay between two people with all the baggage that they carry is likely to have significant impact on the account produced.

Similarly metaphor 3 was chosen because in planning the interviews I felt that the identity of the interviewers would have a strong influence on the responses they gave. Examining the identity work undertaken in the interview setting may help the interviewer to be sensitive to the meanings attributed to events by the respondent. The researcher needs to be aware of how language use and other signals may operate on the person being interviewed in terms of identity. The consequences are that the account provided may construct an identity rather than reveal one.

Metaphor 6 was chosen because it encourages the interviewer to recognise the political nature of organisations; a pertinent perspective, given the nature of the phenomena of interest in this research. Through this metaphor interviewees are seen as politically aware and motivated actors who provide accounts that are likely to serve or protect their own interests.

Although the other five metaphors were not used in detail in this exercise because they were not considered to be as pertinent to the nature and context of the particular interview analysed, they were nevertheless all used as valuable points of reference in the overall analysis of the data. Since I was very familiar with both the interviewer and context of the collaboration under discussion, I did not feel that the interviewee's response would be or was materially influenced by basic assumptions which would lead to interviewees providing a response which they assume the interviewer is

looking for rather than engaging with the issue as framed by the interviewer and according to their experience. The potential problem of pre-conceived assumptions distorting the response provided by interviewees was also overcome by the fact that my interviewee was familiar with academic research in general and my research in particular. As an academic, he was also conscious of the need to engage with the issues as objectively as is possible in any interview situation.

Neither did it seem, given the particular nature of the interviewee and the timing of the interview, that the interviewee was likely to couch his response in an underlying cultural or moral script, pre-programming how employees should talk about the organisation. The independent nature of the interviewee and the novelty of the collaborative scenario he was involved in allowed him a great deal of neutrality and freedom to express his experiences as he perceived them. Given the circumstances of the timing of the interview, his stance at the time was likely to be as culture neutral as it is ever possible to be. I was however reflexively aware of the two remaining metaphors throughout: the use of language for crafting accounts and language as constituting the interviewee. The former holds that even if the interviewee tries hard to be precise and honest, elements of what they say will inevitably be of their own invention. The latter represents the view that the individual is constituted within discourse and that language creates subjectivity.

The three metaphors chosen to undertake the analysis are highlighted and illustrated in table 2.4 below:

Analysis of interview material Using 3 of Alvesson's 8 metaphors (Alvesson 2003)
Interview Setting: Interview/conversation was held over lunch following a consultancy project meeting – I set out my research agenda and asked him to tell me the story of his involvement with FEDD and in particular the aspects which enabled him to increase his influence.
Interview prompts: In your experience what are the competencies associated with a successful outcome to a collaboration? To what extent do these competencies relate to the skills and behaviours associated with effective leaders?

<p>Metaphor 1: The interview as a product of context</p> <p>The interview account may be seen as the outcome of the scene. The interplay between two people with their individual characteristics puts heavy imprints on the accounts produced. The complex social interaction aiming at establishing a micro order takes precedence.</p>	<p>Metaphor 3: The interview as a site for identity work</p> <p>The interview is seen as a site for identity work. The interviewee uses the interview to express, elaborate, strengthen, defend or repair a favoured self-identity.</p>	<p>Metaphor 6: The interview as political action</p> <p>The interview as political action. Actors may use interviews for their own political purposes. Political awareness may lead to either active constructions...or defensive moves..</p>
<p>"It was difficult being simultaneously number 1 in the organisation and not number 1 – I had to switch between the two – I am number 1 and people do what I tell them – I am now part of a team I was not interested in building a career for myself – I love being a Principal - to do a good job to the best of my ability not forgetting the College was a genuine concern"</p>	<p>"I wanted a much more subtle model – did not want it to be about a badge of authority - it's a set of skills that have to be understood – the thing almost happened naturally – experience and insight into the sector "</p>	<p>"Where does the power come from – experience, credibility gained over a number of years in different settings – style is important – understanding different management styles and I have studied leadership"</p>
<p><i>The interview was punctuated with statements like – "you would understand this...appealing to my knowledge of the sector and the players.. he also took particular pains to paint a picture of himself as an influencer in the sector."</i></p>	<p><i>To what extent is the interviewee using the interview to construct his identity in the eyes of the interviewer?</i></p>	<p><i>I felt the interviewee was making a particular effort to position himself as a political player beyond the context of the FEDD case, as a leader in a wider context, positioning himself in relation to the sector.</i></p>

Table 2.4: Using a reflexive approach to the interview

Interview design, data collection and analysis, reliability and validity

In the first phase of interviews my role was established purely as academic researcher in pursuit of my own research interests, although since the interviewees were current clients and since a facilitative approach was taken to eliciting views on the phenomena of interest, it is likely that they viewed me more as researcher/consultant as described by Gummesson (2000). The approach taken to these interviews is described in the next section.

Interview design

The design of the interviews was based on a semi-structured interview approach. The interviews related to one of two main research situations, the Further Education Development Directorate (FEDD) case, which will be described in chapter 3. For

each respondent the approach was altered slightly according to their role and their level of involvement in FEDD. Visual material was used to introduce the interview, an approach that had been used in the initial stages of the research. An example of such visual material, presented in the form of a colour poster which was often used in the introductory stage of the initial interviews to illustrate the nature of the research in a 'light touch way', is set out in figure 2.4 below. The poster provided an overview of some of the themes that had been highlighted through the action research interventions and in a small number of exploratory interviews. It was used to introduce some of the areas of potential interest and relevance to the research such as: culture, leadership, power and relationships.

Influencing capabilities/competencies of participants and points in the process of collaboration where influence may be leveraged

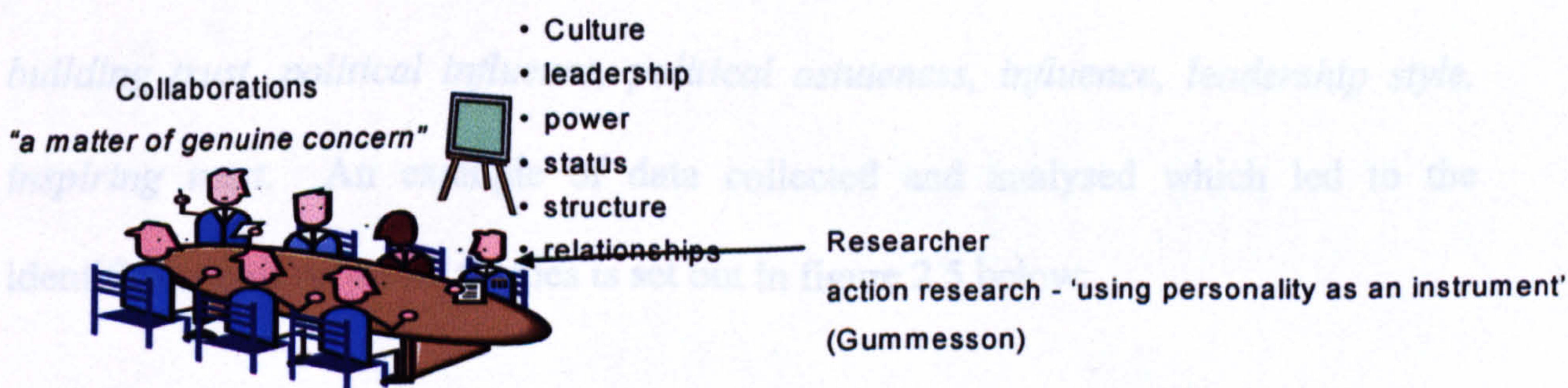


Figure 2.4: Poster Illustration used in interviews

Emerging Themes

The process of gathering, analysing and mapping the early data collected threw up a wide range of concepts and themes associated with competencies for effective collaboration. A typical example of such concepts relating to competencies for effective collaboration practice is provided in the excerpt of data below. It shows a range of competencies for collaboration listed by a client in a consulting assignment

meeting. This meeting took place during the early stages of the FEDD evaluation consulting engagement. As part of this assignment, discussions which aim to generate ideas on important competencies for collaboration was a particular focus:

“Competencies – persuasive, objective, diplomatic, quietly confident, commands respect, influential, experienced, proven track record”

RBM/FEDD/Plps

Some of the competencies mentioned appeared to be more appropriately described as capabilities as they were more broadly based (Walker, 1992). Technically based capabilities such as finance and project management also seemed to be viewed as important, while others strongly emphasised the behavioural aspect of strategy such as *building relationships* (Moss Kanter, 1996; Hamel et al, 1989). Recurring themes which appeared to show relational and behavioural qualities were: *inspiring and building trust, political influence, political astuteness, influence, leadership style, inspiring trust*. An example of data collected and analysed which led to the identification of recurrent themes is set out in figure 2.5 below:

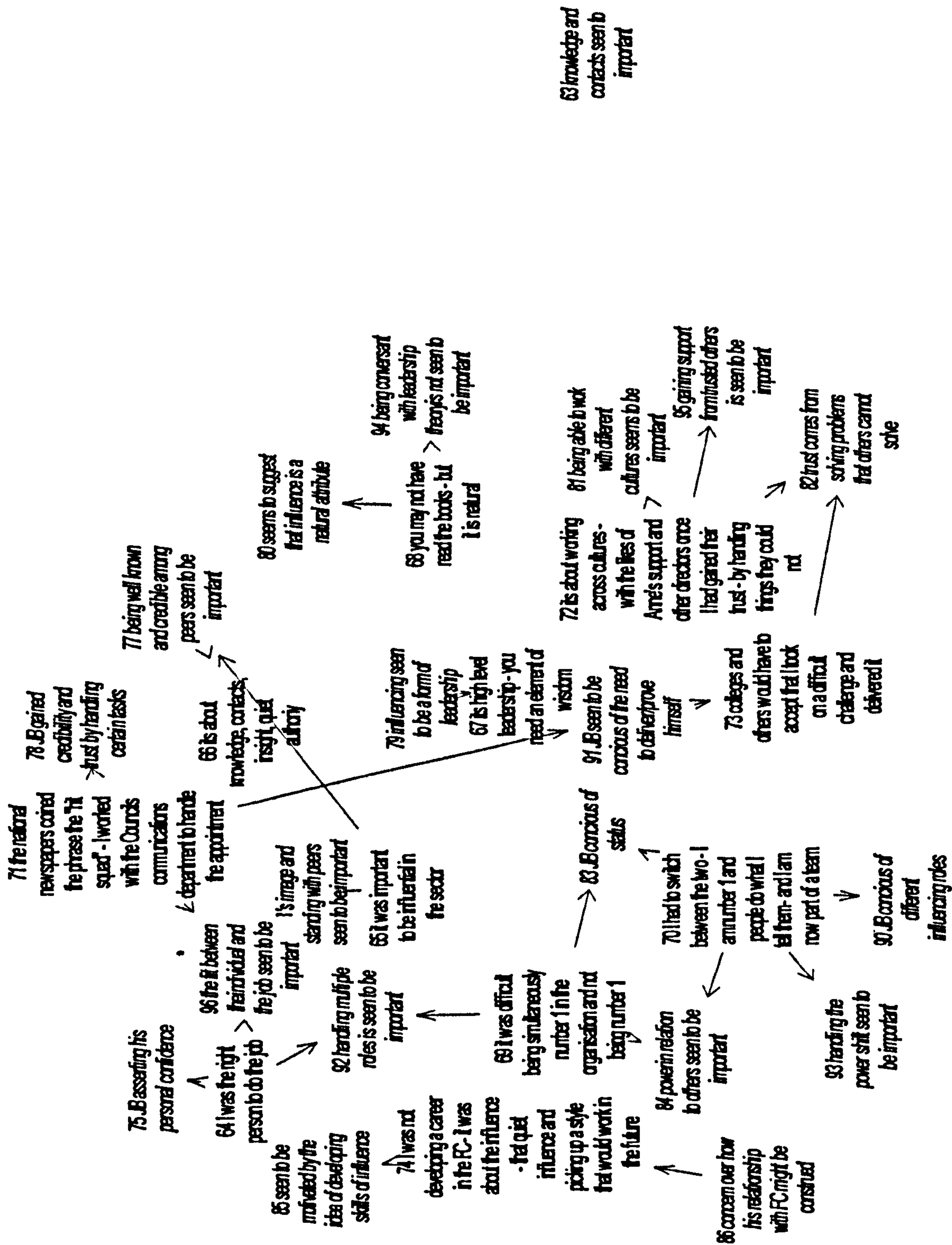


Figure 2.5: Example of data map showing recurrent themes

Key to figure 2.5
 Italics = interpretation,
 Non italics = data

To illustrate how emerging themes were identified in a number of related ways, the following table shows some examples of interview data gathered and analysed with a focus both on the identification of data fragments and the use of observational notes taken throughout and following the interview. In the left hand column the narrative illustrates how the interviews were conducted, in the right hand column fragments of data and interviewer observations (in italics) are displayed.

Respondent and Approach	Observations and data fragments
<p>Director of FEDD and College Principal Executive Responsibility for FEDD</p> <p>Interview/conversation was held over lunch following a consultancy project meeting – I set out my research agenda and asked him to tell me the story of his involvement with FEDD and in particular the aspects which enabled him to increase his influence</p> <p>I took notes as the respondent (<i>JB</i>) talked.</p>	<p>I wanted a much more subtle model – did not want it to be about a badge of authority - it's a set of skills that have to be understood – the thing almost happened naturally – experience and insight into the sector</p> <p>Where does the power come from – experience, credibility gained over a number of years in different settings – style is important – understanding different management styles and I have studied leadership</p> <p><i>JB very softly spoken – not an obviously big personality, unassuming quiet confidence often at pains to clarify his own motives</i></p> <p>I was not developing a career in the FC –but developing influence – that quiet influence – picking up a style that will work in the future.</p>
<p>Assistant Director of FC</p> <p>Executive Responsibility for relationships with Colleges on strategic issues</p> <p>I started out by explaining that I wanted the session to be more like a workshop and less like an interview.</p> <p>Talked her through my poster explained the research paradigm the focus on phenomenology. I was interested more in the behavioural aspects of the way people had performed in her experience of FEDD rather than the measurable aspects of performance</p> <p>The researcher took notes as the respondent (<i>AG</i>) talked</p>	<p>“ That is exactly what we have been discussing ... the need for as much focus on influencing skills as upon evidence, measurement and data which is R's preferred style .. to achieve change you need both . R's style is about factual analysis, data, evidence supports studies rather than spending time trying to see the issues as others see them and influencing their thinking (<i>JB's</i> style). We need a more balanced skill set one which reflects that imperative for collaboration.</p> <p><i>AG disclosed that she would / had applied by not considered suitable as she was not a Principal and therefore would not have the requisite knowledge</i></p>
<p>Director of FC</p> <p>Executive Responsibility for HE and FE strategy</p> <p>I used a similar approach as that used in the interview with Anne Grindley to introduce the interview, using the poster to introduce the concept of influence. As this respondent had not been as closely involved in FEDD as the first two respondents</p> <p>The researcher took notes as the respondent (<i>LH</i>) talked</p>	<p><i>LH also talked of the importance of leaders to change and the new cadre of leaders in colleges – JB being an example “ I wish I could be like John”. LH seemed a bit unsettled and unsure of how to get started in his response</i></p> <p>I like to organise my thoughts on paper – <i>started to scribble</i> - there is a set of general things about collaboration irrespective of the type of collaboration – a set of metaphors – rivalries and natural affinities also I worry about the collaborative word – co-operation and collaboration are slightly different things - there are 3 important words Collaboration Cooperation Alignment</p>

Table 2.5: Interview data – initial interviews

In the example shown above the interview was regarded as a platform for knowledge production rather than simply a neutral conduit to convey experience (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). By adopting this perspective of the interview, Gubrium and Holstein (2003) suggest that life is made accessible to us in the form of stories and personal narratives, if approached as individualised constructions. Respondents reflect life to the researcher by telling stories about themselves, but this is not done in a social vacuum, personal accounts are constructed from experience and build social encounters. My experience in undertaking the interviews was consistent with this perspective. In all of the interviews undertaken the interviewees demonstrated a consistent tendency to dip in and out of biographical modes of constructing identities and positioning themselves in relation to both the subject of discussion and to the researcher. There were many examples of the process described by Gubrium and Holstein as follows:

“participants draw out the substantiality of these topics, linking topics to biographical particulars in the interview process, producing a subject who responds to or is affected by the matters under discussion.”

Gubrium and Holstein (2003 p74)

An example of such biographical detail, shown in a fragment of data from the initial interviews which was later used to develop a conceptual map, is as follows:

“That is exactly what we have been discussing in our team ... the need for the council to put as much focus on influencing skills as upon evidence, measurement and data which is R's preferred style ... to achieve change you need both. R's style is about factual analysis, data, evidence based studies

rather than spending time trying to see the issues as others see them and influencing their thinking - which is JB's style... We need a more balanced skill set one which reflects that imperative for collaboration." AG/FEDD

An example of a data map used to analyse data gathered through interviews is provided in figure 2.6 below. This was developed using Decision Explorer software to identify and confirm emerging themes from the data and to form further interpretations. The analysis and interpretation of the data from the initial interviews confirmed the importance of the recurrent themes that had emerged in the exploratory research, as highlighted in the figure 2.6 below and discussed in the section that follows.

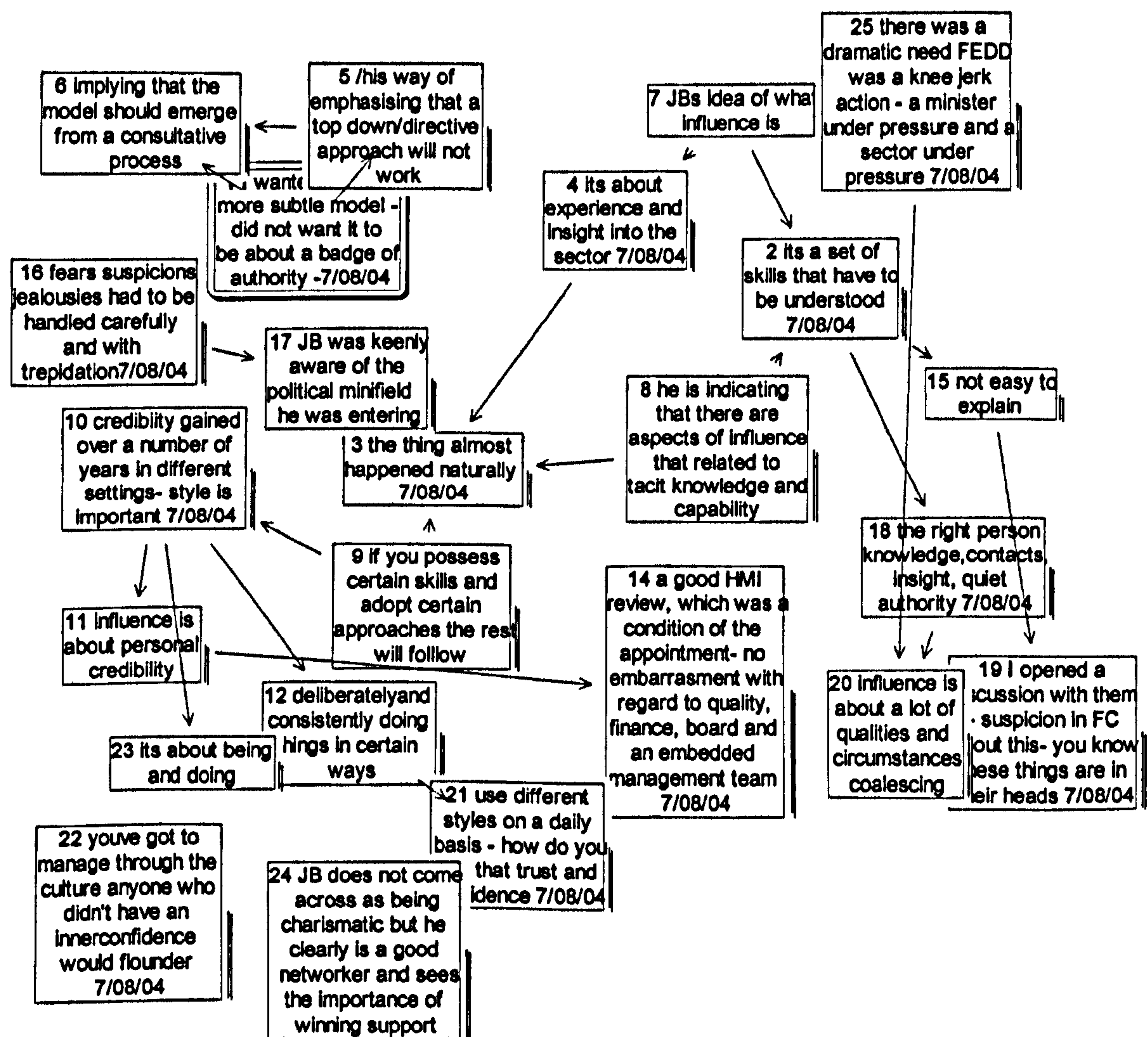


Figure 2.6: Analysis of initial interviews to identify and confirm recurrent themes

Key: Concept boxes without date = interpretation of data.
Concept boxes with date = data

Issues of Validity, Reliability and 'Generalisability'

As suggested in chapter 1 of this thesis it is important to give consideration to the issues of validity, reliability and generalisability associated with the research methodology. Easterby Smith et al (2002) argue that the constructionist's concern with issues of validity centre on whether the study clearly gains access to the experiences of those in the research setting, while issues of reliability are concerned with transparency in how sense was made from the raw data. The generalisability of

the concepts that emerge rests on the degree to which the concepts and constructs derived from the study have relevance to other settings (Easterby Smith et al, 2002).

Validity

The collection and analysis of data throughout the research has been underpinned by a consistent effort to capture dialogue, in which individuals recount their own recent experiences of enacting influence in relation to others and their observations of others enacting influence, within a collaborative setting. This approach has ensured that the collection and analysis of data has been focused on specific examples of the enactment of influence, rather than reported generalisations. Interviewees were particularly selected for interview on the basis of their reputations as participants who were perceived by others to have developed considerable influence and played prominent roles within collaborative settings. In this sense the participants selected appeared to be well qualified to discuss their own experiences and to provide rich data on their close observations of others. While this approach also characterised the earlier stages of the research, selection criteria were of particular importance in stage 3 where participants were invited to discuss and reflect upon the conceptual framework in the light of their own experiences as active participants in action interviews.

Reliability

In the early stages of the research concept mapping was used to identify key themes. The findings of the research were summarised at each stage to identify patterns of recurrent themes. Examples of summaries are provided in table 2.6 below which

shows recurrent themes. The consistency with which key themes arose across cases was identified through summary tables, for example figure 3.6 in chapter 3, which shows the recurrence of themes across cases.

In the later stages of the research, when interviewing became the main method, tables were used to establish patterns of recurrent themes, to review the consistency with which the themes arose across cases and to interpret the meaning of the data items. Multiple instances of data, which related in a similar way to each of the concepts that had emerged as a pattern, were identified in this way. For example figures 5.3 and 5.4 in chapter 5. The concern was not so much to do with frequency but with the potential to provide richly aggregating data around consistently recurring themes.

Opportunities were taken during interviews to clarify meaning by probing and asking participants to clarify their responses. Themes that had arisen in interviews with previous interviewees were often discussed with new participants to gain a sense of the degree of their validity. Additionally themes that had arisen in previous interviews with the same participants were often reviewed on subsequent occasions to check that they were still valid and meaningful. The data resulting both from the early action research stage of the research and from interviews was discussed at regular intervals with academics and research colleagues in tutorials. Tables were later used to demonstrate evidence of the data and the interpretation which gave rise to each of the different dimensions of the conceptual framework (see chapter 6).

'Generalisability'

The empirical engagement has been largely conducted in organisations which belong to the Scottish College sector. However in order to widen the scope for the resulting framework to be applicable in other settings, throughout the research, attempts were made to collect data, in methodologically consistent ways, in other public sector environments, specifically both in the health and economic development sectors. Additionally a small number of interviews, which involved introducing the emerging conceptual framework in its various stages of development, were conducted in private sector settings. Some of these interviews were conducted in organisations located in other geographic areas of the UK and two interviews were held in a private sector multi-national company.

Even though the attempts made to widen the research settings in which the empirical engagement was undertaken were important to increasing the potential for generalisation, they are in themselves not adequate to justify generalising on the basis of volume of relevant data gathered. Neither was this research designed with that purpose in mind. Rather it is intended to demonstrate what Huxham and Hibbert (2008 p22) refer to as *recognisability and closeness* to the real world through an emphasis on *faithfulness* between the data gained in the research setting and the theoretical out put. They emphasise the importance of incorporating generalisability firstly, by concentrating on possibilities rather than on actualities throughout the research process. The process involves development of possibilities through discussion and the careful portrayal of the patterns of data in tentative terms. Secondly, accuracy is considered as reflecting *faithfulness* to the data rather than

replication of it. Thirdly a high level of importance is attributed to the style of rhetoric that is used to build a prevailing sense of possibilities rather than actualities, helping the user to arrive at an interpretation of the value of the concepts (Huxham and Hibbert 2008).

Implications for future research

The potential to increase the extent to which the resulting conceptual framework could have relevance in other contexts could be explored as part of a future research agenda. This could potentially involve the application of a different methodology, possibly based on the development of a set of hypotheses, arising from the dimensions of the conceptual framework which, could be explored through the use of surveys or questionnaires.

SUMMARY OF RECURRENT THEMES AND STEP 1 OF THE ANALYSIS

Of the themes that had emerged through the early process of data analysis, those set out in table 2.6 appeared consistently throughout the data collected and analysed:

Emerging Themes – Summary of Step 1 of the Analysis
 Issues and concerns associated with competencies and capabilities for inter-organisation collaboration throughout the data collected in stage 1 included the following:

Developing relationships, involving:

- ❖ building a network of contacts
- ❖ inspiring and building trust,
- ❖ being capable of influencing others,
- ❖ having a strong reputation,
- ❖ demonstrating political astuteness,
- ❖ being confident

Influence which was discussed as a recurring concern was described as:

- ❖ a form of leadership,
- ❖ involving a number of different roles
- ❖ involving a particular set of skills
- ❖ the use of political skills
- ❖ associated with a person's credibility
- ❖ requires the ability to work with different culture
- ❖ developing relationships with others
- ❖ engaging others in dialogue

Table 2.6: Emerging themes - summary of step 1 of the analysis

The implications of stage 1 of the research were that a range of different ideas associated with competencies and capabilities were identified by participants as being important to collaboration. Among these the concept of *influence* appeared to be a concern of particular interest and significance. It was described as a multifaceted concept and was reflected as an issue of relevance and concern throughout the data collected in stage 1 of the research.

On the basis of an initial scan of existing literature *influence* also appeared to be relatively under-explored in comparison with topics such as *trust* which have been researched in the literature on collaboration. An initial search for extant literature in the field of inter-organisational collaboration, with strong investigative focus on: *influence and political awareness and influence*, suggested that there may be an opportunity to contribute to the field in this area of research.

The focus of the investigation consequently became two fold: to further explore the idea of researching competencies associated with effective collaboration practice, with a particular interest in the *notion of influence*. In parallel with the next phase of empirical engagement, an initial review of the literature was conducted. The final section of this chapter is concerned with the initial engagement with the extant literature.

Having consistently identified the concept of influence, among many other factors of individual and group behaviour, as being relevant to effective collaboration practice, it was important to identify the extent to which such issues, emerging in the data, found resonance within extant literature. In this way the research would remain true to what Gummesson (2000) described as *a hermeneutic spiral*. This is a term for

describing the process of alternating between attempts to understand the phenomena of interest through actual experience and attempts to gain access to opportunities to understand the phenomenon through the experience of others. The spiral illustrates the gyrations between what is termed understanding (our own understanding) and pre-understanding (understanding of others).

INITIAL ANALYSIS OF EXTANT LITERATURE

This early engagement with the literature was undertaken with the aim of identifying recurrent themes to consider in parallel with, and to inform the process of data collection and analysis rather than as a formal literature review.

The scarcity of literature which treats influence as a focal concern within the context of collaboration soon became apparent. Therefore literature from the fields of leadership and management was included and formed the base upon which the later more extensive review of literature, set out in chapter 4 of this research, was constructed. The method used to analyse the literature and to develop a series of themes was drawn from Hart's (1998) approach to the representation of ideas drawn from the literature as tables or maps to aid analysis in terms of how we classify and focus on important themes. A number of potential themes emerged and are set out in the table below (see table 2.7). This approach to capturing and displaying the themes emerging from the literature, based on the use of summary tables, was developed later as the main method for the extensive review of literature discussed in chapter 4.

<p>Competencies, behaviours skills and attitudes</p>	<p>A number of writers examine the behaviours, skills and attitudes that successful boundary spanners use (Pearce, 2000; Williams, 2002; Faerman et al, 2000; Denis et al, 2001; Buckley et al). Williams (2002) explores the major factors that encourage and nurture collaborative behaviour, the competence of key agents within inter-organisational theatres, and identifies a framework of competencies that produce effective inter-organisational behaviour these involve: building sustainable relationships, managing through influencing and negotiation, managing complexities and interdependencies, managing risks, accountabilities and motivations.</p> <p>Other approaches to exploring the characteristics of effective participants within collaborations focus specifically on partnering skills (Buckley, Glaister and Husan, 2002) in which a number of categories of skills are analysed including inter partner skills, managing the international joint venture managers and the upward management skills of managers. Skill areas such as inter partner skills are related to levels of influence - or domains of influence – defined as: macro, industry sector, firm and individual manager. Inter partner skills include credibility which is associated with a good knowledge of the business and the ability to deliver, knowledge and respect for the partner, genuine desire to recognise the partners strengths, the possession of skills respected by partners and the ability to command respect through demonstrating knowledge of the business.</p> <p>Success in progressing through critical phases of a partnership is attributed by Moss Kanter (1994) largely to the ability of participants to manage relationships with partners; this demands managers who are sensitive to political, cultural, organisational and human issues. Kanter argues that, instead of being wholly focused on the economics of the deal, companies should pay attention to the political, cultural and human aspects of the partnerships. Certain stages of the relationship can prove to be particularly formative in the process of achieving collaborative advantage, which is seen as an important organisational attribute.</p>
<p>Influence Tactics</p>	<p>Other writers have focused specifically on the behavioural variables associated with influence behaviour, expressed as influence tactics (Kipnis et al, 1980; Yukl, 2002; Keys and Case; Mowday) and often combined into categories of influence behaviour and influencing styles (Farmer 1999, 1997). This is an angle taken by other writers who express an interest in the notion of influence. For example Pearce (2000) is concerned with two general categories of influence behaviour - hard and soft – while other writers (Denis, 2000; Buckley, Glaister and Husan, 2002) have developed typologies.</p>
<p>Opportunities to influence</p>	<p>Huxham and Beech's (2003) conceptualisation of "points of power" highlighted both typical motives and important opportunities to enact influence within a collaborative context by acting on and gaining leverage from certain openings in the collaborative process. To identify the points at which power can be exerted, Huxham and Beech (2003) conceptualise the power infrastructure of collaborations which consists of; opportunities to directly influence the agenda and the issues that are addressed by the participants, the act of naming the collaborative group, selection of participants, the process for appointments, the form of invitation, what information is received, the location of a gathering and the timing of events.</p>
<p>Conditions for Influence</p>	<p>Some writers focus on the conditions within which influence is enacted (Hardy, 1998; Hardy et al, 2003; Gray, 1985). For example Hardy (1998) suggests that actors with access to authority, resources and discursive legitimacy have the best chance of success in influencing. While Hardy et al (2003) point to factors such as embeddedness and involvement as being critical to the production of resources, knowledge and influence. Influence in this context is defined as "political effects". Gray points to other conditions (1985) suggesting that collaboration will be enhanced by convenors who possess legitimate authority and appreciation skills and who can serve as networkers or reticulists to mobilise other stakeholders.</p>

Table 2.7: Analysis of themes from a limited sample of extant literature

Table 2.7 provides a summary of the salient issues that emerged through the initial, limited review of literature undertaken in stage 1 of the research. It also provides an example of the method that was used to explore the extant literature in an analytical way by using simple tables to: highlight central themes, begin the process of building an argument around key themes and examine these themes in relation to the implications of the first stage of empirical engagement.

This preliminary and limited engagement with the literature in the fields of both management and inter-organisational collaboration stimulated a shift in the focus of interest in the study towards the concept of *influence*, as a phenomenon of interest broader than that limited to the concept of competency. This was particularly inspired by Huxham and Beech's (2003) work on *points of power* which has highlighted both typical motives and important opportunities to enact influence within a collaborative context by acting on and gaining leverage from certain openings in the collaborative process.

From both the initial analysis of the literature and the early empirical engagement, it seemed that there was scope to further explore the concept of influence in a similar way, through the lens of *points of influence*. This would involve exploring the idea that there may be specific points at which influence may be leveraged to achieve progress in the collaboration - in effect the conceptualisation of *points of influence* could provide insights into collaboration practice that highlight *where* there is potential to influence in the collaborative process and *what* participants may seek to influence. This approach was also likely to provide insights into *how* participants enact influence.

The initial analysis of literature also provided some early insights into other potentially important themes found in existing theory. It was important however to ensure that the scope for the research remained open to emerging concepts, while developing against the backdrop of a growing awareness of existing theory (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Practicing and maintaining a reflexive approach

continued to ensure an approach characterised by openness to emerging possibilities (Easterby Smith et al, 2002; Ellis and Berger in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005). This lies at the heart of emergent theory development as described by Eden and Huxham (2003) which involves a cycle moving between stages of action, reflection and developing theory. It was therefore appropriate to revert to data collection to gather rich data in the context of a small number of research situations based on the use of semi-structured interviews. The analysis of these interviews was intended to create a loose agenda for re-engaging far more extensively with the extant literature. The approach taken to planning and conducting interviews within the selected research situations, the data gathered and analysed and the subsequent focusing of the research question, form the principal areas of discussion in chapter 3.

**CHAPTER 3: STAGE 2 RESEARCH - RESEARCH SITUATIONS,
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS AND
FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on stage 2 of the research, shown in the lower right hand quadrant of figure 3.1 below.

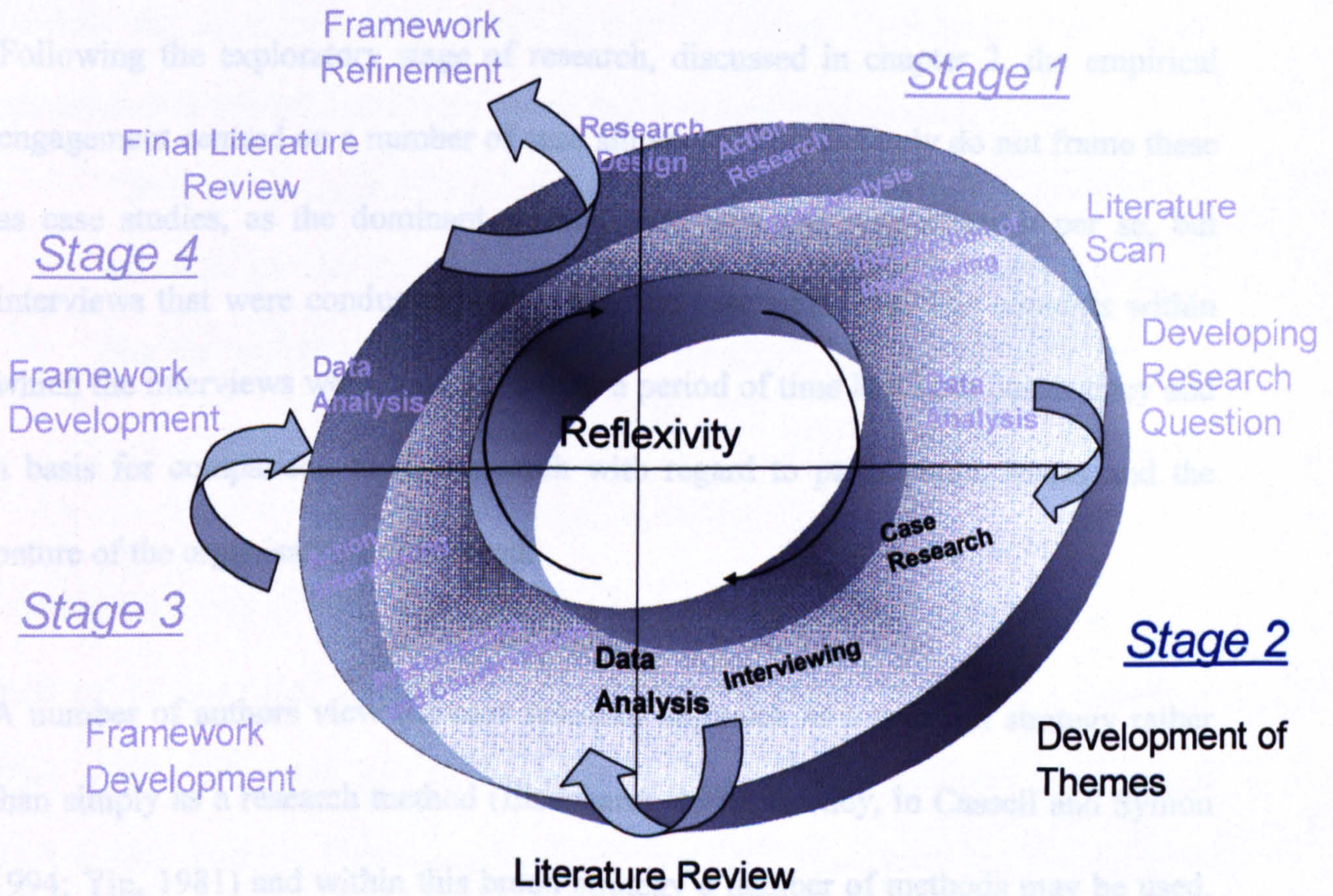


Figure 3.1: Stage 2 of the research

In this chapter two principal research situations and a subsidiary research situation are introduced. The research situations are outlined and examples of data are drawn from each research setting. These illustrate the range of themes and issues of interest that emerged from data collection and analysis in the second phase of empirical engagement. Some recurrent themes and issues are identified. These are highlighted in relation to the further development of the research question. The chapter closes with a summary of the outcomes of the second stage of the research. This analysis is

later developed in conjunction with the extensive review of literature, as discussed in chapter 4.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN *RESEARCH SITUATIONS* - A RESEARCH STRATEGY

Following the exploratory stage of research, discussed in chapter 2, the empirical engagement centred on a number of case situations. I deliberately do not frame these as case studies, as the dominant method used was not case research per se, but interviews that were conducted within specific case situations. The contexts within which the interviews were conducted over a period of time lent both consistency and a basis for comparison to the research with regard to participants, issues and the nature of the organisations concerned.

A number of authors view the case research approach as a research strategy rather than simply as a research method (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hartley, in Cassell and Symon 1994; Yin, 1981) and within this broad strategy a number of methods may be used. As Yin (1981) states:

“As a research strategy the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” Yin (1981 p59)

The virtue of gathering data from specific research cases or situations in the context of this research is evident for a number of reasons. In chapter 2, I drew attention to the subjective nature of the phenomenon of interest and the need to explore the

phenomenon in the light of both existing theory and the perceptions of those in real-life settings, acknowledging that the phenomenon itself is likely to be intertwined with the nature of the context within which it is studied. This clearly raises issues with regard to the potential to apply the resulting theoretical framework to situations beyond the contexts within which it was generated. Eisenhardt (1989 p547) acknowledges this potential weakness of building theory from cases:

“Building theory from cases may result in narrow and idiosyncratic theory.... the risks are that the theory describes a very idiosyncratic phenomenon or that the theorist is unable to raise the level of generality of the theory.”

Eisenhardt (1989 p547)

Bearing this potentially inherent problem in mind and mindful of the view that theory built out of cases may consequently be limited or *modest*, there were a variety of other reasons for using specific research situations for the purposes of empirical work in this research. The reasons outlined by Hartley (in Cassell and Symon 1994 p209), are pertinent to this research:

“Many researchers in their pursuit of delicate and intricate interactions and processes occurring within organisations will use a combination of methods, partly because complex phenomena may be best approached through several methods and partly deliberately to triangulate (and thereby improve validity).” Hartley (in Cassell and Symon 1994 p209)

The case research approach provides a basis upon which to triangulate the outcomes of the research. Triangulation is described by many writers on qualitative research,

for example Robson (1993) and Cassell and Symon (1994), as the deliberate use of evidence from different sources and of different methods of collecting evidence which strengthens the outcomes of the research and enhances credibility.

Additionally, approaches to research based on cases are regarded as likely to provide a strong basis upon which to explore areas of original but also emergent theory (Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 1994; Yin, 1981; Eisenhardt, 1989). Indeed Eisenhardt (1989) cites the argument made by Glaser and Strauss, that it is the very close relationship with empirical reality that permits the development of a relevant and valid theory. The opportunity to explore issues in depth, within their context, means that theory development can occur through the *systematic piecing together* of detailed evidence to generate theory (Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 1994).

Rather than employing case studies as a particular research method or technique, the approach taken in this research is closer to that described by Eisenhardt (1989) in which case research forms an important dimension of a strategy based on constructing theories from case studies. Eisenhardt (1989) provides a roadmap for building theories from case study research, synthesizing previous work on: qualitative methods (Miles and Huberman, 1994), the design of case study research (Yin, 1981) and grounded theory building (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and builds upon it in specific ways to produce a more complete step by step guide from the early stages of defining the research question and selecting cases to reaching closure.

Some potential pitfalls of research using case studies are explored by Yin (1981), particularly the tendency to spend inordinate time and effort to construct readable narratives. Yin (1981) suggests that instead any narrative accounts should be organised around substantive topics of the case study – each narrative portion should integrate evidence from the different data elements, which therefore still need to be recorded precisely but in the form of notes rather than narratives. The narrative should be organised around specific propositions, questions or activities with flexibility for modifying these topics as analysis progresses. Yin's (1981) recommendation has, to some extent, influenced the approach taken in this research where, rather than forming the focus of research in themselves, cases have been used to illustrate where specific issues or themes have been raised recurrently, within and across cases.

It is acknowledged that the strength of research conducted in different case situations stems from the opportunity that case research extends to explore social processes as they unfold over time in organisations (Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 1994). In this vein, a number of writers (Gummesson, 2000; Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 1994) suggest that case research is appropriate for research conducted in environments where there is the intention to generate theory as a means for initiating change:

“Case study analysis has allowed for the tracking of change over time, as a response both to historical forces, contextual pressures and the dynamics of various stakeholder groups in proposing or opposing change.”

(Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 1994, p 208)

Identifying and observing change over time, as a response to the interventions undertaken for the client, was an important element of the initial empirical work carried out, within consultancy settings, in the action research mode. It remained more as an implicit, underlying objective throughout the rest of the research. Tracking change was integral to the process of observing what was happening in the environment of the case situation, in the interests of developing theory or an extension of theory that would be of benefit to practitioners, consultants or agents of change (Gummesson, 2000).

CHOICE OF RESEARCH CASES

Although to a great extent I was limited in my initial choice of case situations to those to which I had access as a management consultant, there were some theoretical criteria behind the choices. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest, when building theory from case studies, cases should be chosen for theoretical rather than statistical reasons. The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases, extend emergent theory or to fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types. The goal of theoretical sampling is therefore to choose cases which are likely to replicate or extend theory. As suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) it makes sense to choose cases which are likely to illuminate the phenomena of interest in interesting ways such as:

“extreme situations and polar types in which the process of interest is transparently observable” Eisenhardt (1989 p537)

For this reason choices were made which would facilitate *cross case* contrast and comparison as well as *within case* analysis, over an extended period of time, to provide the basis for longitudinal study.

With these criteria in mind, two principal research cases have been used as the platform for the empirical investigation; these have been supplemented by data from other contexts. Within one of these cases the role of the researcher was initially as a consultant, as discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, while in the second stage of the research, as reported in this chapter, the role was purely as an academic researcher. As there was some overlap between roles, in the transition from the consulting role to the researcher role, some of the data drawn upon in this chapter is data that was collected in the role of consultant as well as of researcher (Gummesson, 2002).

As highlighted above, one of the principal research situations was secured through what was, at the outset of the research, a consulting assignment - the review of the effectiveness of the Further Education Development Directorate (FEDD). The FEDD is a directorate of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC). It was established to tackle the issues relating to underperformance in Scotland's colleges by drawing on the expertise available in the sector and promoting collaboration across the sector. As already discussed in chapter 2 of this research and emphasised above, action research was the main method employed in relation to this consultancy assignment in the exploratory stage. This was later supplanted by semi-structured interviews, when the case was secured formally as a research case, and the researcher no longer intervened as a consultant but as an academic researcher. Data was gathered from this case over a period of three years.

Supplementary data was also gathered from a closely related situation involving collaboration between a college and a university, which had benefited from the

services of FEDD. Here the researcher was introduced initially as a consultant, undertaking the Review of FEDD's first two years of operations, and later as a researcher. The method used was semi-structured interviews. Data from this case was gathered over a period of two years.

As indicated in a previous discussion, in the second main research situation involving a merger of two Further Education Colleges - Fife and Glenrothes Colleges - the role of the researcher was purely as an academic researcher (Gummesson, 2000). In this case interviewing was the method used from the outset. This research situation was researched over a period of three years. Initial contact with this case situation commenced during phase one of the research.

The choice of these research settings, which are all located within the Scottish college sector and are also geographically centred in Scotland, inevitably introduces some potential constraints with regard to the potential of the research to generate principles that have more general application. This limitation is acknowledged. Attempts to broaden the scope of the research beyond the college sector were undertaken through interviews conducted over two years in other types of public sector organisations. These included two health organisations, one located in Scotland and one in England and an economic development organisation in Scotland. Additionally interviews were held with a private sector organisation: a multi-national manufacturer of non-woven fabrics. While the data from these interviews has not been analysed in as much depth as those relating to the main cases they have provided useful supplementary data and an invaluable point of reference. The

additional interviews and the data generated from these is referred to in chapter 6 of this thesis.

The following table (table 3.1) shows the types and range of data collected and the methods used within the chosen research situations.

Research Case	Methods	Data Gathered
FEDD (Principal Case 1)	Action Research Interviewing	Project set up meeting, correspondence Workshop notes, client briefing notes, reports, notes of meetings, interviews with stakeholders, presentation material Interview transcripts
Borders College Heriot Watt University (Client of FEDD and used a supplementary case)	Action Research Interviewing	Notes of meetings as part of initial consultancy for FEDD Interview transcripts Documentation on JV process
Glenrothes College and Fife College merger (Principal Case 2)	Interviewing	Interview transcripts, Documentation on: merger process, organisation change process, joint policies, stakeholder consultation document, merger project plan, collaboration steering group documents

Table 3.1: Types of Data gathered from research cases and methods used within research cases

Examples of the data indicated in table 3.1 above will be shown in later sections of this chapter. Examples of how the data was analysed will also be provided. Additionally the process of drawing out the results of the analysis will be illustrated.

An example of how data, as illustrated in table 3.1 above, was collected in a particular research situation and used as a basis upon which to explore the notion of *points of influence within collaborative settings* is set out in the form of a vignette.

This was developed from an excerpt taken from my research diary. The data used to develop this vignette was mainly collected during client meetings and was drawn from a combination of meeting notes, reflective notes made in the research diary following meetings and documentation provided by the client.

Vignette of case specific data gathered and analysed during initial stages of the research

In 2002 the Further Education Funding Council established a new directorate as a result of direct ministerial intervention designed to address the "under-performing tail" of the further education sector. The Further Education Development Directorate was intended to take measures to address issues of concern to the Funding Council in relation to the serious financial health and in a number of cases, poor performance of some colleges in the sector.

Due largely to the individual appointed to lead the directorate, it has become a successful instrument of collaboration between the council and the sector. By adopting a particular approach FEDD has successfully reduced tensions between the council, through which college funds are disbursed, and the sector which provides educational services, it has addressed and helped to solve some key sectoral issues. The FEDD's declared philosophy, in line with Minister's objectives and the council's current strategy, is "to work with colleges in a spirit of mutual co-operation offering the support, advice and mentoring services from practising (current or recent) managers from the FE sector".

Having been appointed initially as a consultant to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of this new body over a period of 2 years, I have also subsequently provided consultancy support to the development of their bank of secondees (FEDD staff are seconded on an assignment basis from colleges throughout the sector to assist those colleges experiencing difficulties to resolve organisation problems and financial vulnerabilities).

During my first engagement with this organisation it became clear that, if successful, the FEDD model could become an instrument of successful collaboration in a sector beset by relationships characterised by tension, territorialism and suspicion. The brief was a daunting one for the director appointed to take the organisation forward and the first year of operation posed some real challenges. One year later the FEDD is a resounding success.

My work with FEDD has provided me with opportunities to gather data initially as a consultant engaged in a formal assignment and latterly as a researcher. This has enabled me to form some early and as yet unexplored assumptions as to: how an organisation as a whole, through the approach taken and the behaviours demonstrated by key individuals, can leverage influence to meet the challenges of collaboration and successfully deliver many of its objectives.

Table 3.2: Excerpt from Research Diary - February 2004

To explore the implications of the assumptions that emerged from case specific data, further interviews were conducted in the FEDD case. Additionally, since a second case situation – the Glenrothes and Fife Colleges merger - had been negotiated, there was an opportunity to conduct some initial interviews to explore the theme of *points of influence*. Examples of data gathered in both these settings are provided in the

section that follows and are preceded by a short discussion on the approach taken to the interviews, how they were conducted and the choice of participants.

INTERVIEWS BASED ON RESEARCH CASES – “SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS”

The interviews conducted within the main research settings were treated in a similar way to those carried out in the exploratory phase of the research, discussed in chapter 2. Rather than opportunities to validate preconceived ideas or to pin down evidence or ‘universal truths’ that could be used to produce generalised theory, the interviews conducted within all of the research cases, at this stage in the research, were treated as occasions for constructing social reality. They were viewed as valid opportunities for capturing *shared cultural understandings* and enactments of the social world (Silverman, 2004; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003). Later in the research (documented in chapters 5 and 6) interviews were used to explore the implications of the emerging theoretical framework.

Interview format

The interviews followed a very loosely structured format. Typically I would give a brief description of the emerging focus of the research and explain the approach taken to exploring the issues of interest. I would then ask the interviewee to *tell the story of the collaboration* and in particular to focus on the behaviours and approaches of individuals who had been particularly influential in taking the collaboration forward. I would occasionally intervene to seek clarification or probe for further development of an interesting point or issue but mostly the interview was dedicated to listening, engaging both verbally and non verbally, and capturing what the

respondent was saying. Examples from my interview notes and from my research diary illustrate the approach. At this stage the interviews were recorded through note taking. These notes were written up into partial transcriptions.

The way in which the interview was introduced to the interviewee naturally changed over time as the research question was honed. The following three excerpts taken from my notes of three different initial interviews from the Glenrothes and Fife Colleges merger case demonstrates the changes in introductory format over time:

Interview 1 with CT

“Began the interview by asking CT to “tell me the story” having talked through the poster - reflecting the interest in points of influence – and explained the iterative approach to my research working between data, literature and reflection” CT/G/F1

Interview 2 with CT

*“I set out the focus of the interview as two fold to ask CT to update me on developments towards the merger and to gain access to relevant documents. I also set out the iterative process that I was using to build up my study by moving from data to literature back to data and reminded him of the emerging focus of my study – the nature of influence in interagency collaborations, exploring all types of influence in terms of the behaviour of players the direction of their influence attempts and the tactics they used”
CT/G/F2*

Interview 1 with BD

"I asked BD to explain to me the process that led up to the pre-merger situation that the two colleges now find themselves in and her experiences in relation to the merger process and in particular to focus on individuals who had been particularly influential in the pre-merger process leading up to merger. I asked her to highlight the behaviours and approaches used by key individuals that had proved to be particularly influential" BD/G/F3

Interview Participants

The participants in all of the interviews were senior managers and were all actively involved as participants within the collaborations. The series of interviews held within each research situation was initiated through an interview with the most senior individual and following this, access was gained to other participants. As the collaboration unfolded some of the participants changed, which provided opportunities to gain fresh perspectives on the case.

This section of the chapter is dedicated to providing examples of excerpts of interview data from each of the case situations followed by examples of how the interview data was analysed and how implications were drawn from cross case comparisons. I now turn to data taken from one of the first interviews held, once I had become established purely as a researcher in the FEDD case. I then turn to the analysis of this data.

Excerpt of data from a FEDD case interview

“There are people who have influencing skills that will let you go further – by using personality as an instrument of influence - as a tool. With JB there was a lot of fixing behind the scenes, – you cannot achieve change without it – but you can achieve compliance. In the same way that John has that credibility, I want our team to have the credibility...so that people will want to approach them. Some of it is about telling stories about what has gone before – stories about individual secondees and their experiences – that’s the influence we can have telling the story of other colleges – trying to advise is difficult – sometimes it has to be quite directive in order to get people to think about things a little bit differently. Of course managing RM was critical – and the elected council – managing their perceptions – its like back office and front office. JB and I formed an alliance within an alliance – acting as a bridging structure between the council and the sector, the colleges’ relationship is different with different parts of the council – it’s the cultural pattern. We need to work on understanding the institutions and the way they behave as they do – rather than pin pointing what is wrong, the (Minister’s) analysis is right – we were not understanding colleges – we are not using the right behaviours to find out what was wrong and then using that to define what is the role that we can play to support them, whether it is compliance monitoring or as collaborator. Some of us will approach it in a more systematic way – what do you need to know to understand the way colleges work – get to know the colleges – spend more time with them. You have got to have been there to understand them, encourage them to take advantage of FEDD while they are there. This means using personality – personally visiting the

colleges – seeing their side of the story – ask their views on the prospect of working with specific secondees – will you find that difficult?” AG/FEDDI

The interview that this excerpt was taken from was analysed through a structured process based on concept mapping. A concept map shown in figure 3.2 below was created using Huxham's (2003) approach to emergent theory development, as explicated in chapter 2 of this thesis. Figure 3.2 illustrates many of the themes which appeared consistently in the interview transcripts throughout the process of analysis.

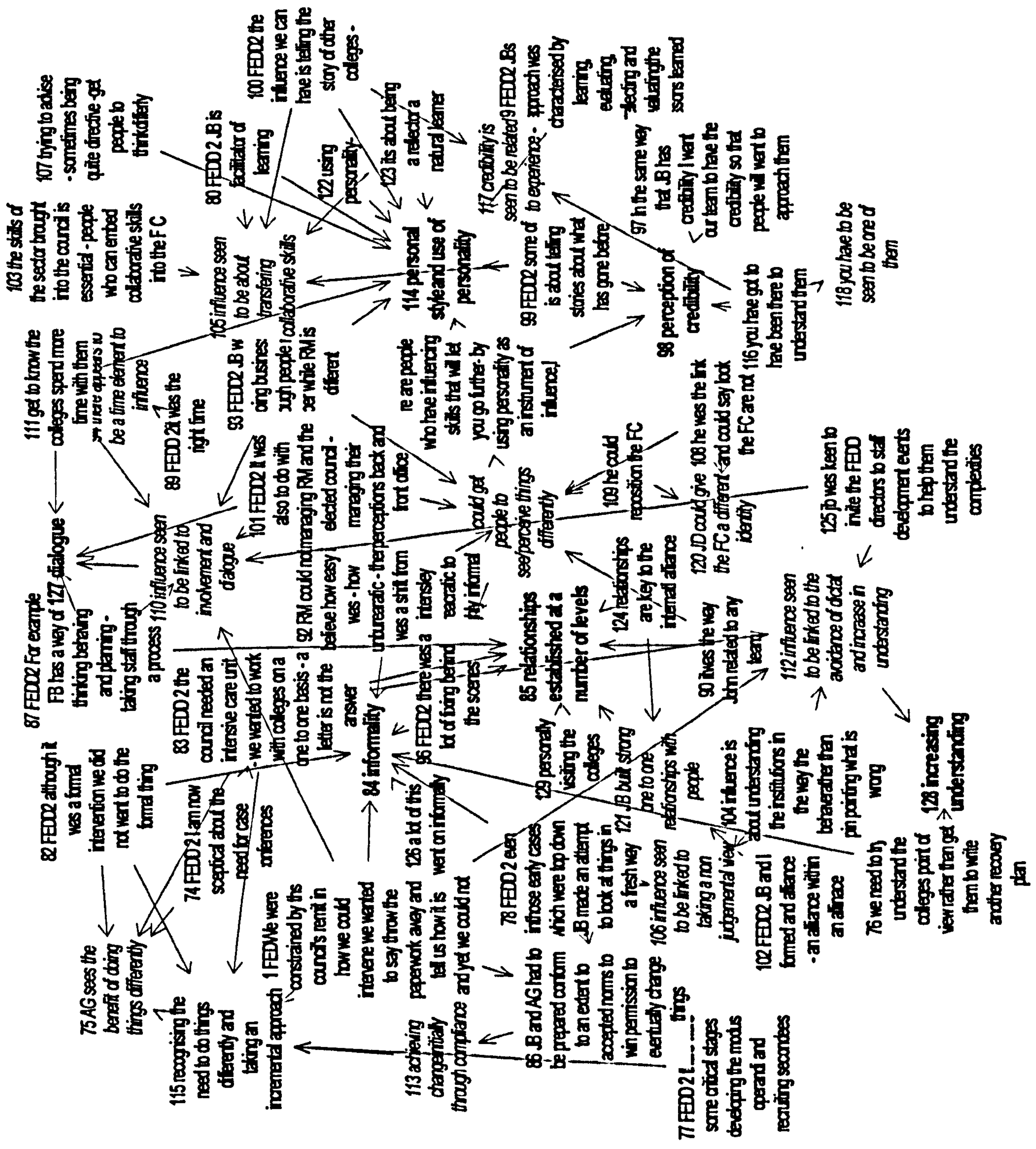


Figure 3.2: Data Map – analysis of FEDD case interviews

Key: Concepts specifying FEDD = data
 Italics = interpretation
 Non italics = interpretation of data
 Bold = emerging themes

Figure 3.2 illustrates many of the themes that appeared with consistency throughout the initial interviews. These are summarised below:

- ❖ The importance of personal style and use of personality
- ❖ The importance of relationships
- ❖ The perception of credibility
- ❖ The importance of increasing understanding between individuals
- ❖ The importance of dialogue

These themes arose consistently from the analysis of the data, both from the initial interviews and from the research diary. They also were apparent in other forms of data. The table shown in table 3.3 below shows a limited analysis of different types of data gathered from the FEDD case. The table highlights different types of data, as summarised in the right hand column. This includes some interview data.

The criteria on the left hand side of the table were identified in a reflective and reflexive exercise undertaken to gain a clearer understanding of how the collaboration had developed over a period of one year. These criteria were derived from the analysis of data emerging from the research diary, the data maps and the tabular forms of analysis undertaken. The middle two columns of the table illustrate the changes in behaviour that I had observed from the beginning of the consulting engagement in 2003, when I was assigned to the case as a consultant, to June 2004 when I was established as researcher in the case. This exercise was undertaken to explore my early assumptions as to the potential *points of influence* behind the

success of the FEDD experience, which could be linked to certain significant outcomes.

The aim of this tabular form of analysis was to identify the changes in approach, behaviour and attitude of the participants towards each other, over time, shown by comparison of features of the partnership identified in left hand column and the changes observed in relation to these over a period of a year.

What is different?	June 2003	June 2004	Data source
Degree of formality internally demonstrated by key individuals within client organisations (FEDD and SFEFC)	Highly formal in tone and style – <i>“take and be seen to take a firm grip on the management difficulties”</i> Correspondence suggests interventionist/auditing approach especially in relation to one of the initial assignments (A) This is a strange secret boy’s club – a compliance culture – 50 notices in the loo telling you what to do/ clocking in and clocking out of the building You have got to manage through the culture anyone who didn’t have an inner confidence would flounder.	Formality significantly reduced – confidence that FEDD has delivered valuable outcomes through a collaborative approach – <i>“consulting style approach is working”</i> JB now working from his college base, approach is light on bureaucracy	Case conference papers Initial council circular letter Correspondence Minutes of meetings Observation of routines and rituals Consulting interview notes
Behaviour of client (SFEFC and FEDD) towards consultants	Formal, courteous, punctilious approach to deadlines, procedure, council papers, access to files highly controlled in atmosphere of secrecy. Multiple micro amendments to all documents submitted Questionnaire for interviews was highly edited by AG and sent letter out to interviewees. Notable shift to less formal approach to the 24 hr event/workshop chaired by JB reflecting his style – warm welcome to consultants	Very warm and friendly – enthusiastic greeting – lots of chat – lots of laughter about early war stories re initial FEDD cases. Pleased with our report and the input on consulting skills – <i>“this has been a very positive development.”</i> Less emphasis on deadlines, AG expressed no desire to see questionnaire, no letter sent out to interviewees. Wanted to repeat the process we introduced during previous engagement of meeting to discuss an early draft of the report.	Consultant briefings Workshop notes and observations Formal minutes of meetings Informal notes of meetings Amendments/editing of documents/ reports by the client
Degree of emphasis placed on written processes procedures/ protocols/ level of bureaucracy	Tight, highly controlled and monitored especially case conference procedure Seconded contracts etc	Much looser, very little evidence of bureaucratic procedures fewer case conferences more voluntary requests for FEDD support. More emphasis on developing FEDD secondees and on instilling a consulting style approach.	Case conference papers Correspondence Minutes of meetings

<p>Relationship between partners FEDD/SFEFC</p>	<p>Highly formal but open Characterised by respect For JB's track record, JB conscious of highly bureaucratic environment and ritualistic way of working, conscious of the need to comply with this to instil confidence. JB strictly working from council office. Producing documents to council style guidelines Files on cases kept meticulously – strong emphasis on orderliness, confidentiality and procedure “Working across cultures was hard but – made easier with the likes of Anne's support and other directors once I had gained their trust by handling things they could not handle”</p>	<p>JB working from his own office with occasional visits to council. File consisted of notes, 'post – its' and scribbled aide notes from telephone calls – met me in a hotel lobby and handed over material – got his secretary to send more through the post. Only one letter too sensitive to hand over as worded very strongly by RMcC</p>	<p>Consulting Interviews John Burt, Roger McClure and Anne Grindley Output of workshops – flipcharts and notes Observation Consultant briefings</p>
<p>Relationship between FEDD and FE Colleges</p>	<p>JB felt that Colleges harboured latent suspicion of relationship between FEDD and council – “hit <i>squad</i>”/puppet of the council – in the eyes of the sector FEDD is “<i>on trial</i>” Fears suspicions jealousy Principals feared loss of sovereignty and power over their own domain Colleges insisted requests should be bottom up (voluntarily from colleges) as well as top down (council directed)</p>	<p>Most colleges interviewed positive about the contribution of FEDD – most attribute this to JB's style acting as a mediator between colleges and council and selecting the right individual (FEDD secondee) to each assignment. Most very enthusiastic about the model – successfully drawing upon expertise that exists in the sector – many intimated that outsiders do not understand our business</p>	<p>Correspondence Minutes of meetings Consulting Interview notes Telephone conversations</p>
<p>Relationship between SFEFC and Colleges</p>	<p>Remote, lacking in mutual understanding often hostile. All transactions of a parent child nature. Style autocratic. Colleges critical of lack of understanding and experience demonstrated by SFEFC as to how to manage a college.</p>	<p>Evidence from interviews that FEDD has acted as a bridge between the sector and the council – developing better mutual respect and understanding. SFEFC now seen as less remote.</p>	<p>Case conference notes Case files Consulting Interview notes Output of workshops–flipcharts and notes Observation Telephone conversations Contracts and agreements</p>
<p>FEDD's attitude towards the challenge of collaboration with the sector</p>	<p>Trepidation, a sense of an awesome challenge Initial cases were dangerous territory – huge files</p>	<p>JB confident that it has been a success although conscious of scope to improve time for someone else to take the Directorship Director relaxed and clearly comfortable with his own contribution wants to move on to complete new projects in his own college and find “<i>ways of playing more influential role in sector</i>”</p>	<p>Meetings with JB Meetings with FEDD secondees Interview with JB</p>

Table 3.3: Relationship Maturity Model –exploring possible “points of influence”

The analysis of factors set out in table 3.3 highlighted issues that appeared to be important to influencing positive developments in the collaboration between FEDD,

the council and the sector. These gave rise to some ideas about what may have been *points of influence*. The following points made in the research diary relate to these ideas:

Potential/emerging *points of influence* – an analysis of the factors that facilitated the change in relationships as documented above.

JB's perception was that he was instrumental in influencing SFEFC to adopt a co-operative model from the outset, insisting that FEDD would only be successful if it were seen to be "working with" colleges and was led and staffed by people with strong track records and credibility in the sector – this required some tough negotiation at the beginning – "it demanded a much more subtle model not a badge of authority". JB asserted "the original top down model proposed was horrifying" but he was able to persuade RM to change his mind.

Although at the outset he adapted to a bureaucratic way of working based on council procedures, rites and rituals, JB sought over time to reduce the bureaucracy attached to FEDD engagements to a minimum and to emphasise the personal touch, the power of networks and contacts. "I had to take a step back to move forward".

Part of a collaborative approach was the idea to invite Principals to nominate secondees for the FEDD bank, providing an opportunity for involvement and volunteering, JB then matched people to assignments based on his knowledge and judgement of the characters involved.

JB used his personal network, knowledge and judgement to match the right person to each assignment and to allow colleges to decide whether to accept the proposed secondee.

JB provided an intermediary approach to resolving difficulties between the council and colleges.

JBs style is seen to be very influential this is both his perception and the perception of other. JB talks of a "quiet authority based on knowledge, contacts and insight"

These factors appear to have been key to the success of FEDD as a "bridging structure" between the council and the sector. However further analysis is required to confirm these assumptions and to identify other potential points of influence, that as yet, have not emerged from this limited analysis of data.

Table 3.4: Excerpt from Research Diary - March 2004

On reviewing the early outcomes of analysis (described in chapter 2 - see table 2.5 - and in this chapter table 3.5), drawn from the research diary, the data maps and the tables, a pattern of recurring themes was evident. These themes, set out in table 3.5 below, appeared to characterise the recurring concerns articulated by respondents

from the FEDD case. They are further developed and confirmed as being of key importance to the research in table 3.6 at the end of this chapter in a cross case comparison table.

Emerging themes – Summary of Step 2 of the Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>the importance of forging personal relationships based on mutual understanding and credibility</i>➤ <i>taking time to understand the intended target of influence</i>➤ <i>being prepared to go beyond a purely bureaucratic approach to partnership – placing emphasis upon developing a clear understanding of how the target of influence sees the issue</i>➤ <i>using personality as an instrument of influence</i>➤ <i>engaging people in a dialogue</i>➤ <i>using examples to tell the story of how the FEDD model worked to the advantage of colleges</i>➤ <i>working behind the scenes to develop mutually acceptable solutions.</i>

Table 3.5: Emerging themes – summary of step 2 of the analysis

Some Initial Cross Case Comparisons Between FEDD and Fife and Glenrothes Colleges

The pattern of recurring themes that emerged from the initial FEDD interviews, summarised in table 3.5 above, found some resonance with the first interviews held in relation to the other main case study – the merger between Fife and Glenrothes Colleges. However there were also some signs of divergence. For example in the Fife Glenrothes case there appeared to be more emphasis on the delivery of a highly

structured, logical, incremental process, illustrated through process diagrams and delivered through formal process interventions. The concept of exploiting opportunities to influence *behind the scenes* highlighted in the FEDD interviews was less evident. In both cases there appeared to be similar emphasis placed on the importance of *relationships* and *creating and sustaining dialogue*, as aspects of behaviour relevant to enacting influence within collaborative settings.

The colleges' merger case offered an opportunity to gather data in a setting where collaboration had developed successfully, over many years, on a structured, planned, incremental basis – what they termed *logical incrementalism*. This phrase was used to describe a process of progressive collaboration from one successful experience to another. It is reminiscent of a process related concept inherent within Ring and Van de Ven's description of IORs as (1994 p96):

“socially contrived mechanisms for collective action, which are continually shaped and restructured by the actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved.” Ring and Van de Ven (1994 p96)

By building the confidence and capabilities required to collaborate successfully, through *serial experiences* of delivering joint venture projects, the partners moved from what they termed *deep collaboration* to merger. The journey from collaboration to merger in this case appeared to be a relatively smooth process. It was described by a detached observer from another organisation as a process of the coming together of two organisations which had a natural affinity:

"It's like siblings where it works – it's a love affair or like brother and sister..." (LHIFEDD)

An example of some data collected within this research setting is provided below and demonstrates the incremental approach taken by the partners, highlighting the importance of both process and relationships.

Example of Data from Glenrothes and Fife Colleges Merger

"There are some core documents in our history - I will give you the nuts and bolts of the journey we have been through... there are some stepping stones starting with the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement in 1999, the creation of an agreement to go ahead with the creation of the first JV 1999 for the Institute of Applied Technology, to the opening of its doors in 2000. This led to the development of a broader model for collaboration for further institute plans - plans for other areas of joint delivery and administration and the move from "deep collaboration to merger on 30th April 2004. This is new as a merger but not new as a collaboration we have had the experience of collaborating to develop the Joint Institutes Model, under which branding was to do with creating a family of brands.

The journey we have been on – the way we have planned and tested and brought into existence the Joint Institutes Model was very much driven by various versions of the diagram. The creation of a picture helped to align the thinkingwe drew it up... it must have been a couple of years ago. Joyce and I tend to – we drew it up before we launched it – we set up a process –

we have got institutions in here – it's a way for staff to understand it - take all separate areas of provision into a joint format of the institutions model – they could see themselves as “done” or “about to be done”. It was on the blocks for 2006. Tracking back on some crucial moments – the key point here is the relationship between Joyce and myself – before I was at Fife College – Joyce was Principal for the last couple of years - this was a crunch point....In terms of the process and the relationships – you cannot separate them...” CTIG/F

Another interviewee from the same case situation provided an account which placed similar emphasis on the importance of *relationships*. *Investing time in dialogue and relationships* appeared to carry a similar level of importance while also recognising that individuals may be seen as influential by virtue of setting an example, through the way they deliver certain outcomes, in a consistent way over time:

“Already having a relationship with the individual was essential in that I did not need to have explicit conversations –it was a case of I trust you – it was not conveyed openly but it is earned over time by observing over time - T was influential in shaping the approach we took – having worked with him and recognising him as someone who had good strategic vision I would see him time and time again do things that led the way for the sector...T's influence came through what he delivered.. C and I have paid more attention to organisational communication, facilitating communication for the development of relationships – the senior management here has never been in any doubt that this is the right way ahead - they are completely part of the

vision and the board too. An event will be described because of something recent – the roots go much deeper....” JJI/FG

Another interviewee, from the same case, also put considerable emphasis on the importance of relationships:

“Going back to the history of relationships between Glenrothes and Fife there were certain influential individuals who drove the collaboration into merger. When the original principal, TB, retired, ...C had been at Fife College and J and C worked then very closely together. It was a very simple thing but very important. – I know I’ve laboured the idea of relationships but it’s so important. J and C had demonstrated collaboration right through and succeeded because of this. They had strong vision and a strong strategy. They showed real commitment and they had a very strong relationship. At the start of the joint management team meeting they would say – okay, who’s chairing this? It wasn’t because it was disorganised it was because they liked that level of informality. They were not concerned with protocol. If I had an idea and talked to J about it, she would say - yes, but when are you going to take this forward? Why are you talking to me about it? Why not also talk to C? It became second nature to them...” BDIF

The strong emphasis placed on relationships provided an interesting point of contrast when examining the data collected from the third case situation, closely linked to FEDD, in which supplementary data was collected, pertaining to the college and university joint venture. In this case it was evident that, because sufficient time was

not invested in establishing sound relationships, participants encountered real difficulties when they attempted to influence each other in the arena of collaboration. This is a very different picture of collaboration – one in which relationships had not been established over time and where the organisations concerned had not developed mutual understanding, through relationships forged between key people. The consequences were that the participants resorted to very different approaches to influence, reminiscent of Huxham and Vangen's (2005) conceptualisation of “*collaborative thuggery*” as illustrated in the following excerpt.

“Collaboration is hugely difficult. .. there is a dynamic at play the bigger the organisation the more they assume automatically that they are the major player and other players should accept without question what they propose and that can cause issues –real tensions develop. They (XX participant organisation) have just assumed that they are running NW (the collaboration) – XY (collaboration participant) and I feel the same - .. the big the player - the one with the money sets the agenda and you have to tow the line We said we would have to think about this. At that point AB (participant) started spitting out the dummy...it is AB's influencing style - hail fellow well met - but if he does not get his way starts thumping the table –...he can be quite disparaging in order to get his own way.” RBMI/BCHWU

Emerging Themes – Summary of Step 3 of the Analysis

The recurrent issues and concerns that emerged from stage 2 of the empirical engagement as a whole - and in particular from the initial data collected and analysed from the established case situations - began to form a natural agenda. This agenda provided a broad frame of reference for the research, however it by no means

constrained the potential for new areas of interest to emerge. Table 3.6 below provides a summary of the main recurrent themes and associated concerns that emerged as a result of stages 1 and 2 of the research. The two main themes are shown in the left hand column; *Credibility* and *Relationships*. The middle column shows *associated concerns* and the three columns to the right indicate the case studies in which these concerns were consistently raised.

Themes	Associated Concerns	FEDD Case	B/HW U Case	G/F Case
Credibility	Reputation, past performance	√	√	√
	Expertise	√		
	Confidence	√		√
	Adopting a structured/ logical/incremental approach	√	√	√
	Using a structured process to engage with people	√		√
	Consistency	√		
	Leadership style	√	√	√
	Relationships	Time as a crucial element in forming relationships	√	√
	Importance of investing time in relationships			
	Interdependence of participants	√	√	√
	Developing a network of influence	√	√	√
	Mechanisms/ Processes needed to promote reciprocal influence	√		√
	Understanding what can be gained from a strong relationship	√	√	
	Helping people to understand what they can gain mutually from the relationship	√	√	√

Key:
 FEDD = FEDD case
 B/HWU = Borders College and Heriot Watt University case
 G/F = Glenrothes and Fife Colleges Merger case

Table 3.6: Emerging themes – summary of step 3 of the analysis

Re-focusing the research question

The process of undertaking the various steps in analysis, discussed in this chapter and in chapter 2, was also instrumental to the re-formulation of the research question. At this stage the reformulation of the research question went through several iterations. Following the decision to re-focus the research on the *nature of influence within collaborative contexts*, the research question was initially revised as follows:

“What is the nature of player influence in inter-agency collaborations?”

As an outcome of having presented my ideas relating to the initial research focus to a number of audiences both academic and non academic, which will be discussed in chapter 5, the research question was further focused as follows:

“What is the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations? Associated areas of concern are:

- *What are the characteristics of inter-agency collaboration, which have particular implications for the way in which participants influence each other?*
- *Is the nature of influence behaviour of participants in inter-agency collaborations different to that enacted in single organisation settings?*
- *What are the implications of the complexities involved in inter-agency collaboration for the exercise of influence?”*

The next stage of the research was designed to address these points and was progressed through an extensive review of the extant literature and the development of a conceptual framework, which will be elucidated in chapter 4. As Eisenhardt (1989 p544) suggests:

“an essential feature of theory building is the comparison of emerging concepts and theory with the extant literature. This involves asking what is it similar to, what does it contradict and why. A key to this process is to consider a broad range of literature.” Eisenhardt (1989 p544)

SUMMARY

The early empirical engagement and the initial and limited engagement with the literature discussed in chapter 2, together with the data gathered from the case

situations outlined in this chapter, stimulated the development of some broad themes. These themes provided what Huxham and Vangen (2005) termed *conceptual handles* with which to explore the literature in greater breadth and depth. However it must be emphasised that while the themes were intended as a sense making device, the overall approach to the next stage of the research was upon remaining open to emerging possibilities.

The data collected and analysed from the research situations discussed in this chapter, in conjunction with the initial scan of relevant literature, provided a set of themes which stimulated a shift in the focus of the research question. This provided a new focus for engaging in a far more extensive review of the literature, to which chapter 4 is dedicated. The themes provided a natural although by no means fixed agenda for engaging with the literature more extensively. While providing some conceptual devices with which to explore the literature, the themes were deliberately framed as openly as possible to allow for emerging possibilities, which could either confirm or contradict the patterns that had emerged thus far. The case situations discussed in this chapter provided the ongoing basis of empirical engagement and the platform upon which the final stage of interviews was conducted.

CHAPTER 4 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter documents the initial dimension of stage 3 of the research, the literature review, as illustrated in figure 4.1 below. The other dimensions of stage 3, also shown in figure 4.1, are reported in chapter 5 of this thesis.

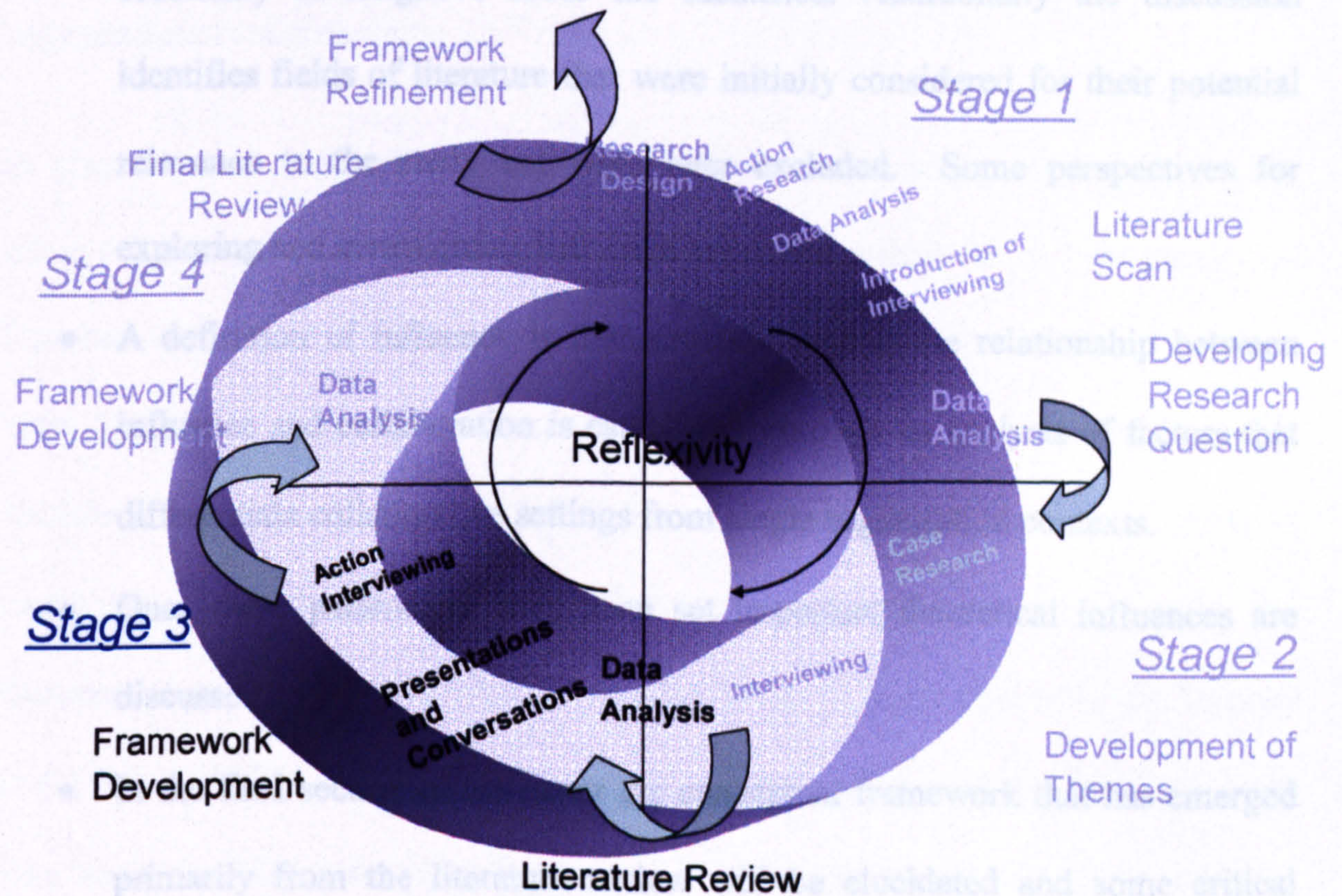


Figure 4.1: The initial dimension of stage 3 of the research process: literature review

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate the issues that emerged from a review of extant literature undertaken to explore the nature of influence exercised by those responsible for interagency collaborations. The purpose of the review was to identify and establish key themes upon which to progress the empirical research. The focus of interest was the nature of the influence that those responsible for inter-organisational collaboration exercise in relation to each other, and the way it is enacted within the context of the collaboration. The influencing behaviours, approaches, processes and

tactics used by those responsible for the collaboration are of particular interest. The research is focused at the level of the individual participant.

The chapter is structured as follows:

- First the main bodies of literature which treat influence as a primary and secondary investigative focus are identified. Additionally the discussion identifies fields of literature that were initially considered for their potential relevance to the study but were later excluded. Some perspectives for exploring and investigating influence are raised.
- A definition of influence is then crystallised and the relationship between influence and collaboration is established through an analysis of factors that differentiate collaborative settings from single organisation contexts.
- Once these parameters have been set important theoretical influences are discussed.
- In the final section of the paper the conceptual framework that has emerged primarily from the literature review will be elucidated and some critical issues identified.

RELEVANT BODIES OF LITERATURE

There appears to be a bias in the public policy literature toward the development of an institutional level of knowledge and understanding and yet practitioners increasingly highlight the level of interpersonal relations when discussing co-ordination and collaboration (Webb, 1991; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). It is argued here that the extant literature on leadership that treats influence as an attribute of leadership, even though not specifically in the context of inter-organisational

collaboration, may provide important insights at the interpersonal level that enable practitioners to become more influential in the inter-organisational domain. Thus the literature drawn upon in this review spans two main fields: the literature which treats influence as a focal concern in the extant literature on leadership and the literature that treats influence as an issue of relevance in the extant literature on inter-organisational collaboration.

In planning and undertaking the literature review some important decisions were taken in terms of establishing review boundaries. The review focused principally on literature that explicitly talks about influence, while recognising that other literatures exist that might touch upon this area, for example literature on relational capital. Relational capital was considered because of its apparent emphasis on relational capabilities (Collins and Hitt, 2006). However following initial consideration, the literature on relational capital was rejected for further in depth review, firstly because it did not explicitly deal with the issue of the influence and secondly because there was no compelling connection between this stream of literature and the body of literature that focuses on influence.

Additionally the literature reviewed on relational capital (Capello and Faggian, 2005; Thuy and Quang, 2005; Collins and Hitt, 2006) was considered to be too broad. It appeared to place particularly strong emphasis on the relational *outcomes* – innovation, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing and performance (Capello and Faggian, 2005; Thuy and Quang, 2005; Collins and Hitt, 2006) - that result from sets of strategic relationships rather than the influence that the individual players have upon each other. For example Collins and Hitt (2006) focus strongly on

understanding the role of relational capital in achieving the goal of knowledge transfer, specifically through leveraging tacit knowledge.

The broad nature of this strand of literature made it an unlikely source of knowledge with a specific focus on the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-organisational collaborations. As Capello and Faggian (2005 p77) state:

“relational capital is defined as the set of all relationships – market relationships, power relationships and cooperation – established between firms, institutions and people that stem from a strong sense of belonging”

Capello and Faggian (2005 p77)

The literature in this area did not therefore appear to be concerned with influence as a main focus of interest.

As an investigative focus influence is under-developed in the body of literature reviewed on inter-organisational collaborations. When referred to at all it relates to focal issues such as power, (Beech and Huxham, 2004), leadership, (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Feyerherm, 1994; Judge and Ryman, 2001; Pearce, 2000; Fiol et al, 2001) and competencies (Williams, 2002; Buckley et al). Influence is, however, treated as an investigative focus in the bodies of literature dedicated to management, leadership and power, by a number of writers, for example, Yukl (2002), Pfeffer (1994), Bacharach and Lawler (1980), Kotter (1985) and Tichy and Davanna (1990), Mowday (1978), Keys and Case (1990), Katz and Kahn (1978), Cohen and Bradford (1991), Tedeschi et al (1972), but these authors do not examine it specifically within the context of inter-organisational collaboration.

This review has therefore drawn upon literature which broadly falls into the following categories:

- Influence as a relation of power within the literature on inter-agency collaboration
- Influence as a relation of power and organisational politics
- Influence as a managerial or leadership concern

The first two categories described above are addressed predominantly in the section that follows, while the third is discussed mainly in relation to the emerging conceptual framework which is elaborated in the final section of the chapter.

In the section that follows the outcomes of the literature review are discussed initially through a definition of influence and related concepts such as power and organisational politics. This is followed by a discussion of the theories that have influenced the research and provide the backdrop to the elucidation of the emerging conceptual framework.

DEFINING INFLUENCE

The notion of influence is treated in a wide variety of ways in the relevant bodies of literature and there appears to be a patchwork of conceptualisations and definitions.

For the purpose of this research, influence signifies:

“the behaviours and approaches that are adopted by an individual intentionally for the purpose of conditioning the way others react or respond to events, acts, proposals or circumstances. “

This definition results from a synthesis of definitions drawn from the literature reviewed (Pfeffer, 1994; Mowday, 1978; Kotter, 1985; Keys and Case, 1990; Wrong, 1979; Tedeschi et al, 1972). In their discussions of influence, many authors, for example, Pfeffer (1994), Mowday (1978), Kotter (1985), Keys and Case (1990), (Wrong 1979) and Bacharach and Lawler (1980) highlight the close and intricate relationship between influence, power and organisational politics. In the next section I explore these relationships as being of central importance to the development of an understanding of influence.

Exploring the concept of influence as a close relation of power

For the sake of clarity in a field that has proved to be awash with conflicting definitions (Handy, 1993), the relationship between definitions of influence, power and organisational politics merits further consideration.

According to Lukes' (2005) conceptual scheme, all cases of co-operative activity where individuals or groups significantly affect one another in the absence of a conflict of interests between them, are identified as cases of influence but not of power. In this scheme power may or may not be a form of influence – depending on whether sanctions are involved; while influence and authority may or may not be a form of power – depending on whether a conflict of interests is involved.

The exercise of influence is seen by other writers (Mowday, 1978; Kipnis et al, 1980; Keys and Case, 1990; Yukl, 2002) as a deliberate behavioural act or tactic, which is directed toward the attainment of specific goals in the work place. Pfeffer (1994 p30) connects the concept of influence with a definition of power; he describes it as:

“the potential ability to influence behaviour, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do.” Pfeffer (1994 p30)

Pfeffer (1994) suggests that while the exercise of influence is likely to involve the use of power in one form or another, power is not always considered to be a prerequisite of influence. However influence and power are terms which are sometimes used interchangeably (Mowday, 1978). For example, Kotter (1985) implies that influence is a way of using power that can be direct or indirect and can involve both soft and hard approaches. This infers that a process involving the selection of approaches is used to enact influence, rather than a series of random acts. Similarly Keys and Case (1990) offer the following distinction,

“influence is simply the process by which people successfully persuade others to follow their advice, suggestion or order. It can be contrasted with power which is a personal or positional attribute that enables one to influence others and which can be thought of as continuous or sustained influence.”

Keys and Case (1990 p38)

The importance of a sense of intention or purpose is highlighted by Wrong (1979) who explains power as the capacity to produce intended and foreseen effects on others and defines power as equivalent to intended and effective influence. In this definition power is one of two subcategories of influence; the other consists of acts of unintended influence.

No discussion of influence would be competent without careful consideration of the bases of power as conceptualised by French and Raven (1959), who argue that the

phenomena of power and influence involve a dyadic relationship between two agents. This perspective seeks to establish the factors that determine the behaviour of the agent who exerts power and those that determine the reactions of the target of this behaviour. Power is defined as influence and influence is explained in terms of the psychological change it produces. The five bases of power include reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power and expert power. Two of these forms of power will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter, in the context of the emerging conceptual framework.

Exploring notions of influence and power in relation to organisational politics

The concepts of influence, power and organisational politics are seen as being closely related by Pfeffer (1994), who defines organisational politics as the outward manifestation of the exercise or use of power, while power is defined as potential force.

“Politics and influence are the processes the actions, the behaviours through which potential power is utilised and realised.” Pfeffer (1994 p32)

Given the centrality of the agent and target of influence to this research, the most appropriate perspective of organisational politics is highlighted by Hardy (1996). This perspective aligns politics with a concern for the management of meaning and the creation of legitimacy for ideas, values and demands and appears to be identical to the notion of political behaviour as defined by Ferris and Judge: thus,

“a person demonstrating interpersonal behaviours designed to manage shared meaning of some event or characteristic.”

Ferris and Judge (1991 p469)

This interpretation of political behaviour and concern for managing meaning is consistent with the notion of *political skill* as defined by Perrewé et al (2004, 2005))

“Political skill refers to the ability to understand people at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organisational objectives. Political skill, thus, implies a facility in dealing with and through others and feelings of enhanced control are gained by those with political skills as they are successful at influencing others at work.” Perrewé et al (2004 p142)

Bacharach and Lawler (1980 p1) ground these concepts linking influence with organisational politics and political skill in context by drawing attention to:

“the high impact of political behaviour, that is the stuff of organisational life and is characterised by bargaining, influence attempts and effort to control symbolic resourcessurvival in an organisation is a political act.”

Bacharach and Lawler (1980 p1)

Having navigated the intricate links between the concepts of influence, power and organisational politics, the focus of the discussion now turns to the challenge of understanding influence within the context of collaboration. The next section of the chapter is dedicated to exploring the foregoing definitions of influence, power and politics in the light of an established theory of collaboration and other theories which have contributed to the development of the emerging conceptual framework, set out in the final stages of this chapter.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF INFLUENCE ENACTED BY PARTICIPANTS IN COLLABORATIVE SETTINGS – THE MAIN THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

A central contextual concern highlighted in chapter 1 of this research is the wide range of issues associated specifically with the practice of collaboration management. These are issues that are likely to have a significant effect upon the way in which participants seek to influence each other in collaborative settings. Explored extensively in the literature on interagency collaboration, these issues include: interdependence, perceptions of power and power distribution (Thorelli, 1986; Trist, 1983; Webb, 1991; Brass, 1992; Hardy, 2003, 1996, 1998; Huxham and Beech, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Fiol et al, 2001), ambiguity and complexity, asymmetrical relationships, multiplicity of aims, membership structures, shifts in membership (Oliver, 1990; Gray, 1985; Huxham and Vangen, 2005), the absence of hierarchical relationships, the tension between autonomy and accountability (Huxham, 1996), trust (Abrams et al, 2003; Hardy, 1998; Huxham and Vangen, 2003, 2005; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994) and leadership distribution (Feyerherm, 1994; Huxham and Vangen, 2005). These are the challenges that often differentiate the practice of collaboration management from the practice of management in single organisational settings and have real implications for the way in which individuals enact influence in a collaborative context.

The theory of collaborative advantage - and specifically a series of conceptualisation that Huxham and Vangen (2005 p310) term *handles for reflective practice* - provides a practice oriented basis for practitioners to consider how to manage collaborations, without prescribing generalised solutions. The two strands of the theory of collaborative advantage, which have been used to develop the emerging conceptual

framework for this research are: the “*points of power*” as conceptualised by Huxham and Beech (2003) and the contrasting enabling and manipulative approaches to collaboration leadership as framed by Vangen and Huxham (2003). Specifically these strands of theory have informed the development of the emerging conceptual framework in two ways.

Firstly, as discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, the Huxham and Beech (2003) conceptualisation of “points of power” has highlighted both typical motives and important opportunities to enact influence within a collaborative context by acting on and gaining leverage from certain openings in the collaborative process.

To identify the points at which power can be exerted, Huxham and Beech (2003) conceptualise the power infrastructure of collaborations which consists of: opportunities to directly influence the agenda and the issues that are addressed, the act of naming the collaborative group, the selection of participants, the process for appointments, the form of invitation, what information is received, the location of a gathering and the timing of events. The relevance of their conceptualisation to this research is two fold. Firstly it provides a contextual frame within which to consider the types of issues that participants, within a collaboration, may seek to influence. Secondly it provides a basis upon which to explore whether influence is typically enacted in relation to the opportunities inherent within what Huxham and Beech term the “*power infrastructure of a collaboration*”. In summary the conceptualisation of points of power provides insights into collaboration practice that highlight *where* there is potential to influence in the collaborative process and *what* participants may seek to influence.

Secondly, Vangen and Huxham (2003) provide a model of leadership in collaborations which identifies the tension between approaches to leadership that are enacted in a facilitative way to nurture *the spirit of collaboration* and those which are more pragmatic and intended to make things happen in a directive way, characterised by *collaborative thuggery* (Vangen and Huxham, 2003 pp69). Activities undertaken simultaneously at both ends of this spectrum are highlighted and legitimised. The relevance of Vangen and Huxham's conceptual framework to this research is that it highlights a dilemma which those responsible for collaborations must address in relation to *how* the processes used to exert influence are employed.

Influence as Political Action

A number of writers, for example Bacharach and Lawler (1980) and Schein (1977), suggest that the political reality of the organisation has been neglected due to the prevalent assumption that organisational behaviour conforms to accepted norms and that generally, organisational settings are characterised by rationality, consensus and co-operation. In contrast this research is predicated on the assumption that organisational life is dominated by political interactions, in which actors are seen as:

“perpetually bargaining, repeatedly forming and reforming coalitions and constantly availing themselves of influence tactics”

Bacharach and Lawler (1980 p1)

The notion of political influence (Ferris and Judge, 1991; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Pondy, 1988; Hardy et al, 2003; Perrewé et al, 2004, 2005) is described as the intended management of shared meaning by individuals, groups or organisations. As meanings are the output of peoples' responses and interpretations, the objective of

enacting influence is to manage the meaning of the situation to shape the way it is perceived. Characterising political influence as the deliberate attempt to manage or control meanings held by others provides an interesting perspective on the observation and analysis of influencing behaviour within collaborative settings. This perspective is at the centre of Huff's (in Pondy 1988) argument which goes beyond a concern for either organisation structure and behaviour or outcomes, in terms of individual and group motives reflected by most models of organisational politics. Huff (1988) promotes a view of political processes as influencing the content of strategic and organisational decisions. This model suggests that political systems in organisations can be harnessed to create important positive effects and that management can channel political interactions to improve their impact on the organisation. Ferris and Judge (1991) adopt a similar perspective on political influence, in key areas of human resource management, on the basis that peoples' perceptions of events shape their reality and therefore their behaviour.

Influence as a Process

The configurational approach to organisation analysis is based on a conviction that parts of a social entity take their significance from the whole and cannot be understood in isolation (Meyer et al, 1993; Farmer, 1999). Central to this approach is the conceptualisation of influence as a process, based on the patterns of influencing behaviour used by individuals. It also suggests that contextual factors could give rise to different configurations of influence according to certain antecedents or situational and dispositional factors (Farmer et al, 1999). The approach has implications for analysis in that:

“configuration theory assumes holistic synthesis in which analysis of the entire social entity, (e.g. influence tactics as combined within an attempt to influence an agent) - not its constituent parts - (e.g. individual tactics) is required” Farmer et al (1999 p14)

It is posited that the configurational approach could provide a useful way for researchers to address the complexities that characterise organisational phenomena such as influence (Farmer et al 1999). This theory suggests that influence styles represent a person's holistic tendencies toward influence use and that styles differ according to the ordered set of cognitions and decisions that constitute the influence process.

Among others who similarly adopt a *“processual”* perspective, Denis and Langley (2001) are concerned with both influence tactics used to shape the course of events as well as the types of organisational actions they promote. Falbe and Yukl (1992) acknowledge the wide range of variables that affect the outcome of any particular influence attempt. Given that the study of influence in this research also embraces the high levels of complexity that are acknowledged as inherent within collaborative settings, it appears that adopting a perspective that emphasises process may be appropriate to the nature of this inquiry.

The theoretical influences highlighted thus far strengthen, enrich and develop the early conceptual strands that emerged as a result of the outcomes of the first two stages of the research (chapters 2 and 3). Further theoretical influences are elucidated in the section that follows. All of these strands, drawn together, form the basis upon which the emerging conceptual framework shown in figure 4.2 has been developed.

In the section that follows each of the dimensions of the framework will be discussed in turn. The framework will be elucidated in the light of both the extant literature that has already been introduced in this chapter and literature that, in the main, treats influence as its primary and specific investigative focus.

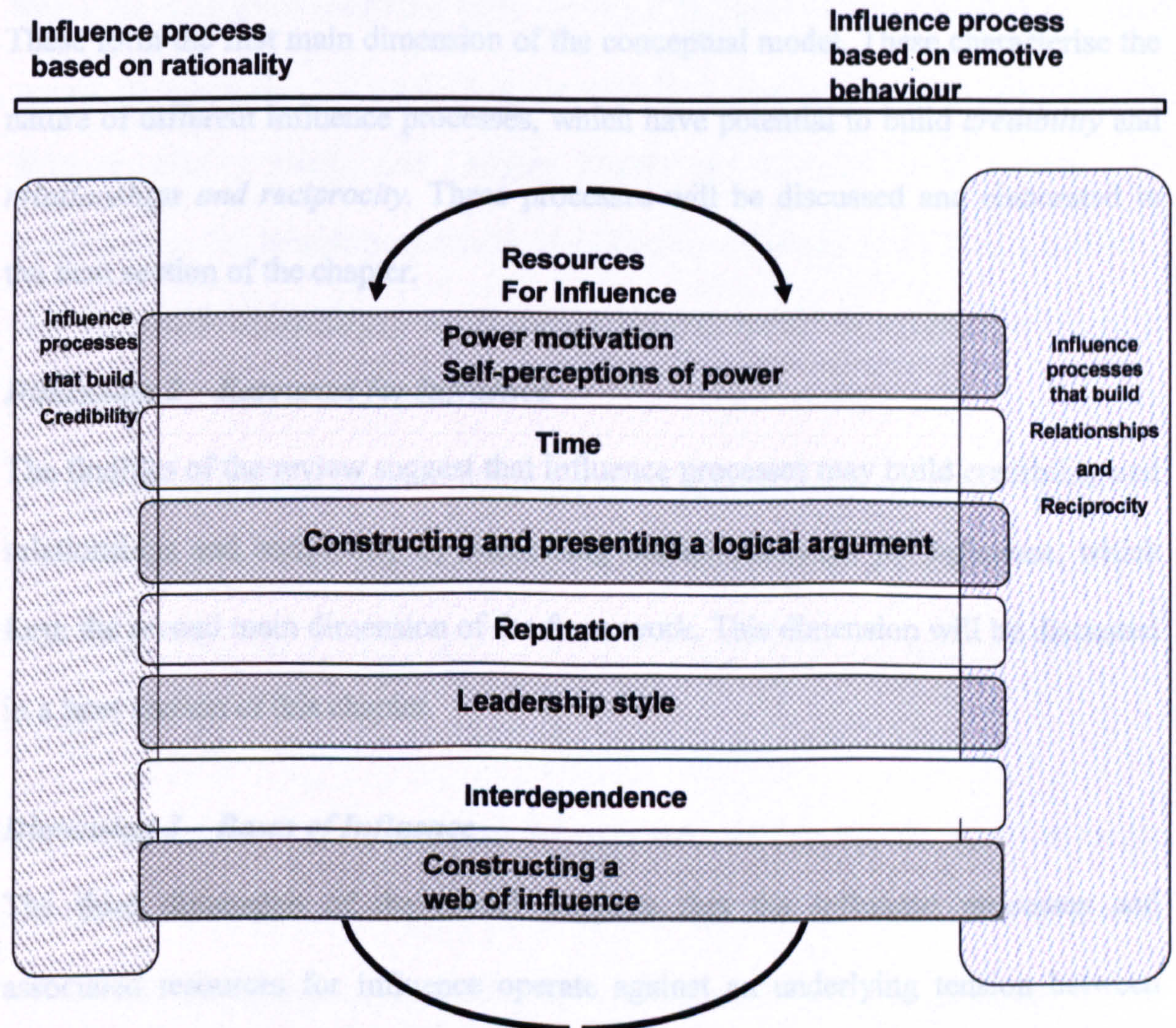


Figure 4.2: Initial Conceptual Framework – building influence in inter-organisational collaborations

EMERGING ISSUES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF INFLUENCE IN INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The emerging conceptual framework shown in figure 4.2 has three main dimensions as follows:

Dimension 1 – Influence Processes

Set against the backdrop of the specific challenges associated with enacting influence in inter-organisational collaborations, outlined in this chapter and discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis, the analysis of data undertaken in the early stages of the research and the review of literature has highlighted two areas of central concern. These form the first main dimension of the conceptual model. These characterise the nature of different influence processes, which have potential to build *credibility and relationships and reciprocity*. These processes will be discussed and elaborated in the next section of the chapter.

Dimension 2 – Resources for Influence

The findings of the review suggest that influence processes may build credibility and relationships and reciprocity by harnessing certain *resources for influence*, which form the second main dimension of the framework. This dimension will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Dimension 3 – Bases of Influence

The third dimension of the model suggests that the influence processes and associated resources for influence operate against an underlying tension between approaches to influence that are based on *rationality* and those that are based on *emotive behaviour*. These themes will also be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

These foci form the three main dimensions of the emerging conceptual framework. The issues, concerning the nature of influence processes that arose consistently

throughout the review of literature, are central to the emerging framework and are discussed in the section that follows.

DIMENSION 1 - INFLUENCE PROCESSES THAT BUILD CREDIBILITY

1.1 : Credibility

While the concept of credibility does not arise frequently in the literature on inter-agency collaboration it is implicit in the work of a number of writers, for example Williams (2002), Denis and Langley (2001) and Buckley et al (2002). The competencies for boundary spanners identified by Williams (2002) are associated with the perceived legitimacy to act objectively and openly for others. Buckley et al (2002) point out that, in international joint ventures inter partner skills are related to levels of influence and domains of influence. These skills include those associated with credibility such as: good knowledge of the business and the ability to deliver, knowledge and respect for the partner and genuine desire to recognise the partners' strengths.

Denis and Langley (2001) highlight the apparent link between the types of tactics members of a collaboration use in promoting change and their credibility as leaders and suggest that changes in credibility directly or indirectly affect the capacity of an individual or leadership group to act in the future. Increased credibility widens the scope for action while reduced credibility diminishes the potential to act. This link between credibility and the potential to enact influence finds resonance in Handy's perspective on influence (1993). The appropriateness of method of influence, he (1993) suggests, depends on two underlying considerations: the level of credibility of the person enacting influence with the target of influence and the complexity of the

relationship at the centre of the attempt. Credibility, according to Handy, can be seen as a system of credits that one person holds in relation to another and is derived from many sources including the reports of respected colleagues and a track record of success. Thus it appears that the concepts central to the emerging framework: relationships and reciprocity and credibility may be inter-related in terms of their relevance to increasing an individual's scope to influence others.

The processes for influence that were highlighted consistently throughout the review of literature seemed to be associated with issues which could be regarded as *resources for influence* to be mobilised in interagency collaborations. These form the focus of discussion in the next section of this chapter.

DIMENSION 1 - INFLUENCE PROCESSES THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND RECIPROCITY

1.2 : Relationships and reciprocity

Relationships are generally regarded in the literature on collaboration to be paramount to success in exercising influence upon others (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Oliver, 1990; Moss Kanter, 1994). In the literature on managerial influence, Keys and Case (1990) argue that a balance of time spent in each critical relationship should be struck according to work needs rather than social preference. Williams (2002) also sees relationships as a critical dimension of influence suggesting that the potential for effective influence is related to the nature and robustness of personal relationships and the dynamics of change. He sees the development of inter-personal relationships as part of a process of exploration which produces information that is invaluable for the identification of areas of communality and interdependency.

Furthermore, while strictly professional relationships are sustainable, more personal relationships will increase the potential, richness and quality of the dialogue.

The degree to which relationships are formalised contractually or operate on the basis of trust appears to be significant to the development of a climate conducive to the enactment of influence. Ring and Van de Ven (1994 p104) highlight the elasticity of formality in inter-organisational relationships with the proposition that informal psychological contracts increasingly compensate or substitute for formal contractual safeguards as reliance on trust among parties increases over time. The extent to which this shift in levels of formality builds the scope, for individuals engaged in collaboration, to influence each other is an issue which merits further consideration.

Consistency is also highlighted in the extant literature as an important dimension of a leadership style that acts as a resource for influencing peoples' interpretive schemes (Feyerherm, 1994). A number of writers, for example Feyerherm (1994) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994), suggest that consistency is an important factor in building a base upon which to strengthen partner relationships. It is argued that by initially undertaking relatively low risk transactions, which do not rely heavily on trust, relationships are built incrementally over time (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). The repetition of these transactions reinforces a sense of security among partners whereby they are then more likely to commit more resources, thus building greater expectation and incrementally *raising the stakes* (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). This suggests that there is a link between strengthening relationships and an increasing

openness to mutual influence attempts, which, in turn stimulates an appetite for higher risk collaborative activity (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994).

The notion of reciprocity can be linked to the concept of interdependence in the context of social exchange theory which attempts to explain how power is gained and lost in reciprocal influence processes between leaders and followers (Oliver, 1990; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2002; Ahedo 1999). Yukl (2002) suggests that those leaders who have a high degree of influence are also receptive of influence attempts from others and that most effective organisations are characterised by a high degree of reciprocal influence. This perspective posits that formal mechanisms are needed to promote influence as a reciprocal form of behaviour. Reciprocity is highlighted as an aspect of “*playing the politics*” in collaborations (Vangen and Huxham, 2003 p72) when:

“individuals enter into reciprocal relationships in terms of sharing information and taking action in support of each others’ agenda.”

Vangen and Huxham (2003 p72)

In a similar vein, Padgett et al (2004) emphasise the important role of relationship building to facilitate reciprocal exchanges and the necessity of building relationships in advance of the need to draw on the potential capital that may flow from them. This concept is developed by Keys and Case (1990) who suggest that influential managers construct a balanced web of relationships and that this network acts as a reserve within which influence is “banked” for leverage to accomplish goals in other directions. Cohen and Bradford (1989 p4-17) take the idea of reciprocal exchanges a

step further in their metaphor of currencies that are traded between organisation members in an effort to build their influencing capabilities. The currencies which they conceptualise as the sources of influence, fall into the following categories: *inspiration related currencies* such as vision and ethics; *task related currencies* such as resources and information; *position related currencies* which include recognition, reputation and contacts; *relationship related currencies* such as understanding and *personal related currencies* such as gratitude and involvement. The currencies have value as defined by the receiver and Cohen and Bradford (1989) argue that it is self evident that a person does not have to have formal authority in order to influence, rather it is critical to understand what is important to the person to be influenced.

Reinforcing the importance of reciprocity as an aspect of influencing processes, Williams (2002) also takes a pragmatic view of influence. He proposes a competency framework for boundary spanners which includes skills, abilities and personal characteristics that contribute to effective inter-organisation behaviour. The framework places a strong focus on both relationships and reciprocity by highlighting the importance of: building sustainable relationships, managing and influencing through negotiation, managing complexities and interdependencies and managing roles, accountabilities and motivations.

DIMENSION 2 - RESOURCES FOR INFLUENCE

The review of literature revealed consistent emphasis on a number of resources that individuals appear to draw upon to build their influence. These are conceptualised as *resources for influence* within the framework and include: *power motivation and self*

perceptions of power, time, constructing and presenting a logical argument, reputation, leadership style, interdependence and constructing a web of influence.

These resources are discussed in turn in the section that follows:

Power Motivation and Self Perceptions of Power

The ability to influence decisions and consequently to drive forward change is seen increasingly, in both collaborative and single organisation settings, as less dependent upon hierarchy and formal authority in the organisation (Pfeffer, 1994; Keys and Case, 1990) than upon other factors, such as social power, (Ansari and Kapoor, 1987; Pfeffer, 1994), self perceptions of power and the power motivation of those who enact influence (Mowday, 1978). Social power is considered by Ansari and Kapoor (1987) as an important facilitating factor when an individual strives to influence another in the achievement of organisational goals.

In a study of upward influence in organisations, Mowday (1978) found that individuals who were associated with high influence activity were characterised by high instrumental power motivation (expectation of success in enacting influence) and intrinsic power motivation (satisfaction derived from enacting influence). They also had high self perceptions of power (resulting from having changed the behaviour of another through the exercise of influence). He also suggests that those individuals who demonstrate high influence effectiveness are more likely to use manipulation as a form of influence, which was seen to maximise their flexibility in influencing future actions.

Time

The concept of time and the enactment of influence within a temporal frame was repeatedly reflected as an issue of significance by writers in the field (Mowday, 1978, 1979; Feyerherm, 1994; Pfeffer, 1994; Franklin, 1975). The timing of an influence attempt, related to the choice of target and methods used to enact influence is seen by Mowday (1978, 1979) as significant to success. Some individuals are influential early on in the influence process while others have more success at later stages. A number of writers (Feyerherm, 1994; Franklin, 1975) suggest that influence emerges *over* time as a product of a pattern of activities and specific instances where influence is exercised. Pfeffer (1994 pp227) also highlights the importance of timing:

“ in utilising the strategies and tactics of power and influence it is crucial to determine not only what to do but when to do it...actions that are well-timed may succeed, while the same actions, undertaken at a less opportune moment, may have no chance of success.” Pfeffer (1994 pp227)

Constructing and Presenting a Logical Argument

In the literature on managerial influence rational persuasion is widely reported to be among the most frequently used influence tactics (Yukl, 1993; Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Fu and Yukl, 2000; Mowday, 1979; Schilit and Locke, 1982; Ansari and Kapoor, 1987). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2002) suggest that a rational influence strategy involves the application of bargaining and logic. It is an attempt to elicit reasoning on the part of the target. This type of strategy could be linked to

utility or expectancy frameworks where influence is enacted with the expectation of achieving desired outcomes.

In collaborative settings, it appears that opportunities to influence are often related to rationalised processes for involving members (Hardy et al, 1998; Huxham and Beech, 2003) around pivotal, structured activities such as the act of constructing the agenda (Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Huxham and Beech, 2003). These processes provide an important opening for rational influence attempts, through approaches such as harnessing the power of discourse (Hardy et al, 2005), use of information and the creation of text (Hardy et al, 2005; Pearce, 2000)

Reputation

Reputation is frequently posited as a potential source of influence (Keys and Case, 1990; Kotter, 1985; Feyerherm, 1994; Faerman, 2000; Williams, 2002; Pfeffer, 1994; Fiol, 2001). For example Keys and Case (1990) propose that developing a reputation as an expert is central to becoming a more influential manager. A number of writers see reputation as critical to establishing influence as a leader (Kotter, 1985; Faerman, 2000), citing reputation as a source of power that facilitates and maintains good working relationships with others (Kotter, 1985) and a means of legitimising certain ways of dealing with a problem (Faerman, 2000; Gray, 1985). Effective leadership, according to Kotter (1985), involves using interpersonal and intellectual skills and other personal assets to establish a good reputation and to earn people's esteem. The notion of reputation as a source of power is central also to Pfeffer's (1994 p136) analysis, which suggests that,

“the reputation for having power brings more power. For the individual, being viewed as powerful or influential may have the effect of changing the person’s behaviour.” Pfeffer (1994 p136)

Pfeffer (1994) argues that reputation, in this way, is a phenomenon that is capable of producing a self-fulfilling prophecy, in that the more influential a person is perceived to be, the more influential they believe themselves to be and so become.

In the literature on inter-agency collaboration the idea of reputation and an important resource for influence is explicit in Fiol’s conceptualisation of the processes by which individuals and groups understand their own power and the power of others. In Feyerherm’s (1994) analysis of leadership, the influence of leaders emerged gradually as a result of both a discernible pattern of behaviour and specific incidents. While Williams (2002 p117) refers to an important competency of the boundary spanner as *“the perceived legitimacy to act objectively and openly for others.”* It could be argued that the perception of legitimacy to act on behalf of others is in itself contributory to the formation of reputation.

Leadership Style - Influence without formal authority

One of the distinguishing features of a collaboration that has implications for the way leaders influence others is that:

“no one can require anyone else to act in particular ways... commitment to act thus has to be achieved entirely through persuasion and negotiation”

Huxham and Vangen (1996 p246)

An underlying assumption of this research is therefore that hierarchical power and control structures cannot be leveraged, within collaborations, in the same way as within single organisations settings to achieve desired results. This has real implications for the leadership style that is adopted by participants within collaborations (Huxham and Vangen, 2005).

The degree of formality surrounding relationships, structures, processes and agreements appears to be relevant to the scope for influence and level of influence that individuals command (Kotter, 1985; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). Kotter points out that influence can be exerted by altering the level of formality of organisational structures, such as those that surround meetings and in this way has the potential to affect people on a continuing basis.

Additionally, research on the most effective combinations of influence tactics demonstrated that the effectiveness of influence tactics, particularly rational persuasion, depends to a great extent on how they are used. Falbe and Yukl (1992) conclude that when managers use tactic combinations they should pay careful attention to the selection of component tactics. Many variables, beside the types of influence tactics an agent uses, affect the outcome of an influence attempt and any tactic can result in resistance if it is used in an unskilful manner. For this reason sensitivity in the implementation of tactics is also considered to be an important precursor to a successful outcome (Keys and Case, 1990; Keys and Bell, 2001).

The behaviours used to enact influence attempts therefore appear to be regarded as important. Additionally, Feyerherm (1994) suggests that the *pattern of* behaviours exhibited by a leader is just as likely to influence changes in interpretive schemes as is one specific instance of behaviour. This suggests that consistency of leadership *style* is as important to influencing developments as is the impact of individual influence episodes.

In the context of collaborative approaches to leadership in a multi-organisational context, Feyerherm (1994) argues that viewing leadership as a property vested in one person may be an anachronism and that given the complexity of the issues concerned, leadership is best thought of as a network of influence spread throughout the group. This, it appears, gives rise to a distributed form of leadership which opens out potential for the enactment of influence across a wider arena (Feyerherm, 1994; Faerman et al, 2000; Fiol, 2001; Denis et al 2001).

At this juncture in the discussion two approaches to leadership and leadership style identified by Beech (2000) are worthy of consideration. The focus of the theory is not specifically upon the concept of influence per se; rather it is upon the leader's role in shaping, influencing and delivering change through others. The *romantic style* is based on the presumption that involving people in the process of change will stimulate both the direction and the content of the change programme. While the second approach enshrined in the *heroic style* is based on the presumption that expert knowledge applied to a problem will deliver a solution and that this should be promoted to those who will be involved in implementation. Both styles are aimed at

engendering change successfully, but a tension exists in the choice of different ways to achieve change. The heroic style is characterised by clear role expectations, a strong sense of certainty and emphasis on observable outcomes. In contrast the romantic style typically lacks structure in terms of boundaries between leaders and followers; is characterised by uncertainty; includes attempts to involve and empower others and is often employed where relationships have a personal element. Within the choice between these two styles lies the dilemma of opting either for a leadership style characterised by predominantly rational approaches to influencing followers or - at the other extreme - a leadership style characterised by influence approaches that are essentially emotive in nature.

Interdependence

As discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis and earlier in this chapter, interdependence is identified as a central concern in the relevant literature. It has already been discussed in this thesis as one of the features that sets collaborative contexts apart from single organisational settings. It is argued here that it is also a resource that may be harnessed in the building of influence within collaborations. For example, Gray (1985) identifies interdependence as a factor which facilitates problem setting, a condition that leads to collaboration. It is also critical to the way power is exercised and the impact of power on relationships between individuals (Webb, 1991; Thorelli, 1986). Interdependence and the degree of mutual reliance between individuals is frequently related to the choice and use of influence tactics (Pearce, 2000; Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Gabbaro and Kotter, 2000).

The issue of interdependence, between levels of the hierarchy, is stressed by Kotter (1985 p18) as creating opportunities to influence both directly and indirectly:

“high levels of diversity and interdependence in the workplace are quite naturally linked to conflicting opinions about action and thereby influence attempts to resolve that conflict.” Kotter (1985 p18)

This driver of influence is recognised by Pfeffer (1994 p226) who maintains that:

“strategies of interpersonal influence are products of a social, interdependent world.” Pfeffer (1994 p226)

Constructing a web of influence

The literature reviewed has revealed a consistent pre-occupation with the notion of influence conceptualised as a web-like form extending beyond the individual and the collaboration, which over time becomes self-perpetuating. The individual at the centre of this web is actively engaged in extending it and repairing its damaged threads. For example Hardy (1996 p630) suggests that in certain contexts,

“political actors are able to secure spheres of influence, where their dominance is uncontested and where power is mobilised to influence behaviour indirectly, giving outcomes and decisions certain meanings by legitimizing and justifying them.” Hardy (1996 p630)

This idea of individuals actively and deliberately engaging in building a web of influence is reinforced by others (Feyerherm, 1994; Keys and Case, 1990; Lotia N,

2004; Williams, 2002; Padgett et al, 2004; Buckley et al, 2002; Handy, 1993) who link it to issues of credibility, reciprocity and relationships. Keys and Case (1990) suggest that influential managers typically maintain a balanced web of relationships and influence is banked for leverage to accomplish goals in other directions.

DIMENSION 3 - BASES OF INFLUENCE

The central foci of the emerging conceptual model - *resources for influence* and the processes that build *reciprocity, credibility and relationships* - are set against strong underlying *tensions*, which appear to be operating between approaches to influence that are characterised by *rationality* and those that are essentially *emotive*.

The notion of *tensions* as a theoretical construct, as conceptualised by Huxham and Beech (2003), is both relevant and instructive to this research. They conceive of *tensions* as a helpful way of providing useful *conceptual handles* that may encourage reflective practice and have the potential to inform managers about the types of issues to consider in the management of collaborations.

The shift in recent conceptions of leadership that emphasise the importance of emotions as a basis of influence over the purely rational, cognitive processes that dominated earlier approaches is highlighted by a number of writers, for example Yukl (2002), Goleman (1998), Ansari and Kapoor (1987), Gill (2006). Ansari and Kapoor (1987) distinguish rational and non rational methods for achieving organisational goals and suggest that a combination of these two methods is normally used. Although there appears to be little consistency in the literature reviewed in

terms of the relative effectiveness of different tactics (Ansari and Kapoor, 1987; Falbe and Yukl, 1992), a number of studies have shown that rational persuasion is the most frequently used tactic (Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl, Falbe and Youn, 1993; Schilit and Locke, 1982).

The separation of influence strategies into categories such as *soft* and *hard* is a perspective adopted by a number of writers such as: Kotter (1985), Falbe and Yukl (1992) Somech and Drach-Zavany (2002) and Pearce (2000). As discussed below, while there appears to be some variation in the conceptualisation of these categories, there also appears to be a consistent argument that suggests that hard strategies generally involve the leverage of position power or formal authority, while soft strategies appear to rely upon the use of interpersonal skills, persuasion and involvement.

According to Falbe and Yukl (1992) *hard* tactics typically involve the use of authority and position power, while *soft* tactics involve personal power and sharing ideas through approaches such as inspirational appeal and consultation, which were considered to be the most effective tactics.

Somech and Drach-Zavany (2002) make distinctions between three categories of influence strategy. These are soft, hard and rational influencing strategies based on categories of tactics. Hard strategy is described as typically involving direct and assertive requests for compliance and may include manipulative threats and aggression. Soft strategies are characterised by the use of a polite, friendly, humble

manner, employing flattery and sympathy and are designed to secure volitional compliance. In this analysis both hard and soft strategies appear to consist of predominantly emotive approaches to influence. Rational strategies by contrast consist of the agent's appeals or attempts to elicit instrumental reasoning by the target and are predominantly founded on bargaining and logic.

Pearce (2000) also makes a different distinction between hard and soft strategies. Soft strategies appear to be of a more rational nature, including approaches such as rational persuasion, but also involve more emotive tactics such as ingratiation and personal appeals. Hard strategies are characterised by use of power in an impersonal and manipulative way which includes pressure, coalitions and legitimacy. Thus both hard and soft strategies appear to involve both rational and emotive approaches.

Kotter (1985 p91) makes an apposite distinction between rational and emotive approaches to influence,

“Effective substantive influence methods require that one use information to influence subordinates “rationally” ...that some goal is desirable...influential bosses tend to be very skilled in this regard. They know how to gather, manipulate, and present facts and inferences in highly effective ways. Symbolic influence methods are quite different, as are the skills required to use them well. Symbolic methods appeal less to reason and more to our feelings. People who are very successful in using such methods tend to be very skilled at sensing how people will react to various words, pictures, events and settings.” Kotter (1985 p91)

An interesting conundrum, which illustrates both the richness and complexity in treating the concepts central to this research is considered and left unresolved by Lukes (2005). This is the question of whether rational persuasion can be considered as a form of power and influence. The conclusion provided by Lukes (2005 p36) is somewhat equivocal. On the one hand he suggests that rational persuasion is a form of power and influence,

“because it is a form of significant affecting: A causes B to do or think what he would not otherwise do or think. On the other hand rational persuasion may not be considered to be a form of influence because B autonomously accepts A’s reasoning so that it is not A but A’s reasons or B’s acceptance of them that is responsible for B’s change of course.” Lukes (2005 p36)

Lukes concludes this discussion somewhat inconclusively by stating there are contradictory conceptual pressures at work between causality on the one hand and autonomy and reason on the other.

The assumption made in this research is consistent with many existing theoretical frameworks, in the field of literature on managerial influence (Kipnis et al, 1980; Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Keys and Case, 1990), that rational persuasion is a widely favoured approach to or tactic for influence that may or may not involve the use of power. This is particularly pertinent when considering the exercise of influence within a collaborative setting where there is often little or no recourse to authority to achieve progress. Indeed it is argued in this thesis that rational persuasion is a particularly important resource for *building* influence in collaborative settings, in

situations where there is a need to exercise influence without the use of formal authority.

French and Raven's (1959) conceptualisation of the five bases of power is of potential relevance to the exploration of the tension between rational and emotive approaches to influence. It is argued that *referent power* – that has its basis in the identification of the target with the agent - has greatest range. Referent power resonates strongly with Nye's (2004 p526) analysis of *soft power*:

“ ...getting others to want the outcomes that you want.... Soft power co-opts people rather than coerces them...if a leader represents values that others want to follow it will cost less to lead” Nye (2004 p526)

Expert power is also of potential importance to this research. French and Raven (1959) argue that expert power varies in intensity with the extent of the knowledge or perception of knowledge that the target attributes to the agent. They make a distinction between expert power that is based on the credibility of the agent and *informational influence* which is based on aspects of the stimulus, for example, the rationality of the argument put forward by the agent. The relationship between the different power bases and the tension between rational and emotive approaches to influence appears to merit further consideration.

Structure of the Conceptual Framework

The preceding discussion was concerned with elucidating each dimension of the framework, through a discussion of relevant literature. The conceptual strands

arising from the earlier stages of research, enriched by the review of literature discussed in this chapter, form the three main dimensions of the framework. It should be emphasised that each of these should be considered as important both in their own right and as inter-linked, inter-playing parts of the whole. The framework emphasises the importance of *influence processes* which carries the implication that influence is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and is therefore best conceptualised as a combination of factors that are likely to vary according to the context within which influence is enacted. The multi-dimensional nature of the framework seeks to convey both the essential interdependence of the dimensions and their variability.

CONCLUSIONS

As Handy (1993) remarks the study of influence and power has proved to be “a bottomless swamp”, difficult to navigate, the field lacks coherence. Knowledge of influence processes within the context of interagency collaborations appears to be particularly scarce. The apparent paucity of extant literature focused on this specific area suggests that there is scope to make a contribution to the field. The review of the extant literature in the field has identified some issues worthy of consideration, in that they are likely to have implications for practitioners in the arena of collaborative activity between organisations. It also highlighted some issues which merit further exploration both through on-going review of literature and through empirical research.

In particular it seems that the influence processes that have the potential to build credibility and those that can build relationships and reciprocity are associated with

the availability of certain resources for influence. It also seems that there is a tension operating between influence processes that are based on rationality and those that are based on emotive behaviour.

The emerging conceptual framework was developed to provide a useful frame of reference for the ongoing research by providing a device for surfacing, exploring and analysing emerging issues. The next chapter of this thesis, chapter 5, therefore reports the outcomes of the empirical work undertaken with the purpose of exploring the relevance of the emerging conceptual framework, from the practitioners' perspective, in the context of the established research cases.

**CHAPTER 5: BUILDING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK –
PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIONS, CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT, ACTION
INTERVIEWING AND DATA ANALYSIS**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an account of the methodology used in stage 3 of the research, as illustrated in figure 5.1 below.

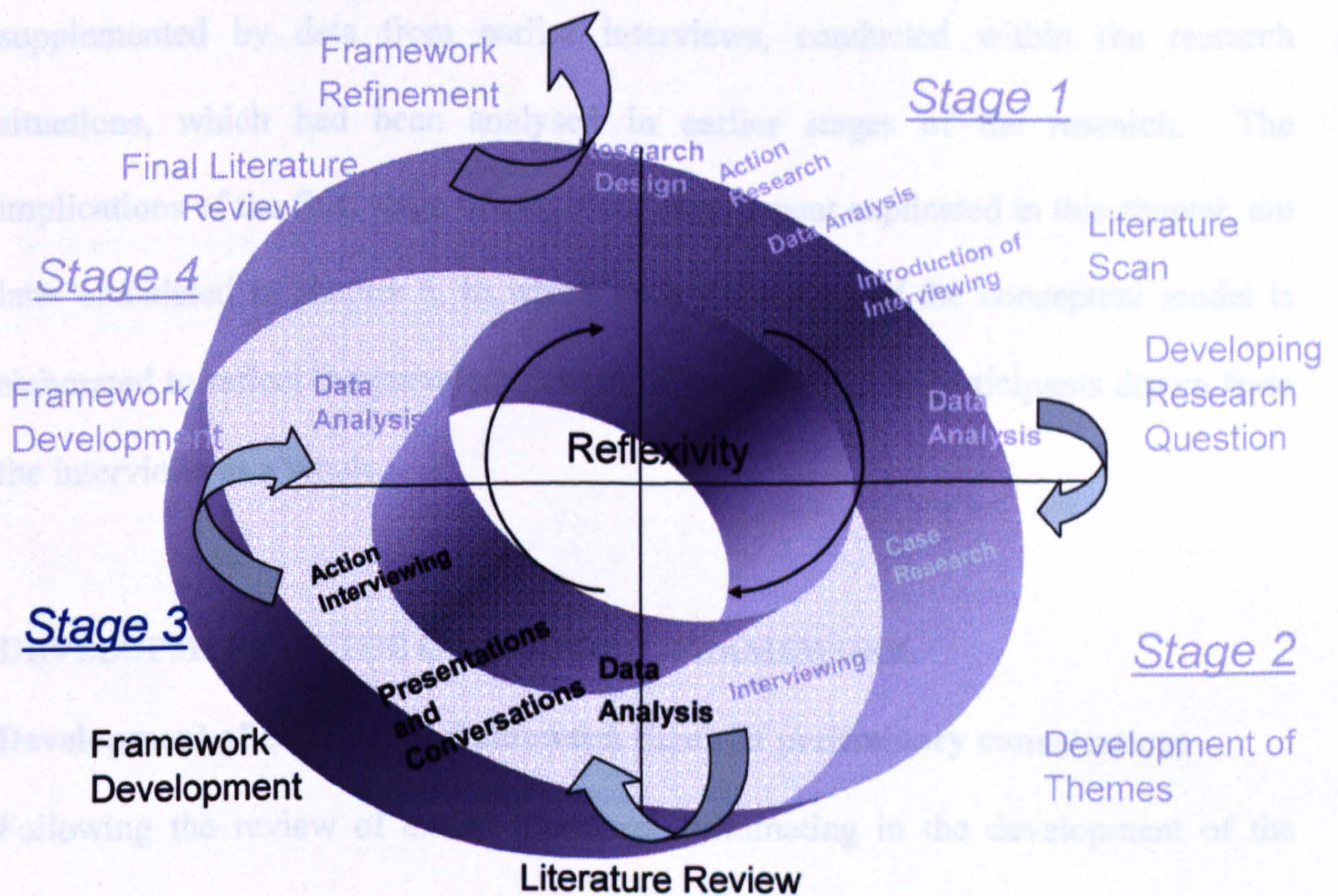


Figure 5.1: Stage 3 of the research

In this chapter attention is initially focused on the approaches used to gauge the reactions of different audiences to the emerging theoretical framework. The discussion covers a range of approaches: presentations to both academic and practitioner audiences and conversations and telephone conversations with practitioners. Secondly, attention shifts to an account of the minor adjustments made to the model as a result of the preliminary presentation and discussion process. Thirdly, the method used in the final stage of empirical research - *action interviewing*

– is elaborated. This was based upon interviews that were focused on eliciting the reactions of participants to the conceptual framework in the light of their experience. Finally, I set out examples of the data gathered and analysed. The analysis draws predominantly upon the data gathered in the final stage of interviews, during which the focus of the dialogue was upon the emerging conceptual model. This was supplemented by data from earlier interviews, conducted within the research situations, which had been analysed in earlier stages of the research. The implications of the final stage of empirical engagement explicated in this chapter, are later elucidated in chapter 6, in which each dimension of the conceptual model is elaborated to reflect the prevalent pattern of responses from participants drawn from the interviews as a whole.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Development of conceptual framework through preliminary consultations

Following the review of extant literature, culminating in the development of the conceptual framework elucidated in chapter 4, the focus of the research became the process of strengthening the conceptual framework. As a precursor to the next stage of empirical engagement and the further development of the conceptual framework, I undertook to explore the implications of the framework with a number of different audiences. A series of presentations, made both to audiences of practitioners and academics, stimulated some valuable feedback. These were followed by phone calls and conversations with colleagues and practitioners who had expressed an interest in the research. The groups and individuals who commented on the framework at this stage were not linked to the case settings discussed in chapter 3. This was a research

design decision intended to create opportunities to gauge reactions to the framework, and to adjust it in the light of the feedback, before returning to the case settings for further empirical engagement. The express purpose of these discussions was to elicit the views and reactions of a wider range of individuals. These conversations raised some important issues in relation to the framework, set out for ease of reference, in figure 5.2 below, and gave rise to some initial minor revisions and refinements.

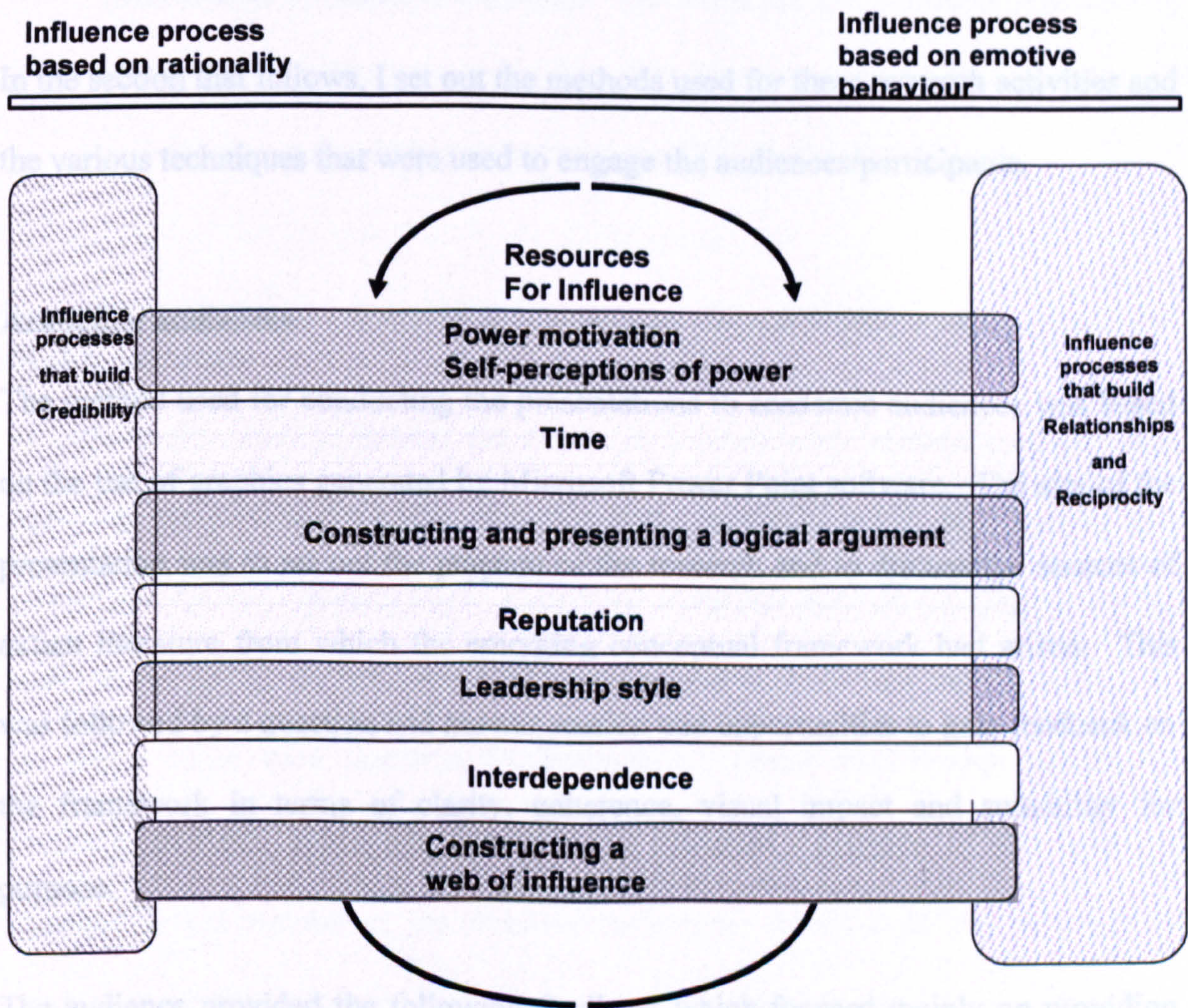


Figure 5.2: The nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations

Presentations were made in two academic contexts, these were: a departmental academic seminar and a developmental paper at an academic conference. One

practitioner presentation was made as part of a leadership programme for the NHS in England. These were valuable opportunities to present the framework in different contexts from those in which data was collected. Other discussions were held on a regular basis over a period of approximately eighteen months with academics and PhD students in supervisory sessions and in annual review meetings. Additionally a number of telephone conversations were held with clients and colleagues, outside the main research settings, who had expressed an interest in the research.

In the section that follows, I set out the methods used for these research activities and the various techniques that were used to engage the audiences/participants.

Academic audiences

The method used for conducting the presentations to academic audiences was based on the use of graphics generated by Microsoft Power Point software. The aim of the presentation was to set out the purpose of the research and to discuss the sources of extant literature from which the emerging conceptual framework had arisen. This was followed by a question and answer session and opportunities to gain feedback on the framework in terms of clarity, coherence, visual impact and suitability for purpose.

The audience provided the following feedback which focused mainly on providing suggestions for improving the visual and conceptual quality of the model central to the framework. The comments were summarised as follows:

- ❖ While the model draws attention to the recurrent issues that emerged from the review of the literature, in relation to the nature of influence as enacted by

participants in inter-organisational settings, the labelling of the model dimensions does not reflect that the theoretical framework has been created to conceptualise the nature of influence in *the context of collaboration*.

- ❖ The approach to labelling the resources for influence is inconsistent; while some appear to be resource-like in nature such as time, others describe activities, such as constructing a web of influence.
- ❖ The visual quality of the model could be improved to enhance the presentation of model dimensions. For example the components reflecting resources for influence overlap the other dimensions in unequal proportions and the arrows do not appear to have specific significance.

Practitioner audience - Presentation to senior clinical leaders – Essex Strategic Health Authority

An opportunity arose to present the model to a practitioner audience, as part of a leadership programme for senior clinicians that I was involved in delivering as part of my consultancy responsibilities. I provided a practice oriented presentation of the model to the group. In the presentation I attempted to show how the dimensions of the model could have practical implications for health care leaders seeking to influence partners from other agencies. I provided examples of the types of influence tactics reported in the literature to be most widely used and the kinds of issues that practitioners may wish to consider when deciding who to influence and how to go about it. A number of participants stressed how helpful the framework was in enabling them to break down an abstract concept such as influence into ideas to which they could relate in their own work, in a practical sense. A simple mapping exercise was used to demonstrate the kinds of strategies that practitioners could

develop and use to influence specific targets. The group was then split into smaller sub groups to practice this approach.

Following the event a consultant in the NHS made the following comment that provided me with some informative feedback on his perception of the impact of the use of the model:

“For me the focus on influencing others in a collaborative context was the most useful part of the leadership programme – if I had attended this two years ago I would have been able to handle the difficulties I faced on the closure of services better – I would have used logical persuasion to influence others –instead of becoming defensive I would have worked at developing an argument based on sound evidence to promote the importance of retaining the services to others - it has helped us to develop a structured way of thinking and the importance of building a network of influence to achieve goals – who do we want to target, what relationships do we need to develop? And how can we use a rational form of persuasion?” AK/ESHA

Conversations and telephone conversations with practitioners

The approach to the series of conversations and telephone conversations with practitioners revolved around providing a brief description of the research, and an explanation both of the main dimensions of the model and the main fields of literature which had influenced its development. In the case of telephone conversations I would email a copy of the model to the participant in advance for ease of reference. Typically I would ask the participant to provide me with their

thoughts on the model in the light of their experience in participating in inter-organisational collaborations, using occasional prompts such as:

To what extent does the framework resonate with your experience?

To what extent do the ideas reflected in the model pick up on some of the issues you have faced as a practitioner?

Is there anything you feel is missing from the model?

The conversations and telephone conversations held with practitioners elicited a range of ideas for developing the model. In particular the notion of *resources for influence* was a dimension of the framework which attracted considerable attention. A common response from a number of practitioners was that while time is an important resource for influencing in collaborations, financial resources are equally if not more important. As one commentator, an NHS Director of Public Health, remarked:

"The one that's missing there is actually the leverage, the finance - those kind of resources. They are really influential - who is going to pay for the change, if you see what I mean, that would have involved picking up this network, we would have had relocation, travel, those kinds of things." AR/BHB

Some commentators expressed the view that the framework did not overtly include themes or concepts, which they thought to be important to enacting influence within collaborative settings. For example the importance of considering the impact of different organisation cultures on the way participants influence each other. The

influencing style individuals develop has implications in turn for the way they will best respond to influence attempts from others. As one participant observed:

“different cultures require different influencing styles, for example the manager of the plant in France, his style is pretty autocratic – there is a lot of micro-management – it worked for him it does not work for others – influencing that type of person requires a different approach – he needs treated differently, you almost take a directive style that’s what he expects, whereas its normally a process of negotiation – by instinct you are using a different approach... there is an instinctive adjustment or sub conscious assessment ... how do the staff treat him do they defer ... so how are you going to play this?” GP/Ahlstrom

Key data showing the views expressed by informants that gave rise to changes in the conceptual model are set out in table 5.1 below:

Framework Developments	Views suggesting the importance of managing cultural differences as an aspect of influencing in the collaborative domain	
Respondent	Views Expressed	Interpretation of the views expressed by participants
Ahlstrom/ GP/3	<i>“different cultures require different influencing styles for example the manager of the plant in France his style is pretty autocratic – there is a lot of micro management - it worked for him it does not work for others. Influencing that type of person requires a different approach – he needs treated differently – you almost take a directive style ..that’s what he expects... whereas normally it is a process of negotiation - by instinct you are using a different approach ”</i>	Being able to adapt to the needs of those from different cultures is felt to be an important aspect of influence, demanding an adjustment to be made in leadership style. Leadership style is perceived as a flexible resource that may be adapted to meet the profile of the target of influence
E Strategic Health Authority/CS/1	<i>“ My role is about developing and implementing a strategic approach to leadership across 23 NHS organisations... .an aspect of the complexity involved in leading on this is culture...there are real cultural differences and issues between partners, for example differences in partner’s values”</i>	Cultural differences between partners make demands on the partnership for example differences in partners’ values. Leadership style could be considered as a flexible resource that may be adapted to meet the needs of the target of influence.
Econ Devel/JF/1	<i>“ when I went to do the self-caterers thing- it was quite difficult to understand what made them tick because they ranged..it was very different ... from a B&B to a guest house..I had to really almost research what it was that made them tick before I went in to try to help them collaborate... it is an understanding of your target....</i>	Cultural differences between partners make demands on the partnership for example differences in partners’ expectations. Leadership style could be considered as a flexible resource that may be adapted to meet the needs of the target of influence.

Framework Developments	Issues relating to the importance of financial resources	
Respondent	Views Expressed	Interpretation of the views expressed by participants
NHS B/AR/1	<i>"One that's missing there is actually the leverage, the finance - those kind of resources. They are really influential"</i>	Resources should include financial resources as well as temporal resources.
E.Strategic Health Authority/CS/1	<i>"The C Es were appointed 3-4weeks ago they failed to appoint in E of E- they were at the bottom of the heap due to intractable financial problems"</i>	The lack of financial resources were seen to act as a constraint on the influence the participants had on driving the collaboration forward
Econ Devel/JF/1	<i>"Fair enough rational, very rational, innovation is very good for you, you can make more money."</i>	Using arguments that stress financial gain/resources is a type of resource for influence
Ahlstrom/ GP/3	<i>"The board is influenced by the profit argument... targets for H&S are built into the bonus scheme its about the reward structure we need to recalibrate the reward"</i>	Using arguments that stress financial gain/resources is thought to provide a type of resource for influence
	Views suggesting the perceived tension between rational and emotive behaviours	
Respondent	Views Expressed	Interpretation of the views expressed by participants
SW London NHS Improvement Academy/RH/1	<i>"I naturally fall into rational persuasion (for example)...the work we do on lean thinking. The ES collaboration enabled change through both rational persuasion and emotive behaviours .."</i>	It was felt that certain individuals naturally tend towards one end of the spectrum more than the other but overall both approaches were used to deliver change.
E Strategic Health Authority/ CS/1	<i>"Tension between rational and emotive approaches to influence ..I absolutely recognise those as a continuum everyone will use both.."</i>	Most individuals are thought to use a combination of rational and emotive approaches.
	Issues relating to the presentation of the framework	
Respondent	Views Expressed	Interpretation of the views expressed by participants
Research Seminar Academic Audience	<i>How does the framework reflect the context of collaboration ?..(notes taken during research seminar)"</i>	The framework should reflect the context of collaboration more overtly
Academic Conference	<i>It seems as though it (the framework) is about influence in any organisational setting (notes taken during research seminar)</i>	The framework should reflect the context of collaboration more overtly
Academic Conference	<i>The labelling of the activities for influence appear to be inconsistent some are more like activities (notes taken during research seminar)</i>	A distinction ought to be made between activity and resource.
	Issues relating to enacting influence to increase self perceptions of power	
Respondent	Views Expressed	Interpretation of the views expressed by participants
Ahlstrom/ GP/3	<i>"I have the credibility and knowledge that I can change things for the better.. People perceive (me) as having the credibility to help themits a self fulfilling prophesy.."</i>	Credibility and knowledge of one's own ability to influence others are felt to be important. Perceptions of credibility are felt to be important to enhancing an individual's ability to influence others. Once an individual is successful in influencing others the drive to exercise influence seems to increase.
E Strategic Health Authority/CS/1	<i>"Thinking of my own boss.. helping me manage through change by recognising my achievements it raised my emotions and made me want to do (influence) more"</i>	Once an individual is successful in influencing others the drive to exercise influence seems to increase.
SW London NHS Improvement Academy/ RH/1	<i>"We talked it through, it was undeniably logical. There was a complete change of mind set .. we said here are the facts.. this is how it would work - it was quite powerful."</i>	Once an individual is successful in influencing others the drive to exercise influence seems to increase
E Strategic Health Authority /AK/1	<i>"(I realise) the importance of building a network of influence to achieve goals - who do we want to target, what relationships do we need to develop? And how can we use a rational form of persuasion?"</i>	A network of influence is felt to be important to influencing on a wider scale. Rationality is seen as an important means of persuasion. Both resources are felt to be important to increasing the self perception of power.

Table 5.1: Evidence Framework – Initial Discussion of Conceptual Framework

The views expressed during the presentations and discussions gave rise to some modifications to the model. However certain concepts which at first were thought by participants to be missing from the model, were later linked through further discussion, to an existing dimension of the model. Therefore no change was made. An example of this is the point made above about different cultures demanding different influencing styles. When explored further with the participants, it was generally agreed that this point fitted well with one of the central components of the framework - the notion of leadership style as a flexible resource that could be adapted to fit the profile of the target. Other issues which did seem to represent gaps or omissions are reflected in the revised model, set out in figure 5.3 below. The model is adjusted in line with the feedback from the preliminary consultations, as reported in the preceding section of this chapter, and these changes are the focus of discussion in the section that follows:

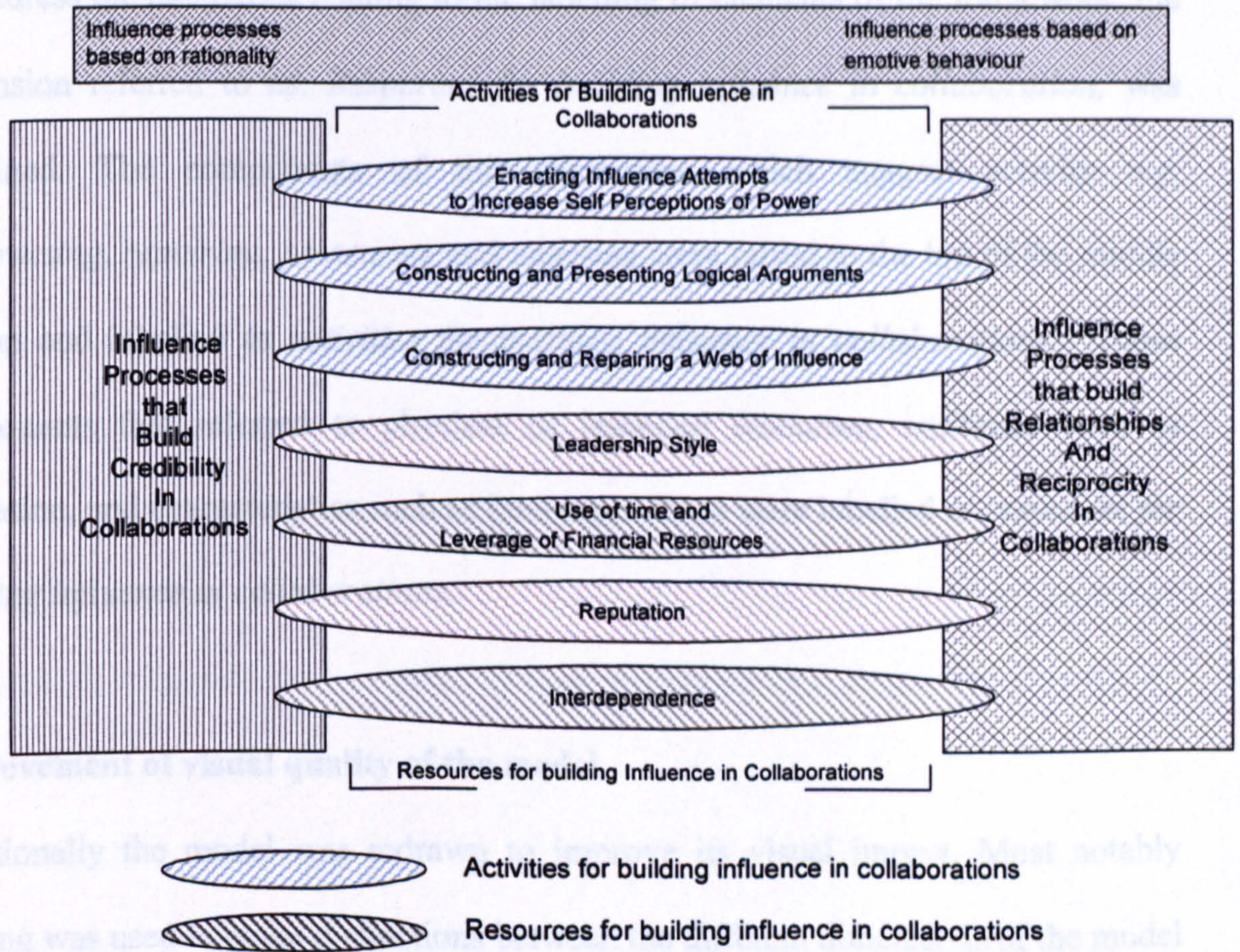


Figure 5.3: Conceptual framework adjusted in line with feedback from preliminary consultations

ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO THE FRAMEWORK AS A RESULT OF PRELIMINARY PRESENTATIONS AND TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS

As a result of the preliminary assessment of the framework made through the series of presentations and telephone consultations the following adjustments were made:

Enacting influence in a collaborative context

The re-labelling of the main dimensions of the framework emphasises that the theoretical frame conveys concepts relating to the enactment of influence *within the context* of inter-organisational collaboration.

Resources for building influence in collaborations

To address the anomalies relating to the labelling of elements of the framework, the dimension referred to as: *Resources for building influence in collaboration*, was redefined. The components of this dimension which suggest activity e.g. *constructing, repairing, presenting* and *enacting* were raised to the top of the middle section and labelled as *activities for building influence in collaborations*. Those components that referred to physical or temporal resources, attributes such as reputation, and characteristics such as interdependence were labelled as *resources for building influence in collaborations*.

Improvement of visual quality of the model

Additionally the model was redrawn to improve its visual impact. Most notably shading was used to make distinctions between the different dimensions of the model and to ensure that the components representing *resources for influence* were consistent in dimension and style. Different shading was also used to distinguish those resources that represent *activities for building influence* and those that represent *resources for building influence*.

Resources for building influence

The emphasis that many commentators had placed on the importance of financial resources was reflected through the addition of the term *leverage of financial resources* to the component labelled *time* as a resource for influence.

Activities for building influence

In the original model the resource for influence labelled *power motivation and self perceptions of power* did not appear to resonate with participants, whereas the label *enacting influence to increase self perceptions of power* proved to be a clearer and simpler way of conveying the same concept without losing any of the meaning. According to Mowday (1978), self perceptions of power result from having changed the behaviour of another through the exercise of influence.

The adjusted model was then used as the basis of the final stage of empirical engagement. This involved a series of semi structured interviews with individuals from the main research settings. The following section of this chapter is dedicated to elucidating the methodology used for these interviews and providing examples of data that was collected and analysed. Chapter 6 of this thesis elucidates the penultimate stage of development of the conceptual model to reflect the implications of the data collected and analysed from these interviews and provides an evidence framework in the form of tabular summaries of the views expressed by respondents and the interpretation drawn from these in relation to each dimension of the conceptual framework.

FINAL PHASE OF INTERVIEWS - ACTION INTERVIEWING AND INTER-ACTIVE INTERVIEWING

Action Interviewing and Perspectives on the Validity of Data

The following section provides an account of the refreshed and developed perspective on interviewing which was adopted at this stage of the research. The following discussion seeks to distinguish the approach to interviewing taken in stage

3 of the research from that adopted in the earlier stages of the research (see figure 5.1). It highlights the reasons why a more developed approach was particularly appropriate by outlining the specific characteristics of the method. This section of the chapter also addresses issues of validity in relation to the use of interview data.

A central principle of the work of Gubrium and Holstein (2003) is that interviewing is now established as an idiom in our society, it reflects society to us through the perceptions of reality conveyed by interview respondents. Similarly Silverman (2004) argues that research based on interviews in the *inter-actionist tradition* provides access to the meanings that people attribute to their experiences and social worlds, rather than providing a mirror image of the social world that positivists strive for.

Increasingly interviews serve to provide a communicated representation of *who* we are, producing insights into ourselves and our lives, and the lives of others. For this reason, as advocated by many writers on interviewing such as: Gubrium and Holstein (2003), Alvesson (2003), Alvesson and Skoldberg (2005), Silverman (2004, 2006) this research programme has been underpinned by continuous reflexivity on the part of the researcher, as a substantive qualitative method.

Through the term *Action Interviewing* Silverman (2004) projects the image of the interview as an occasion for constructing, not merely discovering or conveying, information. It gives the sense of the interview as an interpersonal drama with a developing plot. Interpretation orients to and is conditioned by the substantive

resources and contingencies of inter-action between the participants. Reality according to Silverman (2004) is constructed at the *intersection* of the *hows* and *whats* of experience by way of interpretative practice. Indeed interviewing is seen as a form of interpretative practice involving both respondents and interviewers. Throughout the interview reality is continually under construction, based upon the engagement of active participants in the process of production.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995 in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) suggest that an active interview transforms the subject behind the respondent from a source of opinions and reasons or a repository of emotions into a productive form of knowledge. The interview when viewed in this way can be regarded as a coherent process for producing meaning.

Criticisms of the interview, as a reliable source of information, generally relate to the subjective nature of the output (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003; Silverman, 2004, 2006). These criticisms centre on the problem that interviewees are not observed *actually doing* what they say they do, or *actually saying what they say they said*, they are simply giving their version of the event, conversation or action. However if we accept, as Gubrium and Holstein suggest we do, that interview talk is *in itself* action, then the contrasts between doing and acting become superfluous (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995 in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). Holstein and Gubrium (1995 in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) build on this argument to suggest that interview narrative can be viewed as a shared cultural resource, while interviews

generate accounts and narratives that are forms of social action in their own right and in this way contribute to the development of knowledge.

Active Participants

The view of interviewing informants as “*active participants*” (Silverman, 2004) transforms the interview into a co-operative meaning making project drawing on two sets of contingencies: the *whats* of the interview enterprise – the link between the issue of interest and the informant and the *hows* of the process – the interview respondents constantly monitoring *who they are* in relation to the person questioning them.

The respondent can be observed in working up the context within which interview answers unfold as he/she designs the responses to be heard in a particular way (Silverman, 2004). This view of the interview emphasises its special qualities for the production of meanings that helps to address issues relating to particular concerns about its value as a research method. The respondent’s interpretative capabilities are activated, stimulated and articulated in the interview exchanges. According to this perspective, active interviewers converse with respondents in such a way that a range of different possibilities come into play.

This picture of the active interview and of active participants influenced both the choice of interviewees, the way the interviews were conducted, the analysis of the data, and ultimately the way the analysed data was used to develop the framework.

Selecting participants for interview

The dilemmas and conundrums associated with the choice of informants were mediated by a number of important considerations relating to the suitability of informants to engage in active interviews. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people *fully integrated within their context* and *studied in-depth*. Whereas in the early stages of the research, the opportunity to select participants was somewhat limited and mainly corresponded with contemporaneous consulting activities, in the approach to the later and final stage of interviews the sample was carefully selected, in what could be described as a conceptually driven sampling strategy (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Sampling strategies, Miles and Huberman suggest, should start from the outer parameter of the study and work back to the core, while the focus gradually tightens around specific individuals, events, times and locations following lines of influence. They argue that within case sampling is always set in the context and must be theoretically driven. The choice of informants, episodes and interactions is driven by a conceptual question and involves two actions sometimes pulling in different directions.

1. Setting the boundaries
2. Creating a frame to help uncover, confirm and qualify basic constructs that underpin the study

The approach is often theory driven, either from the outset or as in the case of this research, progressively. The emerging conceptual framework formed the focus of the investigation and informants were chosen on the basis of their suitability to engage in discussion which would elicit a range of perspectives on the framework, in

the light of their experience. It has already been acknowledged that there are potential limitations relating to the choice of the research methodology in general, and to the choice of respondents in particular, in this study. The implication is that the concepts that emerge are not likely to be applicable in a generalised way to all other comparable settings. However they may be applicable to existing or new theories and through these may form an extension of knowledge.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) multiple case sampling adds confidence to findings and a sample plan is helpful in determining which informants are likely to provide the most relevant commentary in the conceptual frame and their suitability to the purpose of exploring the research question. The sample plan used to select participants for the final stage of data collection was developed as set out in table 5.2 as follows:

Active Interviewees	Reasons for Choice	Setting	Circumstances	Techniques and Method of capturing data
FEDD				
Member of FEDD (external to sector)	Likely to offer new perspective.	Invited me to hold the interview at his home office	An external consultant and board member of a College providing services as a FEDD team lead on a number of cases	Written notes – note that an earlier version of the model was used in this interview – first attempt to use action interviewing approach
Director of FC	Second interview and interested in the research	Interview held over lunch	Director due to retire a month after the interview. Considered to have made a significant contribution to FEDD by ex Director	Written notes – note that an earlier version of the model was used in this interview – action interviewing approach
Ex Director of FEDD	Second interview and interested in the research	Interview held in Royal Scots Club	No longer Director of FEDD now involved as lead in a new IOR setting. Considered as having made a highly successful contribution to FEDD	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Borders College Heriot Watt University JV				
College Assistant Principle responsible for the JV	Recently made responsible for the JV and likely to offer new perspective	Interview held in his office	New into this role and already making a positive impact	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)

Active Interviewees	Reasons for Choice	Setting	Circumstances	Techniques and Method of capturing data
University Director Responsible for JV	Responsible for the JV from the outset	Interview held in his office	Now working very successfully with opposite number at the College	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Director of Finance for College	Was originally in a lead role. Withdrew for a period while others stepped in, now involved again but less intensively	Interview held in his office	Now playing a less central role but involved in an advisory capacity	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Fife and Glenrothes Colleges Merger				
Principal of newly merged college	Third interview	Interview held in his office – now moved to headquarters of Adam Smith College	Now established as principal of the newly merged colleges.	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Informants from collaborative contexts outside main research situations				
Director of Public Health	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context and a new sector	Interview held in his office	Previously a client who had expressed interest in the research. Recently involved in collaboration with a directorate in NHS Lothian	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Executive Lead Tourism Innovation Scottish Enterprise	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context and a new sector	Interview held in her office	A client who has national responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Recorded interview – used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Personnel Director Ahlstrom	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context and a new sector	Interview held in his office	A former client who has international responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Interview recorded in note form used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Partnership Manager Performance Unit Essex NHS	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context	Telephone Interview	A former colleague who has regional responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Interview recorded in note form used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Director of Workforce Development Essex Strategic Health Authority	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context	Telephone Interview	A former client who has regional responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Interview recorded in note form used adjusted model (figure 5.3)

Active Interviewees	Reasons for Choice	Setting	Circumstances	Techniques and Method of capturing data
Board Member Livestock Marketing Consortium	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context	Interview in his office	An associate who has regional responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Interview recorded in note form used adjusted model (figure 5.3)
Senior NHS Consultant in Special Health Board	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context	Used model in a coaching session when discussing issues relating to collaboration	A former client who has regional responsibility for stimulating and supporting collaboration in the sector	Interview recorded in note form used earlier model (figure 5.2)
SW London NHS Improvement Academy/ RH	Triangulation Opportunity to use the model in a new context	Telephone Interview	A former colleague with responsibility for collaboration on issues relating to the improvement of clinical standards	Interview recorded in note form used earlier model (figure 5.2)

Table 5.2: Sample Plan

Besides the respondent the interviewer is also naturally central to the success of the interview as a platform for gathering relevant and valuable data (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2004). The quality of the research therefore rests in large part with the interviewer as an information gathering instrument. The following considerations, adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994), were therefore important and ones which were central to the process of preparing to conduct the final sequence of interviews:

How valid and reasonable am I likely to be as an information gathering instrument?

Have I developed sufficient familiarity with the phenomena?

Do I have strong conceptual interests?

Do I have well honed skills of observation and interaction?

INSTRUMENTATION – A SHIFT FROM EXPLORATORY TOWARDS CONFIRMATORY INTERVIEW DESIGN

Given the degree of emphasis placed on exploring the implications of the emerging conceptual framework, in the final stage of the empirical research strategy it was

appropriate to effect a shift in emphasis from exploratory towards confirmatory approaches (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This is implicit within the format used for conducting the interviews as set out below:

Interview Format, Style and Structure

The purpose of the interview was introduced and elaborated through a detailed explication of the emerging framework. The interview was *grounded in the context* (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and this was achieved by inviting the interviewee to set the context and to explain the current situation *as they saw it*. A conversational style was used, with more frequent interventions from the interviewer than in previous interviews, to stimulate a stronger sense of co-production of the interview accounts (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003; Silverman, 2004). In terms of interview structure, a number of questions were posed during the course of the interview at stages deemed to be appropriate by the interviewer. These were intermingled with discussion of the conceptual framework and were generally framed as follows:

- ❖ How does the framework as a whole resonate with your experience of X?
- ❖ To what extent do you recognize this dimension of the framework?
- ❖ To what extent is the issue we are discussing, a particular facet of exercising influence in the collaborative setting?
- ❖ What aspects of enacting influence within the collaborative setting has the framework not yet captured?

While the interview would begin in an open way, as it progressed questions would become increasingly more focused around the research questions and later around key elements of the framework.

Techniques for data collection

As indicated in the sample plan the majority of the later stage interviews were recorded using a digital sound recorder and were then transcribed, studied, checked back against the recording and then analysed. Some of the interviews which were carried out beyond the case research settings were recorded in note form, as the respondents involved were less familiar to me and less likely to feel at ease with a recording device. Two of these interviews were held over the telephone.

Technique for the analysis of data

These later stage interviews were analysed on two levels. First the transcripts would be read carefully. Sections which appeared to be of particular relevance to the development of the framework were highlighted in coloured pen and notes were made in the margins. Once themes that were either convergent or divergent in relation to the various dimensions of the framework had been highlighted, these were drawn out of the text and cross checked with reactions in other interview transcripts. A table was created as displayed in table 5.3, showing the key dimensions of the framework in the left hand side column. The column next to this displays key themes emerging from the data, drawn from the views that were expressed in the interviews in relation to each of the framework dimensions (Wengraff, 2001). These themes are illustrated by the fragments of data, from which the themes were derived,

in the centre right column of the table. Details and coding of the interview, from which the fragment is drawn, and of other interviews in which corresponding data is found are set out in the right hand column. An illustration of a section of the table is as follows. Table 5.3 is intended to demonstrate method, while the table 5.4, shown in the last section of this chapter, will illustrate an example of how the data was interpreted in relation to each of the dimensions of the framework.

Model Dimensions	Theme	Data Fragment	Code & Page Ref
Case B/HWU Case G1/Fife			
Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Increasing credibility by proxy(through a third party)	<p>She fulfilled a role as a conduit to the funding council. Her relationship with the funding council was very good....her role was an honest broker ...she'd say they are right she was endorsing it ...her credibility was important ...she fought our corner she was validating the ideas we brought forward ...</p> <p>John was able to position the FEDD far better in terms of relationships eg between FEDD and ASC</p> <p>It would not have got off the blocks without John's real credibility in the sector and RM had to be assured that JB was a credible player</p> <p>..he was the link to the sector ... he could say look the FC are not... he helped to reposition the FC ...JB was doing business through people</p>	<p>RMcG 1 BC/hwu LH BC/hwu DK/BChwu</p> <p>BL/ FEDD int ROAR</p> <p>AG/FDD</p> <p>RBM/IHWU/BC</p>

Table 5.3: Illustration of a section of the tabular format used for the analysis of data

To illustrate the way in which the interviews were conducted and to highlight the themes that were generated excerpts from the data are shown in the next section.

ILLUSTRATING ACTION INTERVIEWING

Introducing the framework

The first set of excerpts taken from the transcripts of the interviews shows how the interviews were introduced and provides a picture of how the respondents initially engaged in the process of being interviewed. Following the approach proposed by a number of writers on conducting interviews in a constructionist or interpretative paradigm, (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003; Silverman, 2004) wherever possible, I attempted to help the participants relate to the conceptual model through their own recent experience and to provide biographical details that would position the interviewee at the centre of the interview:

(Interviewer- CT3G/F)

I do remember you saying that as you neared merger then it was at a point of bringing the two management teams together and really sort of winning their commitment and support and getting them to buy in to the whole idea of one single organisation.

(Respondent CT)

Sure, it would be different webs of influence because at the start there were some management or operational points of contact and what could be construed as webs of influence but the web of influence that was most important in the early stages was the governors. Then it went on to management and then it went beyond that and it became, I guess, more explicitly a web of influence and was managed as that because we took part of it outside of the management structure what we were trying to do in recognising that the web was critical to moving the whole process forward. I

guess I recognised that. I certainly recognise these things here (pointing to the resources for influence dimension of the model)...

Some respondents expressed a wish to spend more time at the start of the interview setting the context as they saw it and it was not until half way through the interview that we were able to discuss the framework

(Interviewer – DK/BC HWU/1)

So that's the model and it would just be useful to get ten minutes of your time now on how you think those ideas that I've just presented to you would relate to your experience of this collaboration.

(Respondent DK)

Credibility – what immediately sprung to mind was what was often quoted to me is that- you go and speak to them you seem to speak their language. They will see you as an academic so you'll be credible. Although actually we're not dealing with the academic part we're dealing with the organisation's management. But, yes, I mean building that credibility is important. Building a relationship in the first place I think is very important, at an individual level, you know, if you cannot build relationships at an individual level you cannot get the organisations to relate to each other. Because that's in essence what an organisation is isn't it? It's those individuals. I think it's also, personally, because I knew right from the beginning I would need to influence people and I would need to move things along and I would need to get people working with me and buying into the vision. Yes, it's about – how do you persuade people. It's about getting measure of the people that

you're working with and treating them as credible and forming strong relationships with them –

Helping participants to focus on the framework in the early stages of the discussion

The reflexive approach taken to the interviews ensured that as an interviewer I was conscious of the impact that I would have on the research setting (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2005; Silverman, 2004, 2006). In one research setting I was particularly familiar with the players and the context. As a former work colleague of many of those interviewed I may still have been seen as an *insider on the outside*.

I was able to engage some participants almost immediately in discussion on the framework and this led to a more comprehensive account with greater focus on the dimensions of the framework. An example of data illustrating early engagement in the discussion of the framework is shown below. The data is taken from the college and university joint venture.

(Interviewer – BC HWU/1)

I've introduced the model and I've really asked you to think about your experience in relation to the collaboration between (the college and the university) and perhaps to reflect on your experience in the light of having heard about this model and the particular dimensions that I've taken you through.

(Respondent AH)

I think I'll start at the top of the model and my experiences over the years in terms of the spectrum from influencing processes based on rationality

through to those based on emotive behaviour. Certainly, I guess being the director of finance of the college, a central part of influencing the process for collaboration has been being able to deliver the financial rationale..... We were able to use that rationale in exactly the same way between the university and ourselves. By collaborating with the university we found a whole series of costs that were common to both organisationsSo there's quite a substantial argument that we were able to develop around the benefits of working together in a co-located campus..... around a rational figures-based approach to the solution.

Allowing the participant to choose how they began to engage with the conceptual framework

The interviews were planned as interactions intended to elicit opportunities to gather information on the life world of the interviewee, in relation to their interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (King, in Cassell and Symon, 1994).

To encourage this contextual orientation, I deliberately allowed the participants the choice of where and how they began to engage with the framework, giving them time to orientate their thinking around my explanation and to reflect upon how they saw the various elements in relation to their own experience. In some cases I provided examples of suggestions, made by other interviewees, to stimulate thinking. An illustration of this approach based on inviting the participant to take the lead in reacting to the framework is as follows:

(Respondent – JF JF1 SE/1)

It would be best to go through each of the elements then, one at a time.... I think it is really important to have a bit of both on the spectrum (pointing to the top of the framework)if I had just gone out and said "Statistics show that on a rational basis you need toI don't think we would have had as much influence or got people to buy into it as much as we did. Part of it was about the emotive element of influencing people because together it would be better as a passion for a common cause and (it was about) trying to tap into that passion- that was emotive, that wasn't rational.

(Interviewer)

Ok, yes. So you are talking about your passion and your belief in it.

(Respondent – JF)

My personal belief in it but me trying to instil passion and belief in others who then subsequently influenced others and it was the people who had really strong passion and belief in the end game that actually had the biggest influence I think.

Using prompts to tease out ideas about how the framework related to the world of the respondent

A recognised technique in interviewing is the use of prompts and probes in a spontaneous way according to the manner in which the interview is unfolding (King, in Cassell and Symon, 1994).

As the interviews progressed, more focused prompts were used to tease out participants' experiences, which would help to elaborate the conceptual framework.

An example of this kind of probing for a more detailed answer is taken from the Borders College, Heriot Watt University Joint Venture.

(Interviewer – RM HWU/1)

His leadership style then, is that something that you think was particularly significant at that time as a sort of resource to enable collaboration?

(Respondent – RM)

Leadership style was essential to the merger with the college which was otherwise blocked as I said. I can't... and J recognised that a part of that was to take the opportunity to build bridges that had previously been lacking with the college. I can't actually say that beyond that the leadership style greatly shaped the relationship between the university and the college.

(Interviewer)

But the opportunity was seized...

(Respondent – RM)

Yes, the opportunity was seized yeh and personally blessed by the leader.

(Interviewer)

And as you say that whole notion of interdependence was probably a very strong driver.

(Respondent – RM)

It was. Absolutely. I think it was more on the right side of your diagram Virginia (pointing to the emotive end of the spectrum at the top of the framework)... It's an instinct rather than an analysis, I think.

I remember.....they asked us to do a whole series of options appraisals among which they said – why don't you appraise the option of merger with

the college?I think what we did say at that option appraisal was that merger with the college was nonsense but relationship was essential. But actually I suppose the subtext wasthat whatever that appraisal had said, we were going to merge with the College of Textiles. What I'm trying to emphasise is that it was the emotive side of this diagram.

Observing interviewee behaviour and preferences for engagement

Many writers on qualitative interviews stress important characteristics such as: a low degree of structure imposed by the researcher, a predominant use of open questions and a focus on specific situations relating to the world of the interviewee (Robson, 1993; King in Cassell and Symon, 1994). To embed the set of freedoms this implies, within the interview experience, I tried to ensure that the interviewees were given as much scope as possible in enacting their preferences for engaging with the conceptual framework. In one particular interview the interviewee was very keen to discuss a theory he had come across, in the course of his own research as a leader in a collaboration. Therefore it was only towards the end of the interview that I was able to ask him to focus on the conceptual framework relating to this research. On reflection, the preference exercised by this interviewee was consistent with behaviour the individual had demonstrated in previous interviews, showing a tendency to lead, demonstrating a strong desire to share learning and knowledge and to relate practice to existing theory. An excerpt of the interview is shown below:

(Interviewer – JB3/FEDD)

So that's the model – it's got these three dimensions and I just thought briefly if you could reflect to me whether or not you can see some relevance there

with your experience and whether you can see the model standing up in that sense.

(Respondent – JB)

The simple answer is yes. What was striking me is that instead ofwith the project there waswith the project and to a certain extent, if I was looking first of all at the three principals, I would actually go to the three principals and say – what we're going to do is this (pointing to the emotive end of the spectrum at the top of the model)... I would probably put myself more on this end (pointing to the rational end of the spectrum at the top of the model) – I can do the emotive behaviour and the passionate speech but I'm more comfortable with rationality, ... systematic, that's my style. I would put M... further up the emotive scale.

By providing scope for participants to exercise choice in their preferred way of engaging with the framework, the interview became not only an opportunity to capture *what* participants felt was important to the substance of the discussion – the conceptual framework – but *the way* in which they did so and the pattern that this presented when compared with previous interviews. This is reminiscent of what Silverman (2004) identified as constructing social reality at the *intersection* of the *hows* and *whats* of experience by way of interpretative practice.

The impact of interview technique and the competence of the interviewer

One of the key differences between this phase of interviews and interviews that had been conducted in stages 1 and 2 of the research (see chapter 2) was that a digital sound recording device was used. The transcripts that resulted not only provided a

more accurate account of the conversation, because it was possible to rewind and review the dialogue and improve the transcript, but it provided a more authentic record of the conversational style of the interviews complete with voice intonation and non verbal prompts. In previous interviews, I had concentrated on capturing what the interviewee was saying in note form and often failed to record my own comments and voice prompts, which influenced the nature and spontaneity of discussion. Most writers on qualitative research stress the importance of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2005; Silverman, 2004, 2006), indeed King (in Cassell and Symon, 1994) states that:

"The qualitative researcher believes that there can be no such thing as a relationship free interview" King (in Cassell and Symon 1994)

Being critical of my own style of interviewing, I felt that in an effort to build a strong rapport with the participants I was often tempted to interject too often with prompts or points of clarification. On replaying the conversations I realised that this sometimes had the effect of stimulating thought and energising the discussion and at other times may have been a distraction. An example from the FEDD case illustrates this.

(Respondent – JB JB3/FEDD)

Again I'm looking at the project and (thinking about) this model..... I can see where we did build credibility because of the reputation and previous experience of the colleges and the principals involved ...

(Interviewer)

Exactly, the way you performed your businesses really...

(Respondent – JB)

the leaders involved, the attention to detail, the high profile we gave to the launches – involving contacts or to encourage, at a very busy time of the year nine or ten colleges to let their staff come (to the launch events).

(Interviewer)

Absolutely...

(Respondent – JB)

...we had a web of influence that we used both across the sector, with the funding council, with the industry. I think in terms of the credibility in the relationships – it's kind of understood that it did happen and there was a division between the two (referring to the main dimensions of the model). As I say I can see how different styles of leadership were useful to cover both.

(Interviewer)

Exactly, absolutely, because some styles of leadership could be more about building relationships to put more weight on the actual process of building relationships and some styles of leadership could place more weight on actually building credibility.

(Respondent – JB)

I think in terms of the 'leaders of leaders' of the project, my great strength was to be able to get a sense of equality between all the three different colleges. Win win across the three colleges...

(Interviewer)

Yes. You said to me earlier that you thought that engendered a spirit of trust between the three. Do you think trust is something that should be overtly mentioned in this model? I feel it's sort of implicit within it...

(Respondent – JB)

Reputation, leadership style... it is interdependent...

(Interviewer)

Credibility ... all of those things (I say this because he is pointing to the dimensions of the framework) ...

(Respondent – JB)

...if you take any project that has external funding and investment of resources by, in this case the colleges themselves, we set up very very detailed financial controls.... lot of it was down to setting up systems, reputations and trust.....

Process for developing the framework – interpretation and confirmation of key themes and associated concepts

The analysis of data from the interviews provided the basis upon which to continue the process of tightening up and fleshing out the conceptual framework. For each major dimension of the framework it was possible to draw implications from the data that suggested how the framework could be elaborated to reflect the experience of those interviewed. This method was illustrated in table 5.3 showing how a tabular format was used to perform the initial analysis, which gave rise to the emerging key themes associated with the main dimensions of the framework.

Table 5.4 below shows an excerpt of the evidence framework intended specifically to illustrate how the data drawn from each interview conducted throughout the cases was interpreted in relation to each dimension of the conceptual model. In the left hand column I set out the participant and case details, in the middle column the fragments of data from the interviews show the views expressed that centred on particular aspects of the framework. The right hand column shows how the views were interpreted. This provides an evidence base supporting the themes behind the main dimensions of the model. Thus table 5.4 below is intended to provide an example of how the views of all respondents were summarised in relation to the key points made and how they related to the interpretations being drawn. This interpretative framework is illustrated extensively throughout chapter 6 which provides the rationale for the way in which the conceptual framework was developed to reflect the implications of the interviews.

Case And Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Influence Processes that Build Credibility By Proxy	
College/ University JV LH BCHWU	"She fulfilled a role as a conduit to the funding council. Her relationship with the funding council was very good...her role was an honest broker ...she'd say they are right she was endorsing it ... her credibility was important ...she fought our corner she was validating the ideas we brought forward."	Credibility seemed to be built through a relationship with an influential individual and the credibility of the partners grew through the association with a partner who was perceived by others to be credible
College/ University JV/RBM BCHWU	"J was able to position the FEDD far better in terms of relationships eg between FEDD and ASC."	The credibility of FEDD appeared to develop and the relationship between the partners seemed to grow stronger as a result of the interventions of a credible individual.
FEDD AG/FDD	"FEDD would not have got off the blocks without John's real credibility in the sector and RM had to be assured that JB was a credible player."	The credibility of this individual appeared to be a key success factor to FEDD becoming influential in the sector.
DL/FEDD	"...he was the link to the sector ... he could say look the FC are not... he helped to reposition the FC ..."	The credibility of FEDD was felt to be developed through this individual who helped the partners to see FEDD in a new light.
JB/FEDD	"Its about working across cultures - gaining the likes of Anne's support and other directors."	JB felt his credibility grew by gaining the support of key individuals.
JFBE1	"So I actually identified people that had influence in their own environment because they had reputations ... they were seen to be people who (other) people would follow."	To extend her influence J felt it important to identify others who had credibility in their field and thus were in a strong position to influence others.
RBM/FEDD 1	"When you are working with FEDD (members) you get closer to the council."	Having a close working relationship with members of a credible organisation is seen to help build credibility with individuals from other organisations.
Anthem/GP	"I have the credibility and knowledge that I can change things for the better...people perceive me as having the credibility to help them...It's a self fulfilling prophesy."	Knowledge of one's own credibility and other peoples' perceptions of one's credibility appear to be important to influence.

Table 5.4: Illustration of the evidence framework supporting framework development

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an account of stage 3 of the research. It also describes the approach taken to conducting a preliminary review of the conceptual framework, developed primarily from engagement with the extant literature. Through interaction with a range of different audiences and through presentations, discussions and telephone conversations, wide-ranging perspectives were taken into account and reflected in changes made to the framework. This chapter also provides a description of the approach taken to conducting *active interviews*. The data that emerged from this final stage of interviews was analysed using the tabular format described in this chapter and illustrated in tables 5.3 and 5.4 above. It was then used to elaborate and detail the emerging conceptual framework. Both the process of building greater detail into the framework and the resulting description of the elaborated dimensions of the model are discussed as the central features of chapter 6.

**CHAPTER 6: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK –
ELABORATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the initial part of stage 4 of the research process, as shown in figure 6.1 below, the elaboration of the conceptual framework.

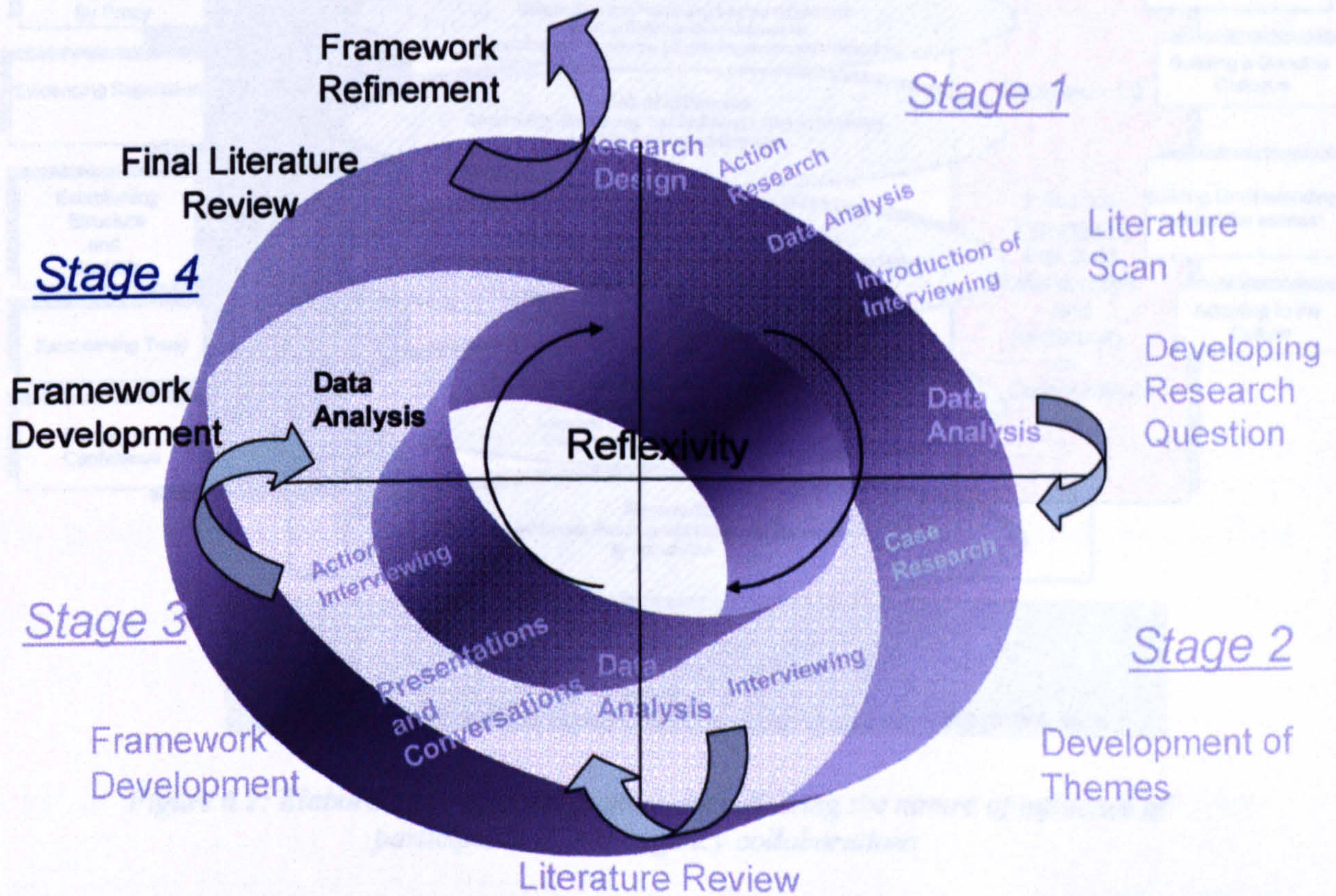


Figure 6.1: Stage 4 of the research

In this chapter the emerging conceptual framework, illustrated in chapter 5 (figure 5.3) is further developed and *fleshed out* to reflect the implications of the data analysed in the final stage of empirical engagement, as discussed in chapter 5. This chapter is focused on building the rationale for the development of the framework shown in figure 6.2 and providing a detailed elucidation of each of its dimensions and associated components.

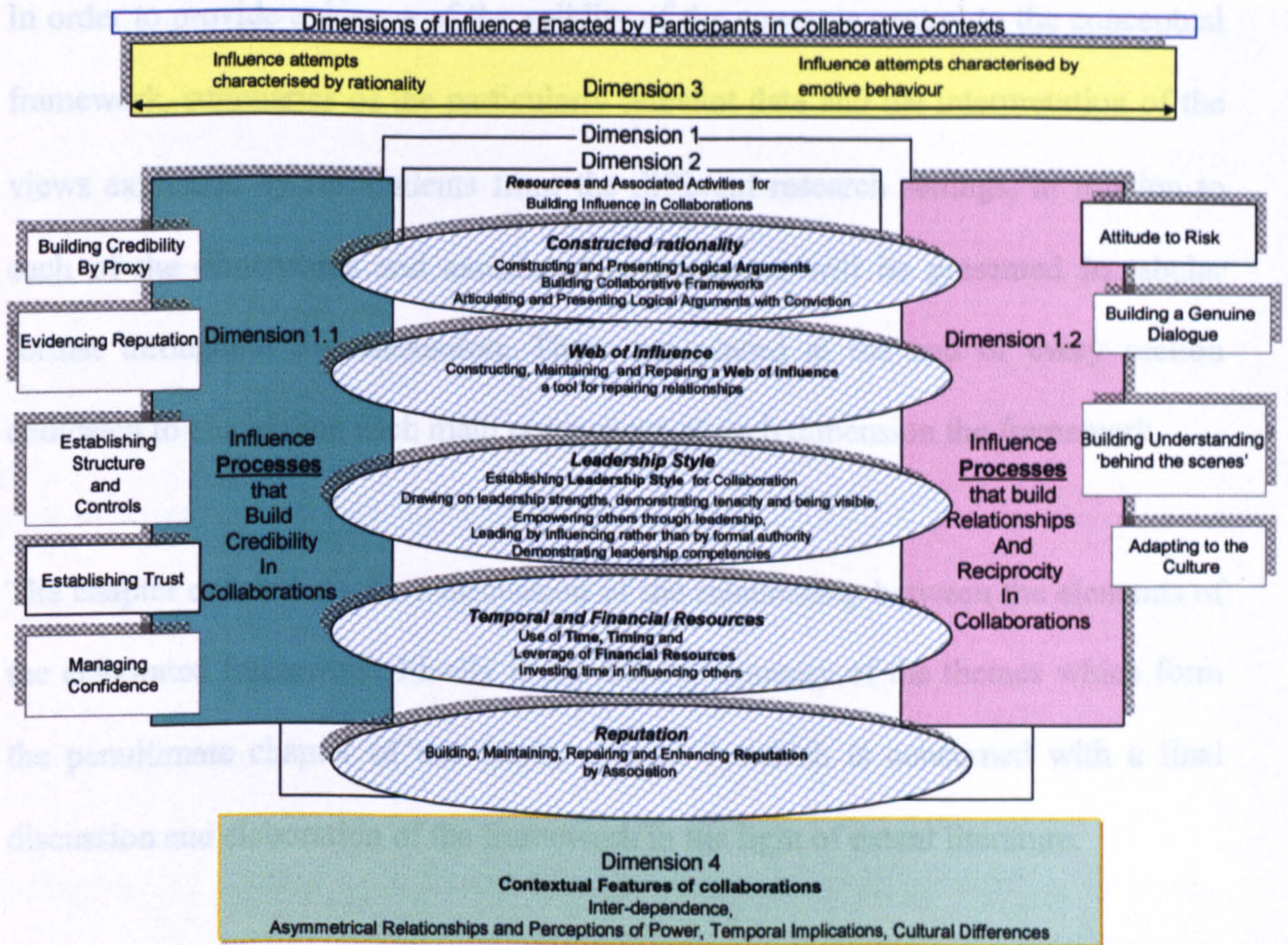


Figure 6.2: Elaborated conceptual framework reflecting the nature of influence of participants in inter-agency collaborations

In this chapter the elaborated conceptual framework, shown in figure 6.2, is discussed in relation to its main dimensions and associated component parts to illustrate the adaptations and developments that have emerged from the analysis of the data.

In the sections of this chapter that follow, the discussion is firstly focused on a review of the key concepts that form the framework. The discussion then turns to a review of each of the individual dimensions of the framework, which are illustrated and expanded in turn. This approach is designed to reflect how the framework was developed on the basis of the data gathered and analysed from the *action interviews*.

In order to provide evidence of the validity of the concepts central to the conceptual framework, summaries of the particularly relevant data and the interpretation of the views expressed by respondents from the different research settings, in relation to each of the dimensions and associated components, will be presented in tabular format throughout the discussion. These are placed at the end of every section dedicated to elucidating each main component of each dimension the framework.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between the elements of the elaborated framework. Finally it provides a summary of the themes which form the penultimate chapter of the thesis, chapter 7, which is concerned with a final discussion and elaboration of the framework in the light of extant literature.

First however, it should be pointed out that, as a result of the empirical engagement and analysis of data gathered from the action interviews, two significant adaptations have been made to the version of the conceptual framework discussed in chapter 5 (figure 5.3) as follows. These relate to the central dimension of the framework: Resources and Associated Activities for Building Influence. The evidence of the pattern of responses that gave rise to these changes is provided initially in a summary table at the end of this section and is developed in later sections of the chapter.

Adaptation 1 : Interdependence and Temporal Implications of Influencing in collaborative contexts

The concept of *interdependence* struck a resounding chord with all interviewees. It was strongly suggested by respondents that interdependence provides a significant driver for collaboration and creates a contextual condition which necessitates the

enactment of influence. In addition the temporal implications and cultural differences experienced by those attempting to exercise influence in collaborative settings were also identified as a particularly important contextual feature. *Interdependence, temporal implications and cultural differences* have therefore been combined with another prominent contextual feature of collaborations, *asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power*, to form a fourth main dimension of the framework. This new dimension will be elucidated in the final section of this chapter. Evidence of the pattern of responses and the interpretation of the views expressed that led to these changes is provided in tabular format in section 4 of this chapter, which is dedicated to discussing dimension 4 of the framework.

Adaptation 2 : Enacting influence attempts to increase self perceptions of power

The first component of the third dimension of the conceptual framework shown in figure 5.3: *Enacting influence attempts to increase self perceptions of power*, found little resonance in the analysis of data as a recurrent theme. Interviewees did however strongly acknowledge that individuals who are particularly adept at enacting influence tend to gain a strong sense of their own ability to influence others, derive reward from success and consequently are inclined to seek out roles in which they will have scope to influence others. Despite this acknowledgement, on close examination of the data, the original component did not appear to be regarded as sufficiently important to interviewees to justify its retention as a central theme of the conceptual framework in its own right. The theme did however align with an observation that those interviewed had been chosen to lead collaborations because they had previously demonstrated a flair for influencing others in collaborative settings. It therefore seemed to be reasonable to consider this theme as an integral

aspect of one of the *resources for building influence*, located at the centre of the framework, which resonated strongly in the interviews with the concept of self perceptions of power - *leadership style*. Evidence of the views expressed by informants and the interpretation of views that gave rise to this adaptation are provided in tabular format in section 2.3.

The discussion now turns to the central concepts that underpin the framework: *credibility, reciprocity and relationships*.

DIMENSION 1: INFLUENCE PROCESSES THAT BUILD CREDIBILITY IN COLLABORATION AND INFLUENCE PROCESSES THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND RECIPROCITY IN COLLABORATION

The concepts that form the first dimension of the framework: *Credibility, Relationships and Reciprocity*, arose as issues of relevance to the focal phenomenon of influence consistently throughout both the empirical work and the review of literature reported in earlier chapters. Thus they form a central dimension of the framework. As influence has been posited in this research as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and conceptualised as processual and dynamic in nature, the dimensions of the framework that relate to credibility, relationships and reciprocity are thus framed as *processes*.

The first dimension of the framework to be elaborated in the section that follows is represented in two component parts which are located at the left and right sides of the framework - influence processes that build *credibility in collaboration* and influence processes that build *relationships and reciprocity in collaborations*. The discussion

that follows elucidates the first component of this dimension: influence processes that build credibility in collaborations.

Dimension 1.1: Influence Processes that Build Credibility in Collaborations

This component of dimension 1 of the emerging conceptual framework is concerned with influence processes that build *credibility* in collaborations. Throughout the empirical work and the review of literature the concept of credibility arose as being of central importance to the enactment of influence. Credibility appears to be a multi-dimensional concept and one that is largely perceptual. The notion that an individual who is credible in the eyes of others within the collaboration, is likely to be in a strong position to enact influence successfully, arose consistently. The relationship between an individual's credibility and their ability to influence others in a collaborative setting was associated with some specific recurring themes. This component of dimension 1 of the framework has been developed to incorporate these themes, which are framed as follows:

- ❖ *Building Credibility by Proxy*
- ❖ *Evidencing Reputation*
- ❖ *Establishing Structure and Controls*
- ❖ *Establishing Trust*
- ❖ *Managing Confidence*

These specific themes are illustrated in figure 6.3 and elucidated in the section below.

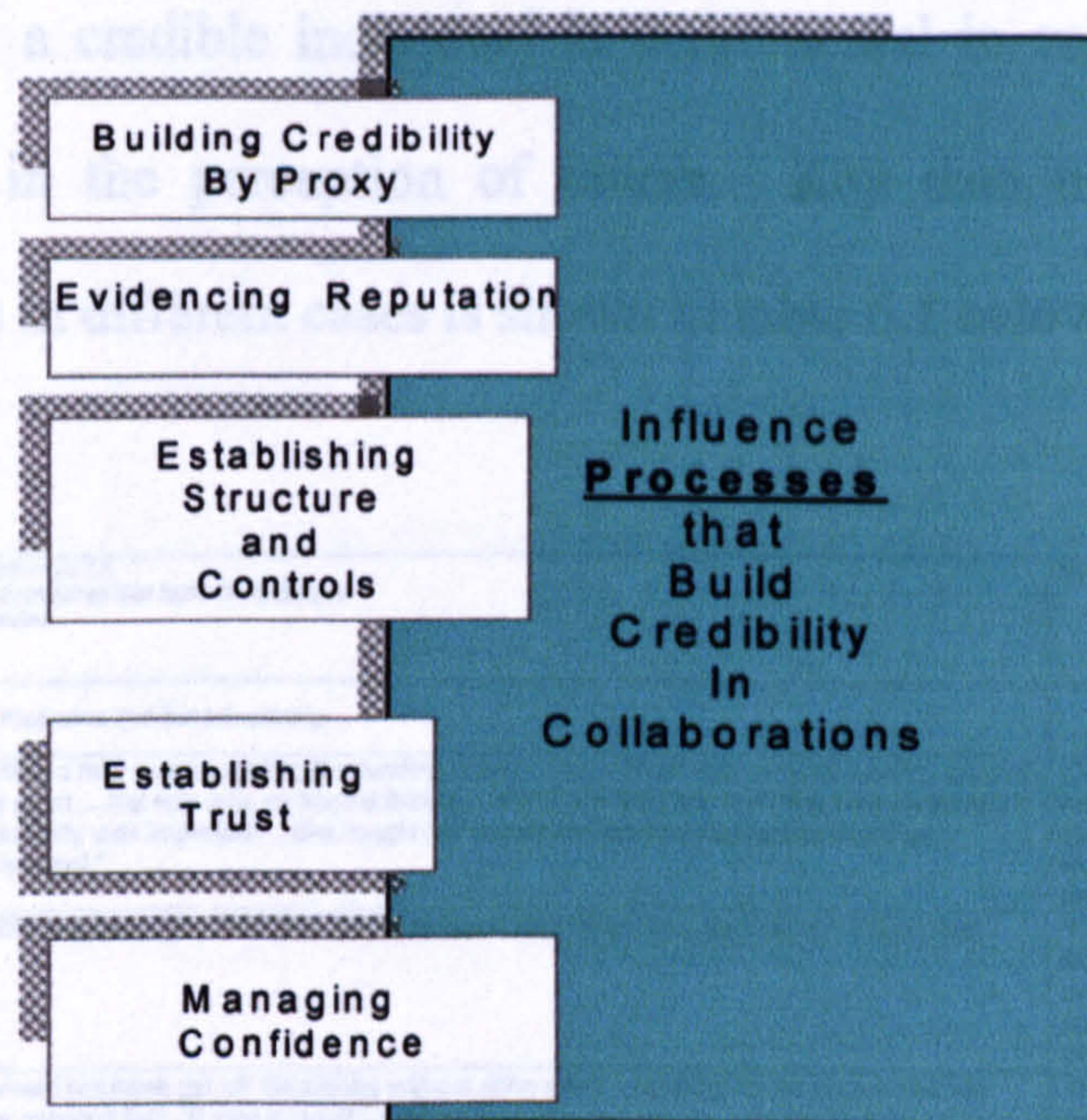


Figure 6.3: Influence processes that build credibility in collaborations

1.1.1 Building Credibility by Proxy

A particular factor that appears to be instrumental in building the credibility of a participant in a collaborative setting appears to be an association with an individual who is regarded as credible in the eyes of the target of influence. For example, in the college and university joint venture case, where at several junctures in the history of the collaboration the partners' credibility appeared to be low in each other's estimation, an outside influence was brought in to broker greater credibility with the target of influence. As an interviewee from this case observed:

"She fulfilled a role as a conduit to the funding council. ... her credibility was important ... she fought our corner she was validating the ideas we brought forward." LHBC/hwu

Thus it appears that an important process for building credibility in collaborations is seen as one in which credibility is built by proxy. Wherein, purely through association, a credible individual is instrumental in enhancing the credibility of a participant in the perception of others. Key data drawn from interviews with respondents in different cases is shown in table 6.1 below:

Case And Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Influence Processes that Build Credibility By Proxy	
Collega/ University JV LH BC/MWU	"She fulfilled a role as a conduit to the funding council. Her relationship with the funding council was very good....her role was an honest broker ...she'd say they are right she was endorsing it ...her credibility was important ...she fought our corner she was validating the ideas we brought forward."	Credibility seemed to be built through a relationship with an influential individual and the credibility of the partners grew through the association with a partner who was perceived by others to be credible.
Collega/ University JVRBM BC/MWU	"J was able to position the FEDD far better in terms of relationships eg between FEDD and ASC."	The credibility of FEDD appeared to develop and the relationship between the partners seemed to grow stronger as a result of the interventions of a credible individual.
FEDD AG/FDD	"FEDD would not have got off the blocks without John's real credibility in the sector and RM had to be assured that JB was a credible player."	The credibility of this individual appeared to be a key success factor to FEDD becoming influential in the sector.
DL/FEDD	"...he was the link to the sector ... he could say look the FC are not... he helped to reposition the FC ..."	The credibility of FEDD was felt to be developed through this individual who helped the partners to see FEDD in a new light.
JB/FEDD	"Its about working across cultures – gaining the likes of Anna's support and other directors."	JB felt his credibility grew by gaining the support of key individuals.
JFSE1	"So I actually identified people that had influence in their own environment because they had reputations ... they were seen to be people who (other) people would follow."	To extend her influence J felt it important to identify others who had credibility in their field and thus were in a strong position to influence others.
RBM/FEDD †	"When you are working with FEDD (members) you get closer to the council."	Having a close working relationship with members of a credible organisation is seen to help build credibility with individuals from other organisations.
Axiom/GP	"I have the credibility and knowledge that I can change things for the better...people perceive me as having the credibility to help them...it's a self fulfilling prophesy."	Knowledge of one's own credibility and other peoples' perceptions of one's credibility appear to be important to influence.

Table 6.1: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.1 Component: 1.1.1- Influence processes that build credibility by proxy

1.1.2 Evidencing Reputation

The process of building credibility was also frequently related by interviewees to the ability to provide recent evidence of strong performance. For example, in the college and university joint venture case this was an important feature of rebuilding the credibility of participants that, at one stage in the collaborative process, had been compromised by tensions among the partners. As an interviewee from this case explained:

“until we’ve got the credibility in there we can’t start to influence. If you’re a college in crisis or you’ve got a poor HMI report it’s going to be very difficult to have any influence with the funders.” AH/BCHWU

Similarly in the FEDD case the appointment of the FEDD director was considered to have been made largely on the basis of his track record in performing well and therefore being regarded as professionally credible:

“The college is very well managed and he has credibility, he has performed well and we had to have the perfect principal – a totally credible and good manager - to be engaged in sorting out the problems.” AG/FEDD1

The notion of individuals acquiring credibility over time resonated strongly throughout the cases. For example, in the FEDD case time was conceptualised as an important factor in incrementally building influencing capability through the process of building credibility.

“Where does the power (to influence) come from – experience, credibility gained over a number of years in different settings.” JB FEDD1

The analysis of data also seems to suggest a significant relationship between credibility and *reputation*. One interviewee saw *credibility* as the current ability to evidence *reputation* which was described as a quality reflecting *past performance*, as illustrated in the following excerpt of data from the FEDD case.

“R took the view that it was important to put into place a manager who had a very strong reputation. He said –You have to prove your credibility by running a very successful operation....”AG FEDD2

In much of the data there appeared to be a strong association between the concepts of *reputation* earned on the basis of *past performance* and the perception of *current* credibility. These appeared to be considered as predicators of the ability to influence in the collaborative domain. This association was a particularly strong and consistent theme throughout the FEDD interviews, as one interviewee suggested:

"The approach to J's appointment was that credibility is an absolute precursor and critical starting point. ...J's real credibility in the sector and R had to be assured that he was a credible player. Some objective measures were required first ... reputation is something you get to hear of without actually knowing the person" AG2 FEDD

The suggestion that the perception of an individual's credibility can be built incrementally out of previously established reputation, within a temporal frame, was a common theme particularly in the FEDD case interviews:

"Again I'm looking at the project through this model (pointing to the framework)... I can see where we did build credibility because of the reputation and previous experience of the colleges and the principals involved" JB3/FEDD

It also appears that credibility, in the eyes of the target of influence, is often related to the degree to which an individual is associated with having performed well, within the relevant sector or industry. On the basis of having demonstrated a strong track record, in the relevant sector, the individual is perceived as an insider and is automatically invested with a degree of trust. This link between reputation related attributes and being identified as an insider was considered by interviewees to

provide a strong foundation upon which to exert influence, on the basis of credibility, as illustrated in the FEDD case:

*“People within the sector will have a reputation, e.g. people know J....
Reputation really counts and she has delivered real results. It's a matter
 of going to someone who is known, who has delivered.” DL/FEDD1*

Case and interview details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Evidencing Reputation	
College/ University JV ADH/BC/ HWU	"It's reinforcing because until we've got the credibility in there we can't start to influence. If you're a college in crisis you've got a poor HMI report its going to be very difficult to have any influence with the funders"	It appears to be easier to influence others if you are regarded by them as credible on the basis of performance and evidence of a reputation for strong performance.
College/ University JV ADH/BC/ HWU	"And also what we're doing is we're actually piloting a lot of collaborative projects with the university again that's helping to embed in a small way the success of partnership working... so that's almost a test case...the university are saying it's a very positive thing"	Taking opportunities to embed partnership working through projects appears to create scope for evidencing the reputation of the partners and building the credibility of the participants.
NHS Trust AR/supp NHSB	"When you are assessing your peers you actually take in some cognisance of their past experience and certainly all the evidence that I had seen was high quality and you know, this was a credible personality"	The assessment of an individual's credibility is felt to be made on the evidence of their experience.
FEDD AG/FDD	"Why JB? – Angus is very well managed and he has credibility he has performed well and we had to have the perfect principal – totally credible and good manager - to be engaged in sorting out the problems"	The individual appeared to be selected to lead the collaboration on the basis of the evidence of his reputation as a high performer and therefore a credible figure.
FEDD DU	"The credibility comes through reputation – FEDD secondees have acknowledged experience and they have delivered"	Credibility seems to be built through the reputation for having experience and for delivering.
FEDD JB3	"Reputation and leadership style is interdependent"	People appear to gain a reputation for a certain kind of leadership style that forms evidence of their credibility.
Colleges Merger CT2	"It's a mixture of experience, corporate memory, accepted expertise and authority, credibility based on knowledge and expertise ...sapiential authority"	Building credibility appears to involve demonstrating evidence of knowledge and expertise.

Table 6.2: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.1 Component: 1.1.2 – Evidencing Reputation

1.1.3 Establishing Structure and Controls

A recurrent notion associated with the credibility of the participants in the collaboration was the degree to which individuals had been seen to be responsible for setting up the appropriate structures and controls. For example, in the case of the college and university joint venture, having the right structures and controls in place was considered to be a key criterion in assessing the credibility of the individuals involved.

"It's quite interesting about influence and credibility. I think that we had to get to a position where our solution was credible, our financial projections were credible" AH/HWU

Similarly with the FEDD case, setting the right systems and structures in place was seen as a process that would build the credibility of the participants.

"A lot of it was down to setting up systems, reputations and trust....." JB2

A number of interviewees emphasised the importance of ensuring that the right project management infrastructure was in place, not only in terms of building credibility but also in strengthening relationships. This was regarded as a means of signalling to partners that there was a strong basis upon which to support a reciprocal relationship.

Case/ Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Establishing Structure and Controls	
College/ University JV AH/BC/HWU	"I am sure that we were assessed by the funders to say well do we have sufficient credibility in terms of our management, our resource to be able to take this forward ..."	Credibility was felt to be built by setting up and delivering a structured process and putting controls in place.
AG/FEDD	"The first point of influence was creating the model it could have turned out differently... what was critical in the first few months was the creation of the modus operandi."	The model appeared to provide the structure to the FEDD work which helped to build credibility.
AH/BC/HWU	"We had to evidence a management infrastructure and a process that would deliver this project successfully. I think that was a turning point that we had to set up a structure of control and financial monitoring and financial management."	Credibility was seen as being built through setting up and delivering a structured process and putting controls in place.
DK/BC/HWU	"and the leadership ... we set up very detailed financial controls. That was the starting point for the senior overarching group at every meeting at the beginning of every meeting was the financial picture..."	Credibility was thought to be to do with setting up and delivering a structured process and putting controls in place.
JB3/ FEDD	"A lot of it was down to setting up systems, reputations and trust so that there isn't a sense that you feel you have been cheated or someone's getting more than you are for less effort."	Setting up systems was felt important to building the credibility of the participants.
RBW/ FEDD	"They should leave the structure where it is because of where it sits it has a certain authority... FEDD is a good influence (on the relationships) between the (partners)."	The structure to which FEDD belonged gave it credibility.
BC/ FEDD	"What did the model do? To say if you follow the framework then you are more assured of success than if you adopt an ad hoc model – when it would be seen as an auditing approach and become confrontational."	Using a structured process helps to build credibility and builds more of a collaborative relationship. An ad hoc approach would be seen as an imposed intervention and may provoke defensive behaviours.
JMc1 GLP	"The steering group was the means of lubricating the relationship between the two colleges...the contact helped to prepare the ground."	The structure of the steering group was felt to be important to building the credibility of the participants.
BD GLP	"We had our frameworks in place we had the track record, we had the credibility."	Having structures in place appears to build the credibility of the participants.

Table 6.3: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.1 Component: 1.1.3 – Establishing Structure and Controls

1.1.4 Establishing Trust

The concept of trust received consistent attention in the interviews as a theme which is particular to influence processes that have the potential to build credibility, relationships and reciprocity among participants in collaborative settings. As discussed in relation to dimension 1 of this framework, the notion of trust was often associated with influencing processes that build credibility by providing a strong base upon which to form reciprocal relationships.

“A lot of it was down to... trust so that there isn't a sense that you feel you have been cheated or someone's getting more than you are for less effort”

JB3/FEDD

Association with a particular sector also appeared to be a strong contributory factor to establishing trust and, as a result, credibility. For example, the success of the collaboration between FEDD and the college sector was largely attributed to the fact that those who acted as advisors to colleges, the secondees, were employed in the sector and therefore were more likely to build successful, trusting relationships within the college to which they were assigned.

“It's easier to trust insiders within the sector and trust and credibility are fundamental.” *DL1/FEDD*

The analysis of data consistently reflected concerns related to trust being an issue particular to the collaborative domain that affects the credibility of individuals and consequently the success of influence attempts enacted by individuals. The following excerpt is taken from an interview with a manager in an economic

development agency whose central remit is to stimulate and nurture collaboration in the tourism sector.

"They now know that if H N gets an enquiry for something then there's a trust there that ST will then share that and collaborate with others to make it happen because they trust each other. Trust is quite important in these relationships.....I think trust and credibility would be better to have in there ... (referring to the conceptual framework) Yeah, I think trust needs to go in there " JF/SE/1

This interviewee was making the point that, if the relationships between partners are based on an established form of trust, this aspect of the influencer's overall credibility is likely to accelerate the process of influence. Thus efforts to establish trust between participants provide a strong basis upon which influence processes may be enacted. Evidence of a similar level of emphasis placed on the issue of trust and its relationship is provided in the table below:

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Establishing Trust	
DUFEDD	"It's easier to trust insiders within the sector and trust and credibility are fundamental."	Trust was felt to be linked to credibility and seem to be associated with working in the sector.
DUFD	"There is now a much greater level of trust among colleges because it is a service which is produced for the sector...the teams are made up of individuals actually from the sector and not outside ...people actually working in the sector who come from other colleges."	DL suggests that trust was established by demonstrating experience and understanding of the sector.
EMcD/BH8	"Building trust and confidence – we need to recognise other people's capabilities and take this further than the SMT ...Leadership is about helping people to cope with change."	Trust and confidence seem to come from recognising peoples' capabilities.
JB/FEDD 2	"Once I had gained their trust – by handling things they could not handle – the initial cases were dangerous territory... In my view yes they are moving forward and gaining in influence."	JB felt he gained trust by demonstrating his competence in working through issues that they found particularly difficult.
JF/sup BE1	"There were two or three people in both of those groups who actually people didn't trust and when they were not there, much more progress was made...there was much more openness to collaborate, people listened to the influencers ... and I think in collaboration you need trust ... even if you have got an influence if they don't trust you ..they don't feel part of it."	When trust is established it seems that more progress is made in the collaboration. Trust is felt to be important to influencing others in the context of collaboration.
DA/FEDD	"There is now a greater relationship between them ...she is receiving all the ...essential information... A key role was shaping the engagement – this involved a visit to (the client) and demonstrating transparency this was a key lever in trust building."	Information and having a role in shaping the process is felt to be important to establishing trust.
JB/FEDD 3	"So that (clear leadership structure) managed the joint working, maximised the contributions from individuals across the organisations, created the trust we needed, managed the tensions. It's a reflective learning process ...have this spirit of mutual understanding and trust."	The leadership structure seemed important to establishing trust.
JMcC GUF	"This happened because there was trust and respect for one another...respect and trust were critical factors."	If an individual is respected they are more likely to be trusted.
JMcC GUF	"Other key competencies are ...winning trust and securing it."	Winning trust is seen as a competency.
JJ GUF	"There had been many points in time if trust in the other individual had not been there it would have fallen apart...if you are not in a position to say I know that is a cock up rather than a conspiracy ...what sits at the core of interpretation is trust."	If trust is established actions of individuals seem to be interpreted with generosity rather than suspicion.

Table 6.4: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.1 Component: 1.1.4 – Establishing Trust

1.1.5 Managing Confidence

Instilling a sense of confidence in the collaborative processes also appears to be important to the process of building credibility in a collaborative context. This appears to involve making certain process adjustments towards the other partners' requirements in the first instance, in order to build an incremental sense of confidence that protocols will be respected. For example, in the FEDD case, all of the key players took a conscious decision to adapt to the bureaucratic style of one of the key partner agencies, in order to fit in with their expectations.

"the first few months were crucial he made a point of ensuring that RM was very well informed ... he went to directors meetings even though they were very boring it was about keeping R informed and up to date and this built confidence. This made RM comfortable and it gave confidence to J. I am not going to be out on a limb..." AGI/FEDD

Confidence levels between participants were often associated with the relative degree of formality involved in collaborative processes and transactions. Within the processes that build *credibility* and those that build *relationships and reciprocity*, there appeared to be an inherent tension in the ideas articulated by interview respondents, between the need to conduct transactions in a *formal* way and the need to reach out to people to influence them through engagement of an *informal* nature in order to build confidence. For example, as one of the FEDD case interviewees explained:

"In a formal role with strategic plans we were constrained by our remit in how we could intervene – although it was a formal intervention we did not want to do the formal thing we wanted to throw the paper work away and say

tell us what the issues are and yet we could not – there were colleges that could identify what was wrong..” AGI/FEDD

The tension between the level of *formality* required to build *credibility* and the perception that a sense of *informality* was required to build *relationships*, appeared to find resonance with the second component of the first dimension of the model – *processes that build relationships and reciprocity in collaborations*. This component will be discussed in the section that follows. Other respondents across the cases also reflected the connection between the efforts made to manage confidence as a feature of credibility, as follows:

Case/ Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.1 Influence Processes that build Credibility in Collaborations	Interpretation
	Managing Confidence	
FEDD/ RBM1	"I put it down to JB's style and persuasiveness he is seen as influential – he is listened to by the FC – at times he is one of them but also a Principal – a lot of it is about the way he has gone about it."	The ability to relate to the different partners and to be seen as one of them appears to instil confidence.
FEDD JT V	"I think because it was arranged by a Principal there is much more buy in from fellow principals, it's not a big brother kind of act."	Because the participants felt they could relate to each other as members of the same sector there was greater confidence in the process which was perceived as collaborative rather than imposed.
Colleges University JV DK	"Where I have got a bit of tension at the moment – perhaps over a kind of social spacewhere I know I'm going to have to give on certain things to get the bigger vision...."	Managing confidence in the collaboration seems to mean being able to give on certain issues.
NHSB/ JG	"Trust and confidence in the team has enabled the discussion to move forward."	Trust and confidence appear to increase the credibility of the participants and to contribute to success in influencing the collaboration.
FEDD/ DG/	"The FEDDs gave the council confidence – they had influence and mediated on funding issues – the FEDD influenced the council and gave it the comfort to go ahead – that was the benefit."	Certain partners in the collaboration seem to be able to instil confidence in others and mediate on issues of importance.
FEDD JB1	"I had a concern that I had to win trust and confidence in the FC with all sorts of people...if this (influence) is going to be the modern way for many people to work ...they are going to go through the "why have I done this" and use different styles on a daily basis – (working out) how do you win trust and confidence."	Winning the confidence of participants was seen to be critical to having the credibility and scope to influence others in the collaboration.
Colleges Merger JMcC/GL/ F	"...he quickly established confidence in each institution through his personality ...this was a critical appointment."	This individual was seen to be influential because he was able to manage the confidence of both JV partners.
CT GLF	"(the process) gave us the confidence to bring together the senior finance post ... these were confidence building measures ...there were various reactions (it was important) to give people confidence and reassurance."	Certain actions are felt to be associated with building confidence among partners.
Colleges Merger BD/	"He was neutral. He had a lot of credibility and influence, he was seen to be very neutral, fair and objective."	The perception of credibility, neutrality, fairness and objectivity seems to be important to increasing confidence among participants and strengthens one's ability to exercise influence in the collaborative setting
DK/BCHW U	"You go and speak to them ...you seem to speak their language. They will see you as an academic so you'll be credible."	Using language that the target of influence is familiar with thus demonstrating familiarity with their world is felt to build trust and credibility.

Table 6.5: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.1 Component: 1.1.5 – Managing Confidence

Dimension 1.2: Influence Processes that Build Relationships and Reciprocity in Collaborations

The second component of the first dimension of the model, shown in figure 6.4 below, is concerned with *influence processes that build relationships and*

reciprocity. It has been developed to incorporate a number of specific themes that were recurrent in the data. These are: *Attitude to Risk, Building a Genuine Dialogue, Building Understanding Behind the Scenes and Adapting to the Culture*. Before elucidating the specific ideas associated with this dimension in detail, the concepts of relationships and reciprocity are discussed in relation to their central role in within the framework and in relation to the link between this second component of dimension 1 of the framework and the first component – *influence processes that build credibility*.

The analysis of data reflected a resounding view among interviewees that strong relationships are a prerequisite to the ability of participants to influence each other and therefore represent the platform upon which acts of reciprocal influence may be centred.

“What will make this work is the relationship between the two organisations – the senior managers in these organisations.” KI/HWU

Throughout the interviews participants described the importance of ensuring that the target of influence is clear about what can be gained from the collaboration. As one interviewee put it quite simply: *“it’s a two way street” AR/Supdt*

A strong link between the themes of relationships, reciprocity and credibility was also often apparent. One interviewee described the relationship between credibility and reciprocity in terms of equilibrium, explaining that to gain credibility partners have to be prepared to be flexible in their approach to key issues; demonstrating intellectual flexibility builds credibility in the eyes of other participants. As one

interviewee implied this often involves being prepared to let go of previously held assumptions and this in itself may be seen as an act of reciprocity.

"There is an equilibrium between reciprocity and credibility." BC/FEDD

The same interviewee suggested that reciprocal exchanges that mutually reinforce understanding and credibility are instrumental in building relationships. The act of treating others as credible was seen as a type of currency to be traded.

"Its about getting the measure of the people that you're working with and treating them as credible and forming strong relationships with them" BC/FEDD

Another interviewee suggested that there is a need to be seen to be *willing to give in order to get*. The willingness to give on certain issues establishes a tacit expectation to receive in other ways:

"Where I have got a bit of tension at the moment – perhaps over a kind of social space ... where I know I'm going to have to give on certain things to get the bigger vision" DK/BC_{hwu}

One interviewee indicated that part of the challenge of engaging partners successfully was linked to helping them feel as though they could make a valuable contribution to the partnership, as she put it:

"how to make people feel that they had something to give" AG/FEDD

Building on the apparent link between the theme of credibility and that of relationships and reciprocity, four specific themes associated with the concepts of relationships and reciprocity are elucidated:

Attitude to risk,

Building a Genuine Dialogue,

Building Understanding Behind the Scenes

Adapting to the Culture

These themes are illustrated in figure 6.4. Each theme is discussed in turn in relation to the elaboration of the conceptual framework in the section that follows:

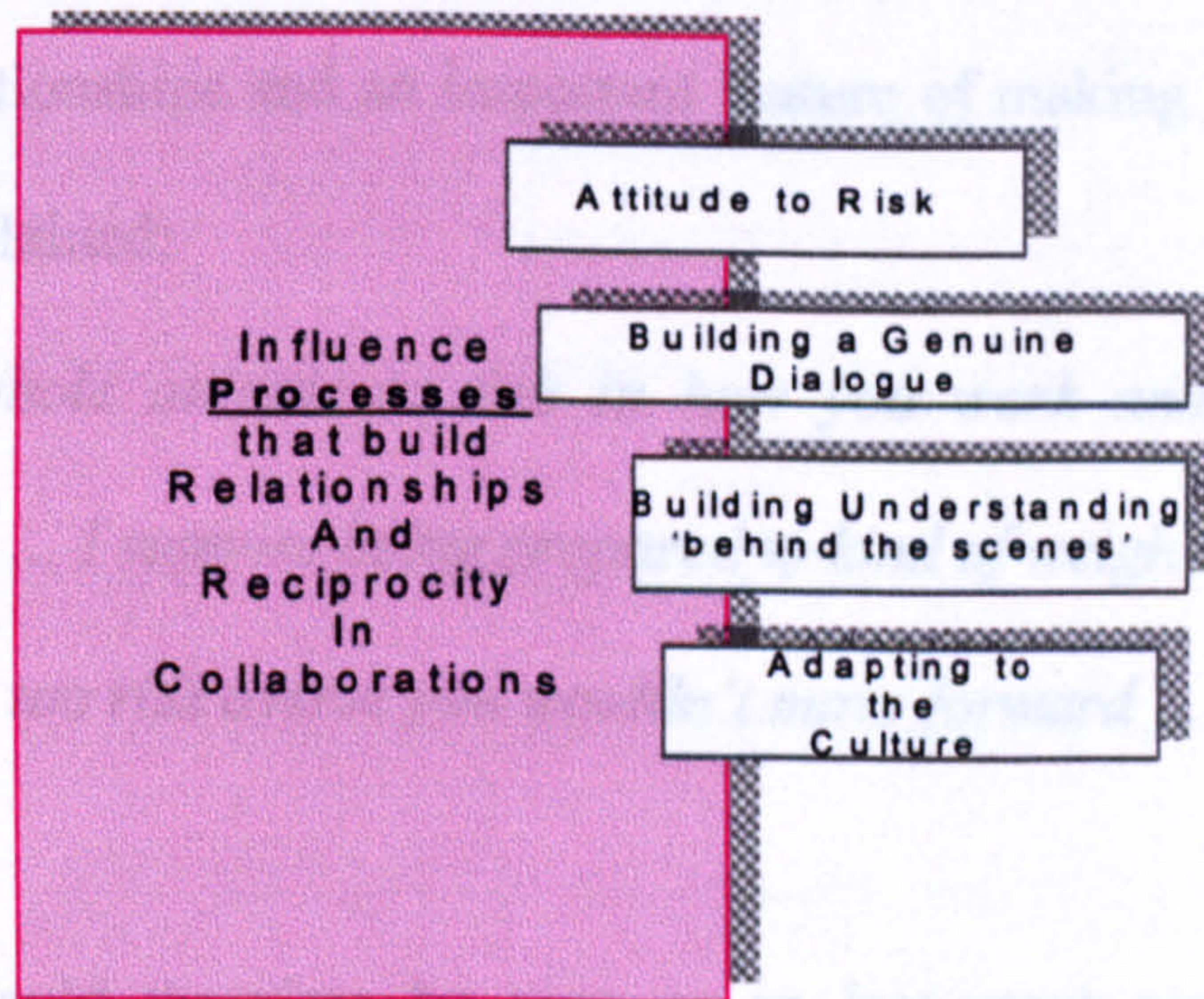


Figure 6.4: Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity

The following themes which illustrate the second component of dimension 1 of the framework are reflected in figure 6.4 above:

1.2.1 Attitude to Risk

Relationships are seen to be an important precursor to influence. In particular, it was suggested that positive, well formed relationships are likely to strengthen the willingness of partners to take risks with each other, in the process of taking the collaboration forward. Respondents suggested that partners need to feel that their relationships are strong enough to withstand the risks inherent within reciprocal acts

of influence. As one interviewee from the college and university joint venture argued:

"I won't take risks with people I do not know because there is a greater risk of destroying that relationship before it gets started.. if you take a risk and they say something.. and you challenge that ... if you have got a relationship there that is not going to destroy the relationship." DK/BCh

Predisposition towards risk taking was therefore seen to be both an outcome of established relationships and an important feature of making progress. As the same interviewee explained:

"This whole attitude to risk in how you work and how you take things forward ... I suppose being prepared to kind of weigh it up and take a risk – if we were too risk averse you wouldn't move forward" DK/BChwu

Risk taking should therefore be seen as an important aspect of the process of influence, as such it appears to be contingent upon strong relationships and a sense of reciprocity among partners.

Case and Interview Details	Modal Dimension 1.1 Processes that build Reciprocity and Relationships	Interpretation
	Attitude towards risk	
College/ University JV DK	"I won't take risks with people I do not know because there is a greater risk of destroying that relationship before it gets started and if you haven't got a relationship with somebody you're less likely to be able to influence them ...if you take a risk and say something and you challenge that ...if you have got a relationship there that is not going to destroy the relationships."	Recognising that relationships are at the root of being able to influence others and being prepared to take risks with partners appears to be important to influencing others.
Colleges merger CT2 /GRF	"You can take steps often that reduce the risk of repair having to be carried out."	Taking steps to reduce the risk of damaging relationships appears to be important to maintaining and building strong relationships.
College/ University DK/	"This whole attitude to risk in how you work and how you take things forward...I suppose being prepared to kind of weigh it up and take a risk - if we were too risk averse you wouldn't move forward..."	Being prepared to take risks is felt to be important to influence but dependent upon having established relationships.
NHS B TT/	"When you are at a senior level you must portray yourself as a proper leader and perform at a higher level important dimensions are behaviour...decision making and risk taking."	The ability to influence as a leader appears to be related to the ability to take decisions and risks.
Colleges merger JM/GUF	"At x college it went through on a nod while y college viewed it as more of a significant risk, there was an electric board meeting, there were concerns about sovereignty and territory."	Perceptions of the risks involved in collaboration are likely to differ among partners and this is felt to affect relationships and the degree of reciprocity between partners.
College/ University JV RBM	"DH did not care that we were putting all our assets in - despite the risk - he did not see it as a risk to the college."	Perceptions of the risks involved are likely to differ among partners and this is felt to affect relationships and reciprocity between partners.
College/ University JVLH	"We created a special committee of the board ... it was about risk assessing and ...the risk associated with this area is enormous and if the team could provide someone to work with a particular college in this area...that would be helpful."	Taking steps to reduce risk is felt to be important to building relationships and reciprocity.

Table 6.6: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.2 Component: 1.2.1 – Attitude towards Risk

1.2.2 Building a Genuine Dialogue

The importance of engaging partners in dialogue and in conducting well structured consultation, in which the views of participants were elicited and genuinely taken into account, formed a recurrent theme. The success of consultation was often associated in the interviews with the degree to which those consulted recognised their own ideas in the output or the analysis. As one particularly experienced interviewee from the college merger case put it:

"We try to be participative in forming ideas, then give them back to people in the form they recognise." CT/GFC

The success of this approach contrasted starkly with the initial failure to engage partners, experienced by another interviewee. Speaking from his experience in the early days of the college/university joint venture case, he recalled:

"... We failed to influence the local debate because we didn't go through a process that was sufficiently structured. We couldn't influence the debate sufficiently ... it got to the stage where we lost the debate ." AHBC/HWU

Within the theme of dialogue and consultation, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the importance of a structured process as a means of emphasising the mutual benefit of collaboration to the partners:

"A challenge for us in the early days ... about the influencing process and how it would be mutually beneficial for both the university and college to collaborate..." RM BC/HWU

The consultation process itself was seen as a vehicle for re-affirming the benefits that could be gained from collaboration as well as a basis upon which to build relationships around a sense of reciprocity. The concern for building a genuine dialogue was shared by participants across the cases as shown in the table below.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.3 Processes that build Reciprocity and Relationships	Interpretation
	Building a Genuine Dialogue	
Colleges Merger CT2	"Yesterday we used break out groups to develop ideas, the process was designed to get them together to jointly plan what is happening in their area....how they influence staff...leading them as gently as possible into the new organisation.	Establishing a process is seen to help to build relationships and reciprocity.
College/ University JV AH/BC HWU	"We met a lot of resistance and a lot of hostility. Perhaps because we were too "bullish" and we actually developed the solutions in a way that I don't think was collaborative and inclusive in terms of other agencies and other areas where the public were not involved ..."	Establishing a genuine dialogue based on wide consultation was thought to be important to building influence.
Colleges MergerCT2	"Try to be participative in forming ideas then give them back to people in the form they recognise."	Establishing a process is felt to help to build relationships and reciprocity.
College/ University JV AH/BC/HWU	"We failed to influence the local debate because we didn't go through a process that was sufficiently structured. We were foisting a solution on people and not allowing them to participate in forming that solution and it really caused a big problem...we couldn't influence the debate sufficiently ...it got to the stage where we lost the debate.... I think what we learned from that episode was that we built up a model where we were much better at involving other stakeholders in the process..."	Taking a structured, inclusive and consultative approach and inviting genuine participation was thought to be important to building influence.
BNHS TT/	"We need to engage in constructive dialogue through the health and joint care executive. Cultural developments are on-going and the consultation process has provided a good foundation."	Building a genuine dialogue is thought to be central to the collaborative process.
FEDD AG1/2	"The way he got buy in was through a process of inform, persuade, present - it's how to make people feel that they had something to give... something...that (they) would find attractive ...high calibre people who genuinely wanted to help change the sector."	Establishing a process is thought to help to build relationships and reciprocity.
Colleges MergerCT2	"In terms of the process and relationships ...you cannot separate them."	Setting up and managing the right process is thought to be central to relationships and reciprocity.

Table 6.7: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.2 Component: 1.2.2 – Building a Genuine Dialogue

1.2.3 Building understanding 'behind the scenes'

A number of interviewees indicated that participants had chosen to focus their engagement in a collaborative dialogue at two different levels: on a one to one basis, behind the scenes and within the formally structured joint venture meetings. This choice was thought to be instrumental in building their influence. As one of the participants in the FEDD case explained, the reason for success in the early, formulation period was attributed to what was termed:

"... a lot of fixing behind the scenes" AG/FEDDI

While the phrase *fixing behind the scenes* is sometimes loaded with connotations of manipulative behaviour, in this case it was explained as a form of diplomacy enacted behind the scenes to build mutual understanding. The aim of this approach was to address concerns in a way that built the confidence of the partners. Another interviewee described this approach as an *influencing tactic*:

"R uses interesting tactics – off line lobbying on the side.. influences things behind the sceneshe plays the politics ... they have used political skills and clout and connections in a subtle low key way." RMBCHWU

It is important to clarify that *lobbying* was, in the case of this participant, seen to be a skilful way of shaping understanding and managing meaning between the partners by exercising the choice to enact influence outside the formal meetings. In this way points that were thought to be difficult to raise in the formal meetings were often raised initially with particular individuals, in an effort to win their support. Issues that had caused concerns in the wider meetings were often resolved after the meetings, through one to one discussion.

The need to attempt to build a picture of the target of influence, to understand their ways and preferences as a means of influence was explored by the same interviewee.

"I always go in thinking I need to know who you are...what is it that makes you tick as an individual? ...Just having a read of those kind of things just helps to build up a picture of people that you're needing to influence ..."

DK/BC/HWU

Thus it appears that building relationships and reciprocity involves being prepared to work with partners to understand their needs in a variety of different ways, at different levels of participation and beyond the confines of the formal partnership meetings. The table below demonstrates how concern for building understanding behind the scenes was an issue of concern across the different research settings.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.3 Processes that build Reciprocity and Relationships	Interpretation
	Building understanding behind the scenes	Interpretation
FEDDAG2/	"There was a lot of fixing behind the scenes..."	It was thought that putting effort into signing perspectives and ideas before critical meetings was important to influencing the partners.
College/ University JV DK/	"Personally what I wanted to do was understand where the University was coming from ... I always go in thinking I need to know who you are...what is it that makes you tick as an individual? ...if you don't know the individual just trying to find out something about how they've responded to other things and other ways or how that organisation has moved and what the influences are - even to, I remember going into D's office and on the wall was their mission statements. Just having a read of those kind of things just helps to build up a picture of people that you're needing to influence"	Demonstrate interest in and understanding of your target's world in advance of attempting to influence was thought to be important to building relationships and reciprocity.
College University JV RB/HMU /BC	"R uses interesting tactics - off line lobbying on the side - he takes you into a room - he says we have said that in there but I have had a talk with Anne Grindley. Richard does not participate but influences things behind the scenes ...he plays the politics they have used political skills and clout and connections in a subtle low key way"	A lot of effort was put into signing perspectives and ideas before critical meetings and this was thought to be important to being able to influence others.
FEDD AG 1	"There is a need for as much focus on influencing skills as upon evidence, measurement and data...to achieve change you need both. R's style is about factual analysis ...rather than spending time trying to see the issues as others see them and influencing their thinking...we need a more balanced skill set.. although it was a formal intervention we did not want to do the formal thing"	Processes that build relationships and reciprocity involve making an effort to see issues as others see them rather than focusing purely on evidential data. This involves spending time with participants on an informal basis.
Colleges Merger JMcC/GHF2	"It is about political astuteness, lobbying in advance of the meeting and undertaking a process with stakeholders"	Putting effort and skill into signing perspectives and the ideas of participants is thought to be important to building relationships and a sense of reciprocity.
SE JF	"There is something here about understanding...the leader understanding who they are trying to influence...trying to understand what makes them tick but also what will be in it for them prior to the influence (attempt)"	Showing understanding of your target's world and how the collaboration may benefit them is thought to be important to building relationships and a sense of reciprocity among partners.

Table 6.8: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 1.2 Component: 1.2.3 – Building understanding behind the scenes

1.2.4 Adapting to the culture

Taking the idea of attempting to understand the target of influence a stage further, a number of interviewees placed significant emphasis on the need to embrace the culture of the organisation to which the target of the influence belongs. Building relationships and a sense of reciprocity could be achieved by making efforts to understand the particular culture to which the target of influence belongs.

The ability to recognise signs of organisation culture and having the confidence to begin to accept it and *manage through the culture* was an important issue to many interviewees in relation to the challenge of influencing others in the inter-organisational domain. In the FEDD case this was considered to be a particularly challenging aspect of exercising influence, as one interviewee stated:

"This is a strange boys club – it's a compliance/civil service culture – you have to manage through that culture – anyone who didn't have an inner confidence would flounder" JBI/FEDD

The same interviewee suggested that the challenge of working across cultures would strengthen relationships and build a sense of reciprocity:

"It's about working across cultures – gaining the likes of A's support – by handling things they could not handle –.... In my view yes we are moving forward and gaining in influence." JBI/FEDD

The importance of understanding and working with organisation culture as a feature of building influence in the inter-organisational domain found resonance on a

consistent basis. For example in an interview with a director of a strategic health authority, particular emphasis was placed on this issue:

“Beyond the implications of the structural re-organisation in the health system there is a plethora of new provider organisations emerging ... within all of these partners there are real cultural differences and they have different values...” CS/ESHA1

Embracing the culture of the organisation to which the target belongs may involve adopting the language and discourse of their organisation and *being seen as one of them*. As one of the participants in the college/university joint venture said:

“You go and speak to them and you seem to speak their language. They will see you as an academic so you’ll be credible. Personally what I wanted to do was understand where the university was coming from ...” DK HWU

Throughout the various stages of empirical engagement the success of the agent in building influence appears to be strongly related to the perception of *belonging to* the group within which the target of influence is situated. The emphasis placed on the importance of understanding the culture, within which the target is located, is accompanied by an equally strong emphasis on the issue of participant identity and the need for the influencer to be seen as a part of the group to which the target of influence belongs. As an interviewee from the FEDD case suggested:

“If you are trying to create influence I think you get better results by letting people see you as a member of their particular group. I started off by saying I am not a management consultant ... she said make sure they understand who you are (as a Board Member of a College)...” BC/FEDD

Those individuals who are able to manage and juggle a number of different roles and identities successfully were seen as being able to move effortlessly between cultures and to exert influence within a number of different domains simultaneously.

As the table below suggests the ability to adapt to new cultures and to work across different cultures with agility and sensitivity appeared to be an important issue expressed by informants across the different research settings.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 1.2 Processes that build Reciprocity and Relationships	Interpretation
	Adapting to the culture	
JB1/FD	"This is a strange boys club – it's a compliance/civil service culture there are 50 notices in the loo telling you how to – there's clocking in and clocking out – you have to manage through that culture – anyone who didn't have an inner confidence would flounder."	Fitting in to the culture and being seen as by the target as "one of us" is thought to be important to influence.
JMcGLF	"There were two different cultures operating under one roof and two systems and they had to sort it out. There was a high level of reciprocity ..."	Adapting to the new culture involved building strong relationships between the partners based on reciprocity.
BC2/FD	"If you are trying to create influence I think you get better results by letting people see you as a member of their particular group."	It is thought that being seen as a member of the group helps to build influence.
JB1/FD	"It's about working across cultures – gaining the likes of Anne's support and other directors once I had gained their trust – by handling things they could not handle – the initial cases were dangerous territory... In my view yes they are moving forward and gaining in influence."	The ability to work with people in different cultures and gaining their trust and support is important to influence.
RBM/FED D/ROAR	"The culture of FEDD has been shaped by J (he is seen as) persuasive, objective, diplomatic, quietly confident, commands respect, influential, experienced and has a strong track record."	Influential individuals are seen as being able to adapt to different cultures and as being capable of shaping new cultures.
BC/FD	"I started off by saying I am not a management consultant....she said make sure they understand who you are..."	It was felt to be important to understand the culture of the organisation of the different partners and their underlying assumptions and to shape the approach taken to building a relationship with them based on this understanding.

Table 6.9: Evidence Framework - Dimension: 1.2 Component: 1.2.4 – Adapting to the Culture

DIMENSION 2 – RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES FOR BUILDING INFLUENCE IN COLLABORATIONS

The final analysis of the data collected reinforced the idea that building influence in collaborations may be related to harnessing certain *resources* and to undertaking activities associated with these resources. These resources and associated activities form the second main dimension of the framework and are discussed in this section of the chapter. Each of the *resources and associated activities for influence* at the centre of the elaborated framework (see figure 6.2) will be discussed in the section that follows. Figure 6.5 below shows how in each component of this dimension of

the conceptual framework *resources for influence* are highlighted in bold text and are in this way distinguished from the *associated activities for influence*. The section below elaborates each of the individual components of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework. Evidence of the data and interpretation of the views of respondents in relation to the main components of dimension 2 will be summarised in tabular format at the end of each of the sections dedicated to elucidating each component.

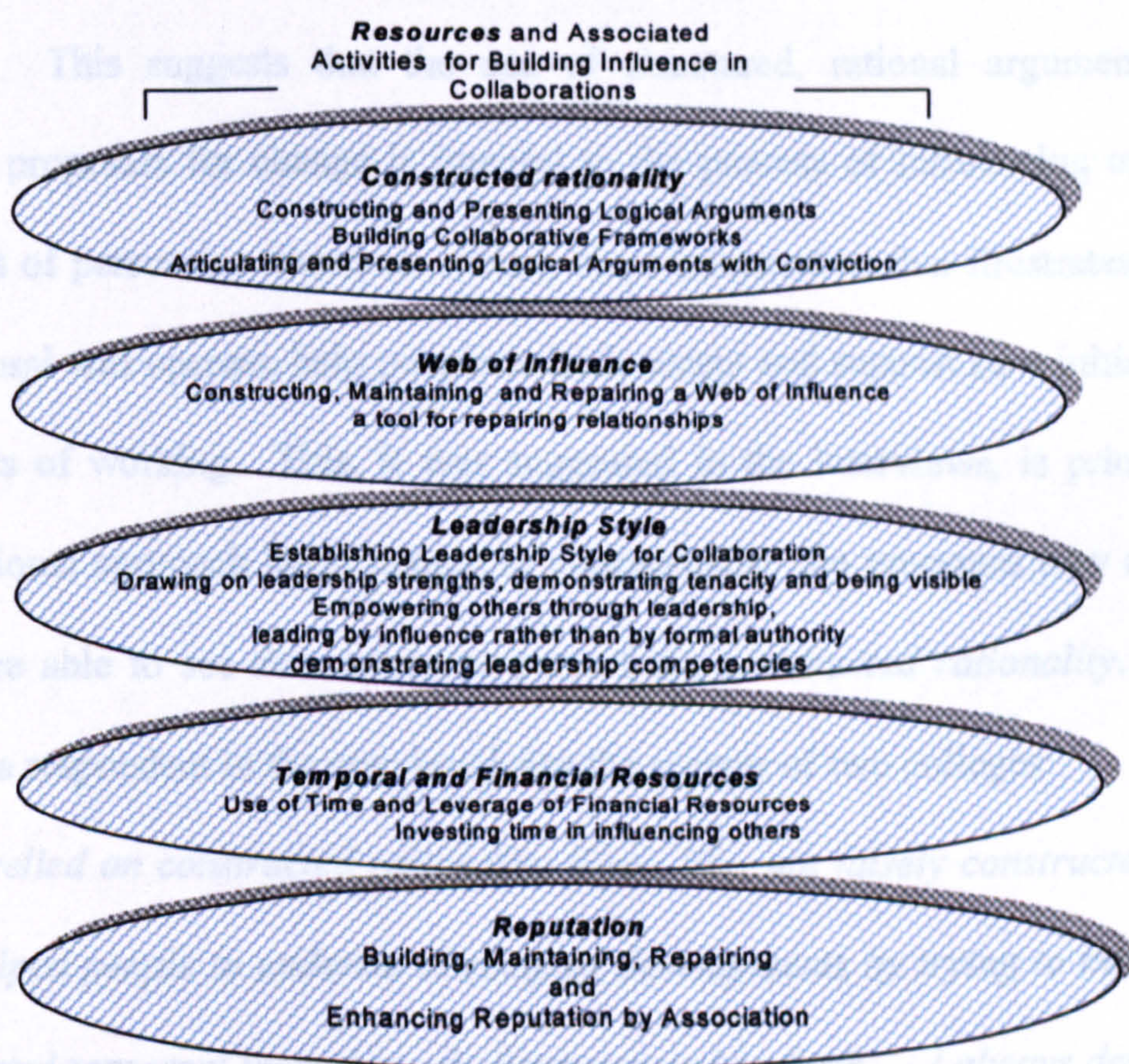


Figure 6.5: Dimension 2 of the conceptual framework

Dimension 2 Component 1: Constructed Rationality

The first component of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework – Constructed Rationality - has been elaborated to include the following concepts: *Constructing and Presenting Logical Arguments, Building Collaborative Frameworks and Articulating*

and Presenting Logical Arguments with Conviction. In the section that follows each of these concepts will be discussed in turn. Section 2.1 will be concluded with a summary table of the views expressed by respondents in relation to these concepts.

The term *constructed rationality* was drawn from the interview data collected in the colleges merger case. It was a label used repeatedly by an interviewee as a means of explaining the importance, in any influencing strategy, of using logical arguments and rational forms of persuasion to support the proposals at the centre of the collaboration. This suggests that the use of structured, rational arguments to communicate proposals for change is integral to the process of influencing others. Logical forms of persuasion based on robust, clear information that illustrates how the new proposal will operate, help people to both accept and support new initiatives and new ways of working. This, it was suggested in the interviews, is primarily because a rational approach helps people to conceptualise the proposed new order, individuals are able to see themselves as part of the *constructed rationality*. As explained by a respondent in the case involving the merger of two colleges:

“We relied on constructed rationality if you like, not falsely constructed but we helped people to understand complex developments by trying to interpret them and represent them through diagrams and so forth ... I always describe myself as an unashamed structuralist” CT/3/GF

Structured methods designed to build and establish a rational case for the proposed new order and to provide participants with a way of seeing themselves in the new context can be seen as an important resource for influencing others.

Approaches to influence that are based on rational persuasion can be enhanced by the use of models or frameworks which clearly set out in visual form the rationale for the proposed new way of working. As an interviewee from the colleges merger case explained:

“I rely on diagrams, I rely on some pictorial representation of concepts ... I think it can be understood better with the help of the model ...” CT3 Glnr/Ft

Winning support for new initiatives or proposals was clearly linked in many respondents' minds to the creation and use of structures or frameworks for the purpose of collaboration. It appears that the process of creating frameworks that model the collaborative scenario helps people to gain a personal sense of belonging and therefore commitment to a new order, which is likely to be substantially different to what they know.

“I think how we got better with that (working collaboratively) is with N W (joint regional collaborative framework)..that was almost a structure to create interdependence between agencies” AH/Bchwu

Modelling the intended way of working in collaboration was seen by many participants as a processual tool for developing a shared vision of the future. The use of frameworks helped participants to clarify shared priorities and ultimately enabled them to commit to joint action. These are the benefits associated with approaches adopted for the purposes of strategic planning, in which there is a strong desire to align the *mental models* - attitudes, thought processes, and assumptions - of key decision makers, in relation to the key priorities for the future (van der Heijden, 2005

p145; van der Heijden et al, 2006 p267). As one respondent remarked, this is particularly important at the outset of an influencing strategy:

“The first point of influence was creating the model – what was critical for J in the first few months was the creation of the (model).. and forming his relationship with RM, the council and the sector ” AG/FD

Modelling the future way of working in a collaborative context proved to be, both in the FEDD case and in the college merger case, a means of gaining permission to work together in a new way and developing a shared understanding of what collaboration would involve for all participants.

In addition to forming structured processes, using persuasive arguments based on logic and promoting new ways of working through models and frameworks, there appeared to be a strong emphasis on the ability to present ideas with conviction.

“DK brought particular strengths in terms of constructing and presenting a logical argument – he was able to articulate, better able perhaps, than anyone hereto, to explain within the college why this was the necessary strategy, not least because he believed it.” RMcG

Considerable emphasis was placed on the resource of rational argument and the associated activities relating to the shaping and construction of a new reality for others, supported by models, frameworks and diagrams. This was accompanied by a consistent message that these resources must be presented with conviction. This message highlights the perceived need for both rational and emotive forms of

persuasion. The tension between these potential extremes forms the third dimension of the framework and is discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 2 Resources and Activities for Building Influence	Interpretation
	Constructed Rationality	
Colleges/ University JVAH JBC HVVU	"I think how we got better with that is with New Ways (joint regional collaborative framework)...that was almost a structure to create interdependence between agencies and central to that community plan was a belief that we should have a collegiate campus. It is written in that plan..."	Building the collaborative framework was seen to be important to creating a sense of inter-dependence. This was seen as important to influencing the partners to collaborate.
AG/FD	"The first point of influence was creating the model - what was critical for John in the first few months was the creation of the modus operandi and forming his relationship with RM, the council and the sector and the recruitment of secondees."	Modelling the intended way of working was felt to be an important resource in helping to form the relationships between the partners.
Colleges merger CT3 Glnf	"We relied on constructed rationality if you like, not falsely constructed but we helped people to understand complex developments by trying to interpret them and represent them through diagrams and so forth...I always describe myself as an unashamed structuralist and I rely on some pictorial representation of concepts and so on and people pooh pooh that often and then you see them leaving meetings clutching the diagrams to their chests...They started to get the logic but they were still in the previous structure."	Modelling the intended way of working was seen as important to helping the partners to form the relationships and the new way of working on the basis of constructed rationality is models, diagrams, visual material.
Colleges merger CT3	"So what we were doing was moving people through a development process which presented them with the logic of the new organisation."	The use of diagrams and models was thought to be an important resource part in the process of stimulating collaborative behaviours.
BE JF	"Bringing collaborative groups together... you can influence that when you think of the tourism framework for action because innovation and collaboration are absolutely fundamental to the framework for action. So its influencing (through) strategies as well as influencing behaviours..."	Using existing frameworks was thought to be an important resource in influencing the collaborative process.
Colleges/ University JVRMcG	"D. brought particular strengths in terms of constructing and presenting a logical argument - he was able to articulate, better able perhaps than anyone hereto, to explain within the college why this was the necessary strategy, not least because he believed it."	Articulating and presenting logical arguments with conviction, based on frameworks and diagrams was thought to be an important resource in influencing the partners.

Table 6.10: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 2 Component: 1 – Constructed Rationality

Dimension 2 Component 2: A Web of Influence

The second component of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework – the web of influence - has been elaborated to include the following concepts: *constructing, maintaining and repairing the web of influence and the web of influence as a tool for repairing relationships*. These concepts are elucidated in the section that follows. Section 2.2 will be concluded with a summary of the views of respondents across the cases.

A theme that resonated strongly, throughout the final stage of empirical engagement, was that of participants extending their influence through a dynamic 'web of influence' which requires continual construction, development and repair work. One of the means of repair, it was suggested, is through the construction and use of

rational arguments. One interviewee from the university/college joint venture case saw the concept of the web of influence as a medium through which participants could draw upon expertise to assist in repairing relationships, by improving the quality of their arguments. This interviewee commented:

"We lost influence at a stage where we were having all these agencies coming in asking us to report to them ... we really hit rock bottom ... we had to turn that around, think about how to repair that" AH/BC/HWU

As well as being conceptualised as a mechanism for building and repairing relationships the idea of a *web of influence* was also seen as a device for countering rebuttal or reducing any likely resistance to influence attempts:

"There were two big agencies plus all the public sector behind us who were content with the contract we came to ... from then on we didn't encounter any major problems - because the mass of political support was there to head off anything ..." AH/BC/HWU

Thus the concept of a web of influence was seen both as a means of preserving influence levels and reducing exposure to the risks that might result in loss of influence.

As well as offering properties associated with the repair and preservation of relationships, it appears that the notion of a *web of influence*, built within an inter-agency collaboration, may also be conceptualised as a means of *extending influence*.

For example in the FEDD case the concept of a *web of influence* was described as a mechanism for crossing boundaries.

“back to the contacts ... we had a web of influence that we used across the sector with the funding council and with the industry.” JB/3 FEDD

Emphasis was placed upon the need for partners to work systematically and continually on their *web of influence* in order to maintain it:

“If you go back to one part of the web you’ve got to be confident I think that you’re going to step on from where you were previously. If you leave it dormant.. you might have started to unpick some of the potential for influence there ... you can take steps often that reduce the risk of repair having to be carried out. There’s a maintenance – you’ve got to ... to construct and maintain the web.” CT/3Glnrth/F

It was also suggested that there is a link between an individual’s *reputation* and engagement in activity intended to build and extend the *web of influence*. This link infers that *reputation* partly rests upon the extent to which individuals are actively engaged in building their *web of influence*.

“I think the reputation of the college is based on how much we are plugged into the webs.... we’ve got to go and tell them and help them to understand what we’re doing...” CT/3/GF

Remaining active in constructing the web of influence was also seen to be important given the strong sense of the highly dynamic nature of the web of influence reflected by participants. As one respondent suggested, individuals need to be continuously

active in building and extending their web of influence and thus it is critical to have current knowledge of the participants:

“Being a serving Principal is important – retired ones will not have that network or the knowledge for matching individual to problem.” DL/FEDD

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 2 Resources and Activities for Building Influence	Interpretation
	Web of Influence	
Colleges Merger CT3 Glnr/F	"back to the contacts....we had a web of influence that we used both across the sector with the funding council, with the industry...that was the power of understanding where they are in a network or set of relationships."	The network or web of relationships that individuals could draw upon was felt to be important to their sense of being able to influence others
Colleges University JV AH	"There were two big agencies plus all the public sector behind us who were content with the contract we came to ...from then on we didn't encounter any major problems - we had political support as well which allowed us to face up any pockets of resistance elsewhere because the mass of political support was there to head off anything – political support in sufficient mass to counter any argument."	The web of influence is thought to have the potential to provide individuals with a strong sense of their ability to meet resistance to change.
FEDD AG/FEDD1	"(Influence is about) being well networked up..."	Influence appears to involve being well connected to a strong network of contacts.
Colleges Merger CT3 Glnr/F	"if you go back to one part of the web you've got to be confident I think that you're going to step on from where you were previously. If you leave it dormant too long then they feel excluded then you might have started to unpick some of the potential for influence there ...you can take steps often that reduce the risk of repair having to be carried out. There's a maintenance – you've got to... to construct and maintain the web."	The web of influence is thought to involve ongoing maintenance.
Colleges Merger CT3 Glnr/F	"I think the reputation of the college is based on how much we are plugged into the webs...people won't always find out that we're doing a good job ...we've got to go and tell them and help them to understand what we're doing..."	Reputation rests on the extent to which people are active in building the web.
FEDD 1 AG/	"Being a serving Principal is important – retired ones will not have that network or the knowledge for matching individual to problem –"	Currency of knowledge appears to be important to maintaining a web of influence – the web seems to change continuously.
/BNHS AR/aupp	"(He) was tremendously influential so that kind of web of influence was very powerful for him and he was extremely good at it and to this day I don't know how he has done it..."	Building and maintaining a web of influence appears to be a key resource for building influence.
FEDD DU/	"There is more maturity in the sector, new people, a new network of contacts, they had networked together as they came through the system and built personal relationships over time and confidence in taking the sector forward..."	Building and maintaining a web of influence is a key resource for building influence.
FEDD AG/3	"We have built a web of influence and it means that you are not alone so you can be more effective in having a voice."	The web of influence gives participants confidence that they are supported by others with similar perspectives.
SE JF1	"We really worked with a small group of key influencers and widened the group of key influencers...gave them very clear almost visual objectives ...that slowly built this web of influence."	Working closely with the participants and having clear objectives appeared to help to build and maintain the web of influence.

Table 6.11: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 2 Component: 2 – Web of Influence

Dimension 2 Component 3: Leadership Style

The pattern of behaviours used by individuals to enact influence on others was seen to be instrumental to the outcome of influence attempts. This pattern of behaviours was often described as the way individuals chose to exercise leadership within the collaboration. The idea that leadership within a collaborative domain involves different challenges and therefore demands a distinctive type of approach was evident throughout the empirical work. This pattern gave rise to some specific

concepts which have been used to elaborate the framework. The third component of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework has been elaborated to include the following concepts: *drawing on leadership strengths within the collaboration, demonstrating tenacity and being visible, empowering others through leadership, leading by influence rather than by formal authority*. These themes are elucidated in the section that follows. Section 2.3 will be concluded with a summary of the views of participants from the different research settings

A general implication of the interview data was that providing leadership in the inter-agency domain is considered to be more of a distributed responsibility than in single organisation settings. It therefore demands a different approach and in particular one that draws on the skills of a wide range of participants at different points in the collaborative process. The following excerpt, reinforces the idea of leadership as a distributed enterprise:

"It would have been easy for me (to make the whole presentation) because M wasn't principal at that stage ... very quickly I realised we had different strengths and weaknesses I think we used this mix very well in the collaborative project" JB/FDD

As well as recognising the different strengths that different leaders can bring to the collaboration, and distributing roles accordingly, it appears that effective leadership in the collaborative domain also demands decisions about the space that the leader chooses to occupy within the collaboration. As one interviewee intimated, effective

leadership also means knowing when to place others at the centre of the stage and when to draw back oneself:

“In a sense the college principal ... I was always conscious of a kind of directing intelligence, but from the back seat as it were ... you know the general directing his troops while keeping himself well out of the way ... I think it was quite knowing on R's part that he felt that was his role and not to be the front line ...” M/BC/hwu

Exerting influence in collaborative settings it seems, involves knowing when to enact influence in an overt, visible way and when to influence the process by leading from behind the scenes.

Leadership style as a resource for influencing others in collaborations also appeared to be associated in the minds of interviewees with the individual's level of motivation, determination, conviction and tenacity in driving proposals forward. As one interviewee from the university/college merger explained:

“But I really felt I went out on a limb to do that because the majority of the university, including some very senior and influential players, were saying no, just forget about it,... I am far from the top tier of management but I can exercise influence, marshal leadership as can many other colleagues when they really care about something. So I guess conviction is about leadership ...” MHWURI

Being prepared to go out on a limb and therefore demonstrating tenacity was seen as important to success in moving the collaboration forward and ultimately becoming a more influential player in the eyes of other participants.

The importance of *visibility* as an aspect of leadership style in collaborative domains was seen as particularly important but also challenging given that collaborative ventures often demand more time than most participants anticipate. As one interviewee stated:

“Leaders tend to get involved at the start and then you get to the delivery and the tendency is to let someone else do itthe principal is invisible ... whereas with this project from day one we set up a system which ensured the principals were going to be involved and visible right the way through.”

JB3/FD

The idea that in collaborative settings success in influencing others is rarely achieved through single attempts but is more likely to result from sustained engagement through the life of the collaboration, was an idea that emerged consistently. This suggests that tenacity and visibility are essential qualities that are likely to enhance chances of success in influencing others.

A number of those interviewed expressed a strong sense of the need to empower others as a general principle of leading collaborations. For example an interviewee from the college merger case explained, leadership in the collaborative domain cannot be achieved through micro-management:

“My style is very much - I’m not running the college.....” CT3 Glnr/F

The interview data reflected a strong sense that a more distributive form of leadership brings its own challenges relating to the need to empower others to lead.

Interviewees suggested that this involves inviting participation, helping people to engage with important issues and placing a strong emphasis on learning:

“JB’s style is very open. It’s all about learning. It’s about an invitation to participate ... we share this collectively, rather than the style which indicates I am in control... you need to engage people so that they want to do it.” AGI/FD

A leadership style characterised by openness and a predisposition towards learning, was seen as one in which people are invited to participate rather than being required to participate.

As discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis, one of the characteristics that distinguishes the challenge of leadership in the inter-organisational domain is that formal authority, position power and legitimate authority do not offer the same leverage for achieving desired outcomes. As one interviewee from the FEDD case proposed:

“You cannot rule by power of Principalship – its power of experience, contacts, knowledge – what you offer others – that is the new way of influencing.” JBI/FEDD

Throughout the interviews there has been a consistent strand of data suggesting that a different form of leadership is required, one that is more distributed and reflects the special nature of influence enacted by players in inter-organisational domains. As one participant explained:

“.... I am far from the top tier of management but I can exercise influence, marshal leadership” RMI/HWU

The need to harness influence as the basis of a different form of leadership style in the collaborative domain, was recognised acutely in the interviews held within a strategic health authority setting in England. It was in this setting that one of the initial presentations to explore the implications of the emerging conceptual framework was held, as discussed in chapter 5. As one of the interviewees explained, the process of influence in the inter-organisational domain cannot rely solely upon the use of the lever of formal authority; instead it must be centred on an iterative process of understanding partners' needs and proposing solutions based on the needs that have been articulated. This approach produces a virtuous cycle which establishes credibility:

*"I have to influence without formal authority I have to use different levers ...
... in this way credibility is established but you have to keep it fed ..."* CSI/ESHA

The kind of leadership style that can be harnessed as a resource for influencing others in the collaborative domain was described as one which encourages others to use their influence. Through enacting influence individuals develop their self perceptions of power. As an interviewee from the college merger case explained:

"And I think that's how we interpret our role.. how we play these things out through the power and influence that they perceive themselves as having ... get them back into the point where they understand the dynamics of influence among peers.... they have got to go and influence that person." CT/Glnr/Fife

Success in influencing others is therefore seen as a process which involves harnessing the skills of persuasion and empowering others to act, rather than pulling the levers of formal authority.

Leadership as a resource in the collaborative domain was also seen to be associated with providing clarity to others and being specific about the type of leadership competencies that are likely to bring success to the collaboration. As the same interviewee suggested:

“There is the competence around acting without referring back, they must be participative, inclusive, and engaging they have to model certain behaviours — It’s a mixture of experience, corporate memory, accepted expertise and authority – credibility based on knowledge and expertise – sapiential authority ... X had no recognised position power but had to influence by speaking to people, listening to people and getting people’s attention.”

CT2/GIFife

Being able to harness the right leadership style as a resource for influencing others involves first understanding why particular competencies are likely to be important in collaborative settings. In the example shown above the interviewee emphasised the importance of particular inter-personal leadership behaviours such as exercising influence by speaking to people, listening to them and engaging with them. Another interviewee highlighted the importance of both competencies and attributes to the development of a leadership style that would act as a resource for influencing others:

“it was important to be (seen as) influential in the sector - (I was seen as having) knowledge, contacts, insight, quiet authority developing influence – that quiet kind of influence and picking up a style that would work in the future ...” *JB1/FEDD*

Awareness of the competencies and attributes that are likely to enable the process of influence, based on an appropriate leadership style, was a characteristic of the way individuals explained their own success in the collaborative domain. The table below summarises the views of respondents on the issues discussed that related to leadership style as a resource for influence.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 2 Resource and Activities for Building Influence	Interpretation
	Leadership style	
FEDD AG/FD	"You also have to be good at recognising different strengths and rewarding people with recognition."	Using a leadership style that recognises others strengths is thought to be an important resource in developing influence.
Colleges Merger CT/GF	"It's more important for organisation development to have flamboyance and flair so each will have a different profile and in quality you need someone who has a steady centred approach rather than a systems focused one..."	Drawing upon the strengths of partners and playing to the strengths of the participants is thought to be an important aspect of influencing others to accept leadership responsibility in collaborations.
FEDD JB/FDD	"It would have been easy for me (to make the whole presentation) because I wasn't principal at that stage .. It would have been easy for me to say hang on I will do this ...very quickly I realised we had different strengths and weaknesses ..."	Regarding leadership as a shared role and recognising that different players can be more influential at different points in the process is thought to be important to the use of leadership style a resource for influencing others in collaboration.
College/ University JV RMcG BC/MVU	"In a sense the college principal....I was always conscious of a kind of directing intelligence but from the back seat as it were...you know the general directing his troops while keeping himself well out of the way... I think it was quite knowing on B's part that he felt that was his role not to be the front line ...it became specially the case after the incident."	Recognising that influencing is a team role and different players can be more influential in different roles and at different points in the process is thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing others in collaboration.
RMCG 1	"But I really felt I went out on a limb to do that because the majority of the university, including some very senior and influential players, were saying no, just forget about it, co-location with the college is history.... I am far from the top tier of management by I can exercise influence, marshal leadership as can many other colleagues when they really care about something. So I guess conviction is about leadership..."	Leadership style is thought to provide those who have lower levels of formal authority with an important resource for influencing the collaboration.
FEDD JB3/FD	"Leaders tend to get involved at the start and then you get to the delivery and the tendency is to let someone else do it and further down the line you get to the wash up stage the principal is invisible...they have moved on to the new project ...they are there at the inception ...whereas with this project from day one we set up a system which ensured the principals were going to be involved and visible right the way through."	Involvement, visibility and tenacity are thought to be important to harnessing leadership style as a resource for influencing others in collaborations.
Colleges Merger CT3 Gln/F	"My style is very much - I'm not running the college.... Along with the principal's group specifically the leadership team, we've got to be the ones that are framing the future and understanding the pressures that we're under. You can't understand the policy change, the politics we work within, the markets that we work within if you're sitting inside."	Being clear about the leadership the roles and empowering others to lead is thought to be important to harnessing leadership style as a resource for influencing others in collaborations.
Colleges Merger BC/DG/F	"The visibility of the management team was important. We were seen as working as one team. It was about dispersed influence rather than concentrated influence...we tried to create one voice and one voice coming from two people."	Recognising that influencing is a shared role and that leadership in collaboration is a distributed enterprise was thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing

FEDD AG2/FD	"JB's style is very open. It's all about learning. It's about an invitation to participate ...we share this collectively rather than the style which indicates I am in control... you need to engage people so that they want to do it...you also have to be good at recognising different strengths and rewarding people with recognition."	Inviting people to participate, engaging them and recognising their contribution was thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing collaboration.
Colleges Merger CT3/Glnw /F#	"And I think that's how we interpret our role in relation to change processes and organisational development and how we play these things out through power and influence that they perceive themselves as having ...I think what we are trying to do is to get them back into the point where they understand the dynamics of influence among peers. This is not a managerial proposition, don't go to another director and say - you must do this. This is one of their peers - they have got to go and influence that person."	Helping people to understand the context, helping them to understand the new situation and encouraging them to work with others was thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing collaboration.
Colleges Merger CT2/ G/F#	"There is the competence around acting without referring back, they must be participative, inclusive, and engaging they have to model certain behaviours - get them to model the behaviour of taking responsibility and working hard for example the AP for Quality had no recognised position power but had to influence by speaking to people, listening to people and getting people's attention - I say you don't call people to you, you go to them - that's my preference - you have to see people - to some extent this characterises my own style"	Providing clarity on the type of leadership style that is going to bring success to the collaboration encouraging people to lead by influence rather than by formal authority was thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing collaboration.
FEDD JB11	"I was the right person to do the job it was important to be influential in the sector-knowledge, contacts, insight, quiet authority - I was not developing a career in the FC but developing influence - that quiet kind of influence and picking up a style that would work in the future ... It's high level leadership - you have to have an element of wisdom - you may not have read all the books but this is natural... Style is important - understanding different management styles and I have studied leadership."	Understanding what style you use and why it is influential was thought to be important to harnessing leadership as a resource for influencing collaboration.
College/ University JV AH BC/ HWUJ83	"Recognising that influencing is a team role and different players can be more influential at different points in the process."	Recognising that influencing is a shared role and that was thought to be important to leadership in collaboration.

Table 6.12: Evidence Framework - Dimension: 2 Component: 3 – Leadership Style

Dimension 2 Component 4: *Temporal and Financial Resources*

The fourth component of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework – *temporal and financial resources* - has been elaborated to include the following concepts: *Use of Time and Leverage of Financial Resource, Investing Time in Influencing Others and Timing of Influence Attempts*. These concepts are discussed in the section that follows. Section 2.4 concludes with a summary of the views expressed by respondents across the different research settings.

Temporal and financial resources for the enactment of influence appeared to hold significance for interviewees. Some respondents particularly focused on the importance of being able to leverage financial resources to equip the collaboration, as an important starting point in an influence process. The following excerpt was taken from an interview conducted in an NHS setting with a senior clinician, rather than from one of the main case studies:

“You’ve got a case in point here haven’t you I mean we didn’t have the right resources in place and that does hammer out your confidence ... and that does impact on whether you are going to make change happen if you haven’t got the resources you can’t move it ...AR/NHSB”

The notion of participants in collaborative settings exerting influence over time was a recurrent theme and related to this was the sense that agents of influence need to create *a time space for people to influence each other*. This idea arose strongly throughout the college merger case. As one interviewee stated:

“I think it’s the design of time to create opportunities –if you don’t have the opportunity for the group to come together...their ability to influence or to

exert power is diminished ... there has got to be some clear understanding about timeand the purpose of that time – That time has got to be created... It's got to be by design." CT3Glnr/F

The idea that time should be an important factor of the design of the collaborative process, to allow for the enactment of influence between participants was a point that emerged strongly and indicated the importance of time as a resource for influence.

The notion of time and timing as a key resource in enacting influence strategies was framed as a fundamental requirement of any influence process, in terms of both formal and informal engagement. As one interviewee from the colleges' joint venture case emphasised:

"(It's about) having time to spend with them – not in formal settings but the time you spend informally with people...time to get to know what issues they are trying to address...Knowing when you can go and speak to them."

DK/BChwu

This suggests that time and timing should therefore be seen as a resource that can be harnessed to build relationships, which in turn will enable the process of influence. Time was expressed both as a resource that individuals use to build influence incrementally and a resource to build strong relationships, which in turn facilitate the build up of the individual's influence profile.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 2 Resources and Activities for Building Influence	Interpretation
	Use of time, timing and leverage of financial resources	
B NH8 AR/Supdt	"You've got a case in point here haven't you I mean we didn't have the right resources in place and that does hammer out your confidence. ...and that does impact on whether you are going to make change happen ...I mean that's what this is about isn't it making change happen...if you haven't got the resources you can't move it ..."	Use of time and financial leverage are thought to be important resources for building influence in collaboration.
Colleges Merger CT3 Ginn/F	"I think it's the design of time to create opportunities – if you don't have the opportunity for the group to come together ...then that doesn't work they don't operate as a group and their ability to influence or to exert power is diminished.... there has got to be some clear understanding about time that's available for that and the purpose of that time – create space for directors to get together work together think together and act based on that. That time has got to be created it doesn't happen accidentally. It's got to be by design."	Influence is believed to be exerted over time – it seems to involve 'creating a time space' for people to influence each other.
College/ University JV DW/ BCHWU	"Having time to spend with them – not in formal settings but the time you spend informally with people talking through shared problems, shared difficulties, time to get to know what issues they are trying to address...knowing when you can go and speak to them."	Spending time with people in informal situations is thought to be an important use of resources in the process of influencing others over time. There appears also to be a need to get the timing of the influencing attempts right.
FEDD JB/1	"Where does the power (to influence) come from – experience, credibility gained over a number of years in different settings..."	Time is thought to be an important resource to acquiring influence on the basis of experience and credibility.
FEDD DU	"There is more maturity in the sector, new people, a new network of contacts, they had networked together as they came through the system and built personal relationships over time and confidence in taking the sector forward."	Timing is thought to be an important resource for acquiring influence.
FEDD CT/RY	The timing was right, there were the right personalities and people and there was support from the Principals."	Timing is also thought to be an important resource in the process of influencing others over time
SE JF	"Time is important for him because he's chief executive of a growing business but he obviously feels that it's important to give that time to the bigger picture...because they are leaders they are prepared to give up time for the bigger picture to influence changes of a wider scale...for some people they come and go because timing is an issue"	Time is thought to be an important resource that participants contribute in order to influence the collaboration. People who see an opportunity to influence are more likely to be prepared to invest time in it. The timing of their involvement appears to be an important consideration for the overall process of collaboration.

Table 6.13: Evidence Framework - Dimension: 2 Component: 4 – Use of Time, Timing and Leverage of Financial Resources

Dimension 2 Component 5: Reputation – As a Resource for Building Influence in Collaborations

The fifth component of dimension 2 of the conceptual framework – reputation as a resource for building influence in collaborations – has been elaborated to include the following concepts: *Building and Maintaining and Repairing Reputation and Enhancing Reputation by Association*. These concepts are discussed in turn in the section below. Section 2.5 concludes with a summary of the views expressed by respondents across the research settings.

Throughout the interviews reputation was acknowledged both as a resource for building influence, in its own right, and as an important dimension of successful influence processes used by participants to take the collaboration forward. Reputation was closely linked throughout the interviews to other dimensions of the

conceptual framework, in particular to constructing and presenting logical arguments, maintaining and repairing a web of influence, influence processes that build credibility and influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity.

Reputation as a resource was discussed more specifically both in terms of the advantages it brings to the enactment of influence within a collaborative setting and the disadvantages associated with its loss. As discussed in relation to dimension 1 of the conceptual framework, reputation was conceptualised as an attribute that emerges from past actions, which informs the perception of credibility and therefore the ability of an individual to influence others. As one interviewee put it:

“reputation is something you get to hear of without actually knowing the person” FEDD/AG2

This conceptualisation of reputation was discussed in instances where the ability to influence was lost because reputation was damaged, as well as in instances where the ability to influence was gained. For example in the university/college joint venture case one interviewee commented on how reputation was damaged and this reduced the ability to influence the joint venture partners.

“We lost influence ... in fact it was like a naughty school boy in front of the headmaster ... so we had to turn that around, think about PR. It (reputation) has improved dramatically over the last few years.” AH BChwu

As discussed in relation to dimension 1 of the framework, collaboration was seen as an opportunity for individuals to build their credibility by association, and thus their potential for influence. Similarly it appears that association with a collaborative

partner with a strong reputation is likely to have an enhancing effect for individuals. In this sense reputation enhanced by association was seen as an important resource for influence. As another interviewee in the university/college joint venture suggested, it is possible to exert influence by giving a partner the opportunity for reputation enhancement:

“I hope what the college gets out of this is the improved reputation for the delivery of higher education ... I have no qualms about using (the university) to help us achieve that.” KHWUI

In discussing reputation, as a resource for influencing, interviewees often suggested the importance of evidencing certain capabilities or credentials with which the partner organisation wishes to be associated. Equally it seems that there may be a tacit expectation that reputation is a resource that could be drawn upon through reciprocal exchanges.

“Reputation – yes we had to build our reputation. Case in point – M saying to me after the HMI review, that’s so important ... they want to know and have it reinforced that they’re dealing with a quality organisation ... equally we want to use their reputation to help us build our portfolio” DKHWU

It thus appears to be the perception held by participants, that collaborating with reputable partners provides an important resource which they may harness to build their own reputation and thus to increase their potential to influence. Additionally it appears that partners may be instrumental in exerting influence upon the way in which other partners’ reputations are perceived, through association.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 2 Resources and Activities for Building Influence	Interpretation
	Reputation	
FEDD J83/	"Reputation and leadership style is interdependent, if you take any project that has a net investment of resources, in this case by the colleges themselves....."	Reputation and leadership style appear to be important resources for influencing particularly where participants have made a significant investment in the collaboration.
College/ University JVDK/BCH WU	"It (reputation) has improved dramatically over the last few years. I think we have been able to deliver more successful projects which is important as well over time."	Improved reputation over time was felt to be important to developing greater scope for influence.
College /University JVDK /BC HWU	"I hope what the College gets out of this is the improved reputation for the delivery of higher education ...it enhances the respect that people hold for us as an organisation and I have no qualms about using (the university) to help us achieve that."	Improved reputation was thought to be important as a resource leading to greater scope for influence and stems from the association with another reputable, credible organisation.
FEDD J83/	"Again I am looking at the project and this model and I can see where we did build credibility because of the reputation and previous experience of the colleges and the principles involved, the leaders involved, the attention to detail, the high profile we gave to the launches involving ...back to the contacts...we had a web of influence that we used both across the sector with the funding council with the industry"	The reputation and previous experience of the participants was felt to be an important resource in building influence in the sector.
College/ University DK/BC HWU	"Reputation – yes we had to build our reputation. Case in point – R saying to me after the HMI review, that's so important ...they want to know and have it reinforced that they're dealing with a quality organisation...equally we want to use their reputation to help us build our portfolio and attract people to the college..."	Reputation is seen as a resource that is built out of strong performance and may be harnessed to influence others. Equally the reputation of other participants can be seen as a resource which may be leveraged for influencing others.
FEDD3 AG	"Reputation means being known and understood. Credibility is hugely important ...it is the eligibility criteria. Credibility is based on a person's experience of another person and it confirms their reputation."	Reputation is felt to be developed by participants becoming recognised as credible through others' experience.
BOIGVF1	"and we had the reputation for dealing with the unions."	Reputation was seen as being built out of a perception of being competent at managing critical relationships and was therefore felt to be an important resource for influence.
BNH8 AR	"Yes it was reputation. Mine is a slightly different kind of reputation i.e. solid performer, a forward that is fly half, kind of thing. But obviously my experience is really quite important. Some national and significant local experience, reasonably well handled...I think that counted for a lot."	Experience and track record are felt to be important to reputation.
FEDD DL	"Reputation is fundamental. People will have a reputation. People within the sector will have a reputation for example people know JH."	Reputation is felt to be an important resource for influence and involves becoming known to others for being competent.

Table 6.14: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 2 Component: 5 - Reputation

The discussion thus far has been concerned with the elaboration of the first two main dimensions of the framework. Attention now turns to the third dimension: *Bases of Influence – the tension between approaches to influence that are based on rationality and those that are based on emotive behaviour.*

DIMENSION 3: BASES OF INFLUENCE

The third dimension of the framework, shown in figure 6.6 below, suggests that influence processes and associated resources for influence, discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, operate against the backdrop of an underlying tension between *approaches to influence that are based on rationality and those that are based on emotive behaviour.* This dimension of the framework, shown in figure 6.6

below, is now elaborated through a discussion of the analysis of data that was drawn from the later stages of empirical engagement.

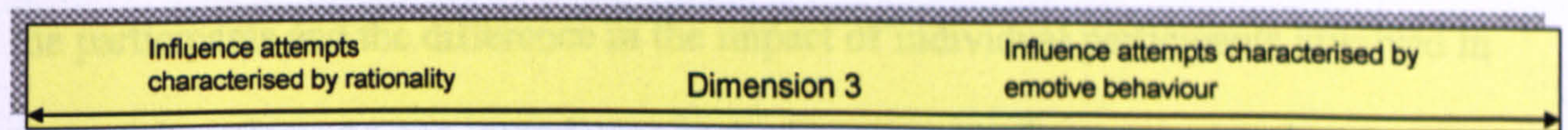


Figure 6.6: Dimension 3 – Bases of Influence – a tension between approaches to influence based on rationality and on emotive behaviour

Dimension 3 of the conceptual framework represents a continuum between influence processes based on rational behaviour at one end of the spectrum, and those based on emotive behaviour at the other end of the spectrum. The idea of a tension operating between these two potential extremes stimulated significant reflection and discussion among participants. This dimension of the framework has been elaborated to include the following components: *Raising Awareness of the Impact of Different Influencing Styles, Striking the Right Balance*. These themes are discussed in the section that follows. The section concludes with a summary of the views of participants from across the different research settings.

One perspective that emerged consistently was the idea that approaches to influence, that are based solely on the use of emotions in the inter-organisational domain may often be seen as *inconsistent behaviour*. This is because participants often have difficulty in interpreting emotive behaviour. As one interviewee commented:

“We said we would think about this (proposal for shared campus) ... he started spitting out the dummy ... he likes to get his own way and if he doesn't the toys come out of the pram – he's very personable ... – hail fellow well met but if he does not get his way he starts thumping the table.” B2/BChwu

The contrast between the two ends of the spectrum enabled those interviewed to reflect upon: the relative strengths of the agents of influence, the different needs of the participants and the difference in the impact of individual participants involved in the collaboration. As one interviewee in the FEDD case often commented:

“R’s style is about factual analysis, data, evidence supported studies rather than spending time trying to see the issues as others see them and (by understanding them better) influencing their thinking (which characterises Js style).” AGI/FEDD

Thus at one end of the spectrum lies an approach predicated upon the need for a purely rational approach based on the analysis of facts, supported by logic and evidence by hard data. Contrastingly at the other end of the spectrum is an approach predicated by a concern similar to what Goleman (1998 p27) has termed *emotional intelligence* – recognising one’s emotions and their effects on others, seeking to understand others’ feelings and perspectives and reading people’s emotional currents.

A highly consistent message throughout the interviews was that there is a need to strike the right balance in relation to the bases of influence. As one interviewee from the college merger case stated:

“One of the issues that would link your point on processes based on rationality to processes based on emotive behaviour is that the diagram that you referred to (in the merger document) and which was central to the whole development, (it) would lack meaning unless there were an emotive element behind it” CT3/Glr Fife

This view was also expressed recurrently in the interviews that were conducted in different settings to the main research cases. For example, in the interviews held in the economic development agency:

“I think it is important to have a bit of both on the spectrum ... if I had just gone out and said “statistics show... I don’t think we would have had as much influence ... Part of it was about the emotive element of influencing people... to tap into that passion that was emotive, that wasn’t rational ... I think emotive behaviour was almost the strongest element of it” JF/Econ Dev

Influencing others in the collaborative domain was therefore considered to involve the use of both rational and emotive approaches. Success was often conceptualised as requiring a balance to be struck between the two ends of the spectrum and it was frequently acknowledged that this balance may require a blend of the skills and contributions of different participants.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 3 Tension between Influence Attempts characterised by Rationality and Influence Attempts characterised by Emotive Behaviour	Interpretation
RBM /BCH/WU JF/ Supp data	"We said we would think about this (proposal for shared campus) ...x started spitting out the dummy...he likes to get his own way and if he doesn't the toys come out of the pram - he's very personable on the surface talks a good game - hail fellow well met but if he does not get his way he starts thumping the table - he's a bully and can be quite disparaging in order to get his own way..."	Emotive approaches to influence may be seen as inconsistent and irrational behaviour.
FEDD/ AGI	R's style is about factual analysis, data, evidence supports studies rather than spending time trying to see the issues as others see them and influencing their thinking (JB's style)."	A purely rational approach that stresses the importance of factual evidence over a concern to understand others' perceptions is felt to be insufficient. There seems to be a need to influence using both approaches.
Colleges Merger CT3 AGr File	"One of the issues that would link your point on processes based on rationality to processes based on emotive behaviour is that the diagram that you referred to and which was central to the whole development would lack meaning unless there were an emotive element behind it - it was talking about the key mission or contributions of the colleges plural and then the college singular when we became a merged institution it move....."	The approach based on the use of the diagram was felt to combine both rational and emotive approaches to influencing participants.
Colleges Merger CT1/GuF	"Outside the formal management structure another member of staff is observing anxieties and rationality ...people are taking on roles (it's about) getting them into a manageable format and making progress."	Being aware of both rational and emotive responses to change is felt to be important to influencing the transition into the new structure.
Colleges Merger CT2	"This time last year we were beginning to talk about merger...we were excited and enthused when we made the decision in April without exception they were inspired and then there was an element of fear and uncertainty and insecurity when they realised that there were 6 of them and the new college would not need 6..."	Observing both rational and emotive responses to change is important to influencing the transition into the new structure.
Colleges Merger BDCuF	"Collaboration cannot be instituted there has to be a will to engage with it. The council can throw money at it but people have to want to collaborate. Its not a strategic thing it's a mindset...I actually believe I have been fairly influential and I always believed merger is really what we should do but I was always very sensitive to other peoples' feelings."	While the case for merger was felt to be rationally compelling the concerns of this participant were that attention should be paid to the emotional responses of participants. Observing both rational and emotive responses to change is important to influencing the transition into the new structure.
CTGuF	"We went through an exercise of building up a structure for the organisation based on that rational diagram which involved further overlays of rational sketching or laying out of boxes and so on...we presented them with the logic of the new organisation but they were (emotionally) still comfortably back in their own structures."	While rational approaches to influence were felt to be important to influencing change, people may take time to make the emotional transition.
FEDD JBFS	"I is more like me but probably a bit more towards that end (emotive) I is very good in a crisis when we want to have impassioned anger and influence things... Mandy's strength was very much on the fine detail the tenacity to get things done, to organise meetings I would never place her in an impassioned speech to staff to encourage others or to raise morale."	Different participants are felt to be likely to have a different preferred style for influencing others which is based on either rational or emotive approaches.
Colleges Merger CT2	"They found that the organisation had moved emotionally as a group into the new structure and they started to question why they couldn't see themselves in the new structure.... when they couldn't see themselves in the new structure ...the new rationally based framework, then they started to get worried."	It was felt that some individuals take longer than others to make the transition into a new order both rationally and emotionally and therefore both approaches to influence are required.
BE JF1	".....I think it is important to have a bit of both on the spectrum ...if I had just gone out and said "statistics show.... I don't think we would have had as much influence or got people to buy in as much as we did....Part of it was about the emotive element of influencing people because together it would be better as a "passion for a common cause" and trying to tap into that passion that was emotive , that wasn't rational....I think emotive behaviour was almost the strongest element of it...was the one that created the critical mass and the momentum that made."	There is felt to be a need to influence using both approaches. Emotive approaches were seen to be likely to create the greatest momentum behind the collaboration.
FEDD AC1	"FEDDs need to know the business and at the same time be sensitive be able to fit in and gain the respect of Principals."	To become influential it seems that there is a need to demonstrate factual knowledge of the business (rational approach) and at the same time to be sensitive in terms of shaping the emotional responses of participants.
FEDD GC	"There were very complex emotional issues - you can't do enough research into the cause of the problems... the problem analysis process could have been more thorough."	Influencing change appears to involve being able to apply a rational approach to understanding emotive issues.

Table 6.15: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 3 – Tension between Influence Attempts characterised by Rationality and Influence Attempts characterised by Emotive Behaviour

The next section of this chapter is dedicated to discussing the final dimension of the framework – *Contextual Features of Collaboration: Interdependence and Asymmetrical Relationships, Perceptions of Power, Temporal Implications and Cultural Differences.*

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF COLLABORATION

As already discussed in the introductory section of this chapter, a new dimension has been added to the emerging conceptual framework. This draws attention to the

importance that was attributed by interviewees to the characteristics which distinguish the context of inter-organisation collaborations from that of single organisation settings. This dimension was added to the framework to reflect the high level of concern articulated in the interviews for the particular implications associated with the enactment of influence in inter-organisational contexts: *interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences*. These are illustrated in figure 6.7 below and discussed in the section that follows. The discussion of each of these issues concludes with a summary of the views of participants from the different research settings.

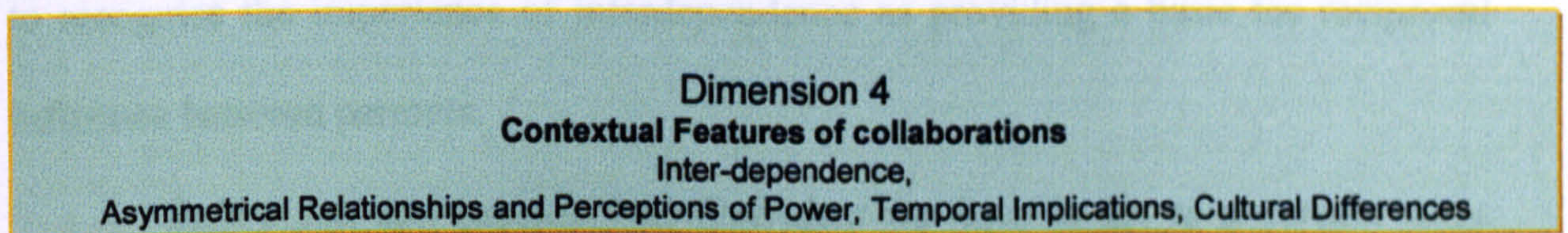


Figure 6.7: Dimension 4 – Contextual Features of Collaboration

4.1 *Interdependence as a Driver of Influence Attempts*

Interdependence was acknowledged strongly throughout the interviews as a driving force for collaboration. As one interviewee explained, the acknowledgement of interdependence between the partners in the collaboration was a factor that stimulated the influence processes.

“a key challenge... was to communicate to ...stakeholdersand to influence funders.... that is in your model ...very much about the influencing process and how it would be mutually beneficial for both (partners) to collaborate. The interdependence was key for both the college and university.” ADH/HWU

The perceived importance of interdependence as a driver of collaborative activity was evident throughout the cases. In the university and college joint venture interdependence was seen as a basis upon which to enter into reciprocal influence attempts, which in turn heighten the sense of interdependence.

"We can recognise that its two organisations that we can build, I suppose it's reciprocity but it's also the growing interdependence of the two organisations. And actually it benefits us both to create that interdependence." DK/HWU

Another interviewee from the university and college joint venture case also appeared to recognise the importance of interdependence as providing a basis for reciprocal influence between partners.

"Before you can become interdependent we have to get to a certain stage with our own development, I think one of the problems we've got about interdependency is where you've got other organisations in crisis... I could talk at length about interdependence...a recognition that we have to work together". ADHI/HWU

To harness interdependence as a basis upon which to enact influence in the collaborative setting demands a certain level of confidence among partners about the state of maturity of their own organisation.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 4 Contextual Features of Collaborations	Interpretation
	Interdependence	
FEDO LW	"There is a set of general things about collaboration irrespective of the type of collaboration – there are 3 important words collaboration, co-operation and alignment ... mutual self interest .. they win and I win...Its about aligning objectives ...those who have other things to contribute.. Its about choosing partners ...we are all trading something here."	A strong sense of interdependence is thought to arise when the partners realise that their goals are similar and that they cannot achieve them in isolation. It also is felt to be associated with a need to demonstrate reciprocity.
College/ University JV DKU-HWU	"We can recognise that it's two organisations that we can build, I suppose it's reciprocity but it's also the growing interdependence of the two organisations. And actually it benefits us both to create that interdependence."	The growing interdependence of the two institutions was felt to be important to the development of the JV.
Colleges Merger JUGVF1	"We shared the view that competition was not helpful....it makes us look foolish so let's talk about collaboration....We said let's do this and make life easier for ourselves by working together."	Interdependence in this case appeared to be a strong driver behind the rationale to move into deeper collaboration in which there was clear mutual benefit for both partners.
Colleges Merger BDVGF	"The mood was definitely for collaboration. There were some functional conditions that drove this."	Interdependence in this case was a strong driver of the rationale to move into deeper collaboration.
Colleges Merger JMc	"They set up a leadership group to discuss collaborative issues. ..At the same time the council undertook policy developments to shift the sector beyond competition to establish the concept of collaboration as essential, positive and desirable. The idea was that greater collaboration would create increased efficiency across institutions.... It was established that there was scope for greater complementarity in the curriculum...."	The contextual drivers for collaboration at sector level were felt to increase the sense of interdependence among participants and the willingness to work together.
JF SE/1	"His style is not great, he is all about him, not about creating an interdependency within the group that can make a difference."	It was felt that the styles that individuals adopt can help to build a sense of the context of interdependency in the group and this is important to influencing others.

Table 6.16: Evidence Framework - Dimension: 4 Component: 1 – Interdependence

4.2 *Asymmetrical Relationships and Perceptions of Power*

The feature of asymmetry that characterised the collaborative relationships in all of the research situations was a prominent feature in discussions with interviewees. As one interviewee in the college and university case suggested:

"It's a David and Goliath scenario but it does not necessarily follow that the larger player has the most power - we have significant influence." AHHHWU

In this case the implication was that the partner to whom the joint venture project was most significant, became the most prominent in the partnership; despite size and other traditional measures of power, such as budget and resources, being in inverse proportions. This seemed to have a profound effect upon how individual participants perceived their overall potential to influence.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 4 Contextual Features of Collaborations	Interpretation
	Asymmetrical relationships	
College/ University JV AHV/BCHWU	"There was an interesting power relationship that in the face of it you would expect the university to have much greater influence than it perhaps was having ...despite the fact that they were much bigger, bigger resourced, bigger infrastructure, more staff in different areasnevertheless we are the central body and all the funding is coming through usits an important project for them but it hasn't been central to what they are doing."	The assumption that the larger the partner the more influence did not apply in this case. The smaller partner had a larger stake in the JV and therefore took the principal role.
FEDD JBS	"Let's go back to the incompatible partners they were very different in size, sometimes very large and small organisations where there is perceived difference in status, size, power and I think we acknowledged this..."	Acknowledging differences between the partners is important.
College/ University JV JVG/F1	"Because this was the bigger college it was seen as the predator - they feared being swallowed up ..there was a precedent for this Glenrothes swallowed up Buckhaven."	Acknowledging differences between the partners is important and understanding the impact that this can have on the emotions of the participants.
Colleges Merger BD GVF	"Because F college was the bigger one it's provision was the greatest. There were some quite difficult issues to manage."	Acknowledging differences between the partners and understanding the impact that this can have on the emotions of the participants was felt to be important to influencing others.
College/ University JV LH/BCHWU	"There is no doubt it is a David and Goliath scenario. As long as it seems that the way it is going is in their best interests, they're fine and they treat us well. As soon as we have an opinion of our own, they come out fighting...."	It was felt that one of the partners in the collaboration used their size to the disadvantage of others to influence outcomes and this caused relationship problems.
RBM College/ University JV	"There is a dynamic ...the bigger the organisation is the more they assume automatically that they are the major player and other players should accept without question what they propose and that can cause issues ...there are two things. If that does not suit the minor players they will start to become disengaged because their objectives are not being met and a real tension develops..."	It was felt that if one of the partners in the collaboration uses their size to the disadvantage of others to influence outcomes this is likely to cause tensions and relationship problems.

Table 6.17: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 4 Component: 2 – Asymmetrical Relationships

4.3 Temporal Implications

The temporal implications associated with the context of collaboration are also key features of the challenge of influencing in collaborative context. In the FEDD case a number of participants pointed to the organisational considerations related to ensuring that enough time was made available for the collaborative process. This implies that designing and structuring the collaborative process needs to include the 'design of time' Additionally since collaboration was experienced as an enterprise that would typically be delivered over a relatively long time period, the process would inevitably have to be "rewound" to facilitate the impact of membership churn and the introduction of new members. A number of participants discussed the importance of participants developing influence over time and that different participants were likely to become influential at different times throughout the collaboration. The views of participants on the issues relating to temporal implications as a contextual feature of collaboration are summarised in the table below.

Case and Interview Details	Model Dimension 4 Contextual Features of Collaborations	Interpretation
	Temporal Implications	
FEDO JB2/	"Where does the power (to influence) come from – experience, credibility gained over a number of years in different settings."	Acquiring influence over time involves gaining experience over time.
FEDO DU	"There is something about making collaboration happen. There is a time element involved. Maturity takes time. Even the relationship with the FC is different now."	The relationships between partners were felt to mature over time.
FEDO JB3	"It is a dynamic within an organisation, across the organisations, the different time scales for this, across different teams and different sections of the colleges..."	The dynamic of collaboration is different to that in single organisational settings as the different partners time scales have to be taken into account.
JJ/ Colleges Merger GVF	"Already having a relationship with an individual I did not have explicit conversations (to say) I trust you ...It was not conveyed openly but it is earned over time by observing over time ...T was influential in shaping the approach we took ...I would see him time and time again do things that lead the way for the sector."	It was felt that influence in a collaborative context is developed over time by consistently demonstrating leadership and demonstrating certain attributes.
FEDO JB3	"....sometimes (they) do not have this understanding of time horizons."	It seems that different partners may have different expectations in terms of the time required for collaboration.
FEDO JB3	"There has got to be almost stop and go back, do a bit of history rewinding, go back and start again... This is long term not short term. You have got to understand the constraints – there is nothing wrong with moving backwards – I think it is actually quite healthy."	It was felt that in a collaborative setting participants need to be prepared to back track in time in order to move forward with new members.
JMcC Colleges Merger	"The approach we took was to move forward and sort out the detail later in order to keep the momentum going. There was a tight timescale. The move was first mentioned in November 1999 and the move to a single location took place in August 2001. ..."	It was felt that participants often underestimate the time taken to deliver collaborative objectives and it seems to be important to maintain momentum and not become distracted by detail which can become overly time consuming.

Table 6.18: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 4 Component: 3 – Temporal Implications

4.4 Cultural Differences

Another key characteristic of the particular set of challenges associated with enacting influence in the collaborative domain is that of the various and often marked cultural differences between partners. This is another contextual feature which helps to explain why collaborative work so often involves greater complexity and takes longer to achieve than participants first anticipate. Identifying, understanding, taking account of and managing cultural differences, in collaborative contexts, was highlighted by a number of interviewees as a key concern in relation to the exercise of influence.

The importance of being able to adapt towards the cultures of other participants in order to be in a better position to exercise influence has already been discussed in relation to dimension 1.2 of the framework. As a contextual concern, the differences between participants' organisation cultures may predicate their attitudes towards the influencing behaviours of others. Therefore it is important that participants are both

aware of culture as a contextual consideration which may affect a wide range of variables, such as: different influencing styles, the degree to which individuals are receptive of influencing attempts from others, the values that underpin partners behaviours and assumptions and participants' attitudes towards working with others in collaboration.

The views expressed by interviewees in relation to the cultural differences inherent within collaborative settings and the impact of these differences upon the way in which influence is exercised in collaborations are summarised in figure 6.19 as follows:

Case and Interview Details	Modal Dimension 4 Contextual Features of Collaborations	Interpretation
	Cultural Differences	
JB1/FD	"It's a compliance/civil service culture- there's clocking in and clocking out - you have to manage through that culture - anyone who didn't have an inner confidence would flounder."	Being able to manage through cultural differences between partners is thought to be important to influence.
JMc/GUF	"There were two different cultures operating under one roof and two systems and they had to sort it out. There was a high level of reciprocity ..."	Differences between partners are seen to include cultural ones. An important part of exercising influence appears to be the ability to work with a number of different cultures.
BC2/FD	"If you are trying to create influence I think you get better results by letting people see you as a member of their particular group."	It is thought that being seen as a member of the group in question and therefore part of their culture helps to build influence.
JB1/FD	"It's about working across cultures - gaining the likes of Anne's support and other directors once I had gained their trust - by handling things they could not handle - the initial cases were dangerous territory... In my view yes they are moving forward and gaining in influence."	The ability to work with people from different cultural contexts and gaining their trust and support is important to influence.
RBM/FED D/ROAR	"The culture of FEDD has been shaped by J (he is seen as) persuasive, objective, diplomatic, quietly confident, commands respect, influential, experienced and has a strong track record."	Providing leadership in collaborative contexts is likely to involve the use of behavioural capabilities to influence others and to shape the culture.
GP/ Ahlstrom	"different cultures require different influencing styles, for example the manager of the plant in France, his style is pretty autocratic - there is a lot of micro-management - it worked for him it does not work for others - influencing that type of person requires a different approach"	In a collaborative contexts individuals are thought to respond differently to influencing styles due to cultural differences.
CS ESHA	"How does the framework reflect cultural differences between partners and their organisations, for example how do people cope with differences in partner's values?"	Differences in organisation culture among partners is likely to mean that their values are also different.

Table 6.19: Evidence Framework – Dimension: 4 Component: 4 – Cultural Differences

The conceptual framework that emerged from the final analysis of data is shown in figure 6.2 and incorporates the recurrent issues highlighted throughout the research.

On the basis of the elaborated conceptual framework, illustrated in figure 6.2 of this chapter, a number of key concepts were identified, as a basis upon which to conduct

further and final enhancement of the framework in the light of the extant literature.

A summary of the key concepts is as follows:

- Building credibility may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. These may be expressed through the following categories: building credibility by proxy; evidencing reputation; establishing structure and controls; establishing trust; managing confidence.
- Building relationships and reciprocity may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. These may be expressed in the following categories: risk taking; building a genuine dialogue; building understanding behind the scenes; adapting to the culture.
- Participants may draw upon a range of resources and associated activities in the use of these resources to build influence in collaborations. These appear to include: constructed rationality; web of influence; leadership style; temporal and financial resources; reputation.
- Influence attempts may be characterised by rationality at one end of the behavioural spectrum or by emotive behaviour at the other end of the spectrum and a tension exists between these two potential extremes. This tension acts as a backdrop against which influence processes are enacted.
- The nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations appears to be strongly affected by some particular contextual conditions that characterise the collaborative domain – interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, the temporal implications of influencing in the collaborative domain and cultural differences between participants.

- The central concepts within the framework appear to be highly interconnected and interdependent.

The last of these key concepts merits some consideration here before the discussion moves on to conclude this chapter and to outline the next and final step in the research process.

The interdependent nature of the concepts central to the framework

The highly interdependent nature of the central dimensions of the framework has been a consistent feature of the outcomes of the research. It appears that the concepts of credibility, relationships and reciprocity are particularly closely linked. It also appears that these concepts are linked through the use of the resources for influence situated at the centre of the diagram. The remaining two dimensions – the tension between rational and emotive approaches to influence and the contextual characteristics: interdependence and asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power – appear to provide the context within which influence processes are enacted. In effect, these two dimensions explain the *how* and the *why* of the nature of influence in inter-agency collaborations. The *how* explaining the extent to which the behaviour used to enact influence is characterised by emotive or rational approaches. The *why* explaining the extent to which influence is enacted because of contextual variables, typical of those experienced in collaborative settings, such as high levels of interdependence, asymmetrical relationships, temporal implications and cultural differences.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has reported on the detailed elaboration of the conceptual framework. The elaboration of each of the dimensions and associated components of the framework was discussed, in a systematic way in relation to the outcomes of the final stage of empirical engagement, reported in chapter 5. The discussion prepares the ground for the penultimate chapter of this thesis, in which the implications of the main dimensions of the elaborated framework and the associated key concepts will be explored in the light of the extant literature, primarily in the fields of inter-organisation collaboration management and leadership. Following this the final chapter of the thesis will provide an elucidation of the implications of the conceptual framework in relation to the contribution of this work to both theory and practice and will set out the potential opportunities for further exploration that have emerged in the course of the research.

**CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND FURTHER ELABORATION OF THE
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter builds upon the process of elaborating the conceptual framework, reported in chapter 6, by further developing and refining the framework in the light of the extant literature. This chapter is concerned with the final element of stage 4 of the research as illustrated in figure 7.1 below.

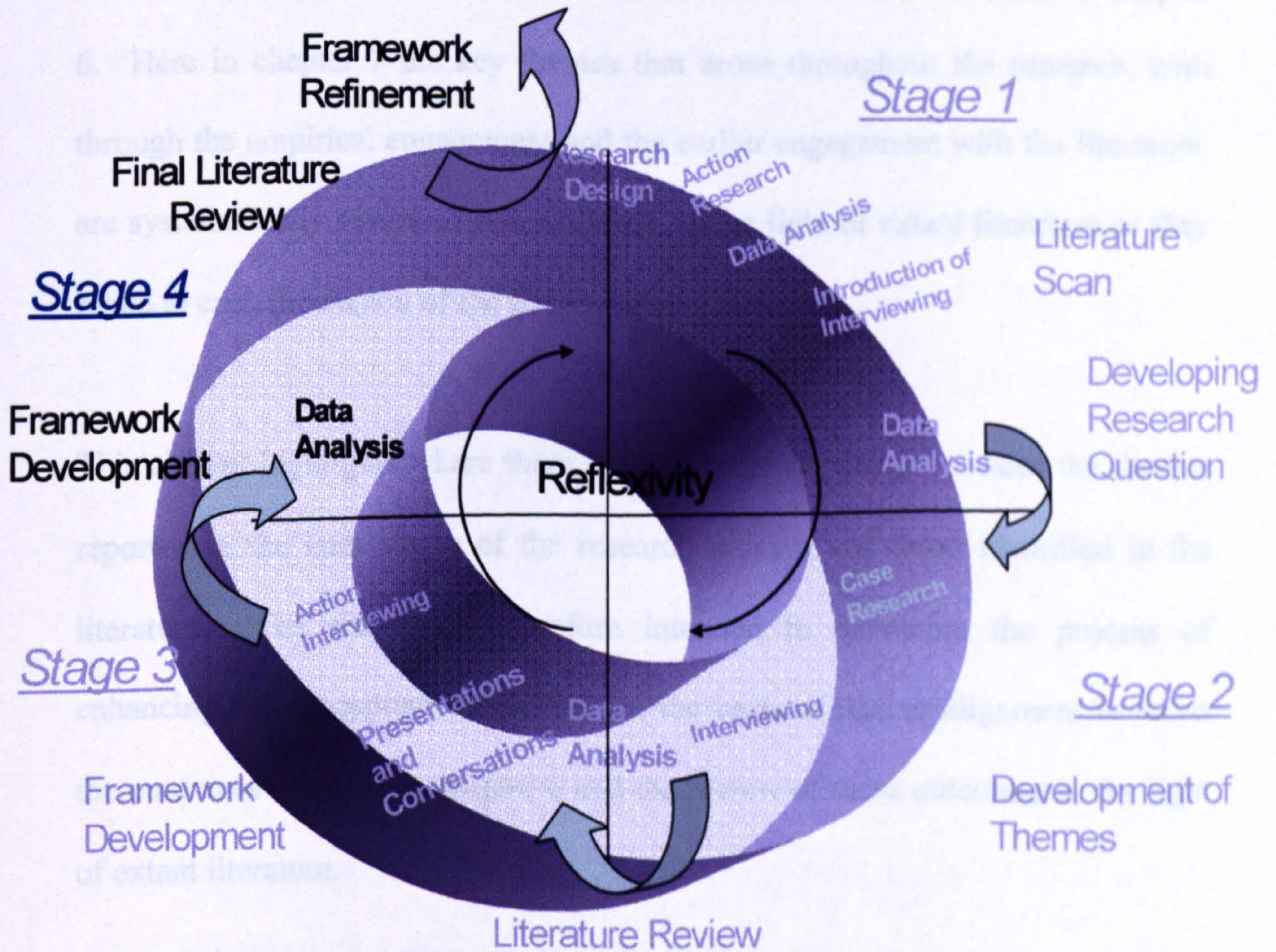


Figure 7.1: Stage 4 of the research process

The central aim of this chapter is to document the process that was undertaken to strengthen the conceptual framework, on the basis of the themes that emerged from a final review of the literature. The intention is to ensure that the final fully

elaborated framework, which unfolds as a result of the research process as a whole, is rooted firmly in both the review of literature and the empirical investigation. This final review of literature draws upon aspects of theory already discussed in chapter 4 as well as additional theoretical frameworks drawn from the fields of inter-organisational collaboration and leadership. The overall aim of this chapter is to explore the links, relationships and interdependencies between the main dimensions of the elaborated framework discussed in chapter 6. Here in chapter 7 the key themes that arose throughout the research, both through the empirical engagement and the earlier engagement with the literature, are systematically reviewed and explored, in the light of extant literature as they relate to each dimension of the framework.

This chapter highlights where there appears to be alignment between the themes reported in the later stages of the research process and those identified in the literature. The chapter is therefore intended to document the process of enhancing the conceptual framework on the basis of further alignment between the outcomes reported in chapter 6 and the review of these outcomes in the light of extant literature.

The main dimensions of the framework and associated components that were examined in relation to extant literature are framed, as previously described in chapter 6, as follows:

- Building credibility may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. This may involve the following: *building*

credibility by proxy; evidencing reputation; establishing structure and controls; establishing trust; managing confidence.

- Building relationships and reciprocity may be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. This may involve the following: *attitude to risk; building a genuine dialogue; building understanding behind the scenes; adapting to the culture.*
- Participants may draw upon a range of resources and associated activities in the use of these resources to build influence in collaborations. These may include: *constructed rationality; web of influence; leadership style; temporal and financial resources; reputation.* These resources are explored in relation to the influence processes that build credibility and those that build relationships and reciprocity, in the light of the extant literature.
- Influence attempts may be characterised by rationality at one end of the behavioural spectrum or by emotive behaviour at the other end of the spectrum and a tension exists between these two potential extremes. This tension acts as a backdrop against which influence processes are enacted.
- The nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations appears to be strongly affected by four particular contextual conditions that characterise the collaborative domain – interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences.
- The central concepts within the framework appear to be highly interconnected and interdependent.

The inter-connections between the key concepts are explored as follows:

Inter-relationships between the key concepts that form the main dimensions of the framework

As discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis, it appears that dimension 1 of the framework - *influence processes that build credibility, relationships and reciprocity in collaboration* - is particularly closely linked with dimension 2 - *resources for influence*. This second dimension of the diagram is therefore deliberately explored, in the sections that follow, *in relation to* dimension 1 rather than independently. The first two dimensions are explored against the backdrop of dimensions 3 and 4. Dimension 3 represents the underlying tension that appears to exist between influence attempts which could be characterised by rational behaviour and those that could be characterised by emotive behaviour. The fourth dimension suggests that there are two contextual features of inter-organisational collaboration that appear to affect the degree to which influence is enacted in collaborative settings – interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power *and temporal implications*.

The key concepts inherent within the main dimensions and their inter-relationships are explored in the first section of this chapter, in the light of extant literature on inter-agency collaboration and the literature on leadership. The implications of the literature review are then highlighted. As a consequence of this process some final adjustments were made to the conceptual framework. These final adjustments reflect the further alignment of the elaborated framework with existing theory and are

elucidated in the last section of this chapter. To conclude the chapter, the themes that show potential for further exploration will be identified for consideration.

DIMENSION 1: CREDIBILITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND RECIPROCITY

Central to the discussion in chapter 6 of this thesis, was the suggestion that building credibility, relationships and reciprocity appears to be particularly important to influence processes in the inter-agency domain. In the conceptual model these processes are associated with particular resources and activities for enacting influence. This association is discussed in the section that follows which sets out the rationale for the further elaboration of the components of the framework in the light of the extant literature.

Dimension 1 - 1.1 Resources and activities that relate to credibility building processes

Throughout the later stages of the empirical engagement respondents consistently made connections between ideas associated with the need to build *credibility*, of these, particular concern was expressed for the need to: *build credibility by proxy, through relationships with others; evidence one's own reputation; establish structure and controls; establish trust and manage confidence*. The final review of literature reinforced the importance of these concepts and suggested that these concepts could be integrated into two main categories:

- ❖ **Influence processes that build credibility through one's own reputation and by proxy – through perception**
- ❖ **Influence processes that build credibility through credibility enhancing actions – through action**

These two categories are discussed in the section that follows and are illustrated in relation to the relevant components of dimension 1 of the conceptual framework, shown in figures 7.2 and 7.3 below:

1.1.1 Building credibility – through perception

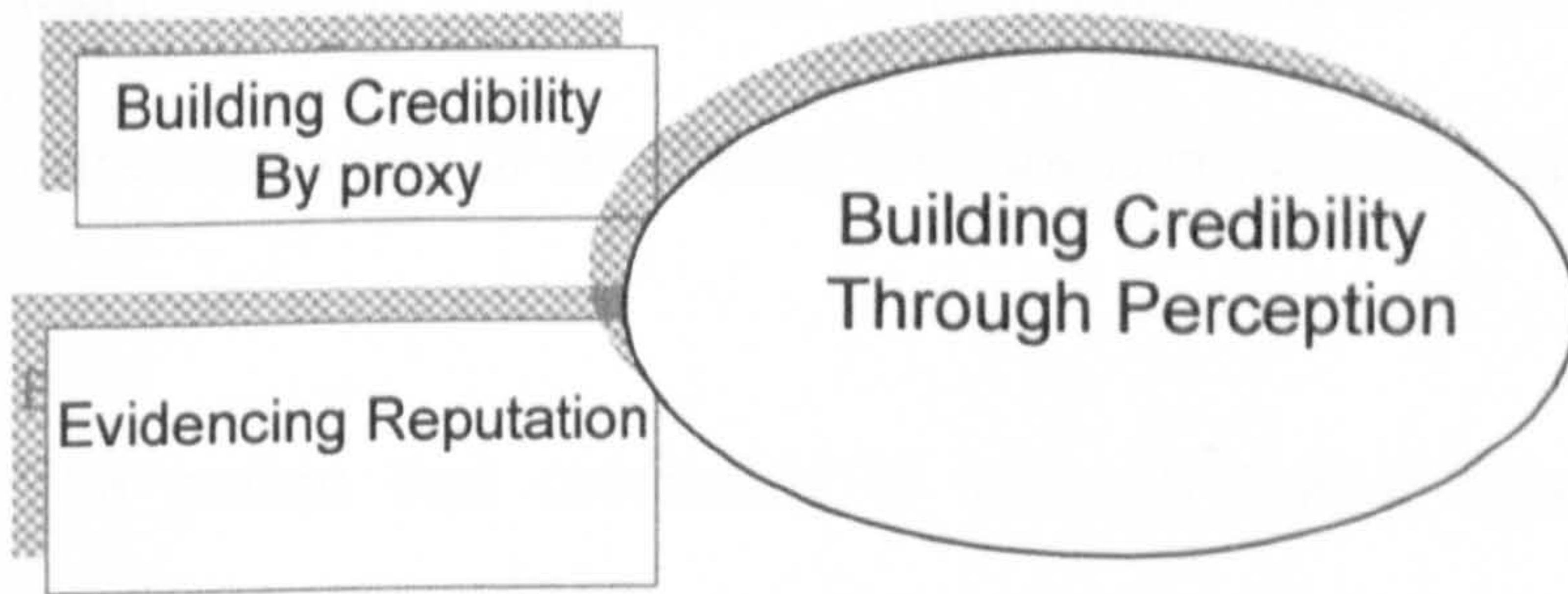


Figure 7.2: Building credibility through perception

As discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis the concern for influence processes that build credibility, through association with others, found resonance in the final stage of empirical engagement. This concern was echoed both in the literature on leadership and the literature on collaboration (Fiol, 2001; Padgett et al, 2004; Bartolome and Laurent, 2001; Buckley et al, 2002; Denis et al, 2001). In the literature reviewed, the concept of credibility appears to be closely linked to the formation of relationships and with the concept of individuals developing a web of influence based on relationships (Feyerherm, 1994). Credibility appears to involve gaining access to a network of relations which facilitates the potential to *influence by proxy* through association with other influential figures (Kotter, 1995; Radin, 2007; Fiol 2001). In this vein Kotter (1995) argues that certain relationships are capable of leveraging influence and that leaders need the power associated with credible relationships. The more interdependence in the relationship the more important it becomes.

Similarly, Radin (2007) suggests that if a person lacks credibility it is important to be able to determine *who* has the credibility in that situation and to try to partner with them to influence a particular relationship, thereby leveraging their credibility. Osborne (2006 p238) appears to concur stating that in certain rural settings the identification of individuals as *real* members of local communities offered them an important level of credibility with local community groups.

The notion that credibility is strongly linked to a range of variables such as: associations with other credible individuals, reputation, performance and action, trust and managing confidence levels, is born out consistently in the literature (Trice and Beyer, 2001; Pfeffer, 1994; Osborne, 2002, 2006). Trice and Beyer (2001 p156) directly associate these factors with the potential to influence:

"Successful performance buttresses the influence of any leader."

Trice and Beyer (2001 p156)

Similarly Pfeffer's (1994) argument posits the importance of the link between reputation and performance. He suggests that a major source of power is a person's reputation in the organisation. This depends upon how well an individual has performed, particularly in getting things done. Developing this source of power and therefore potential to influence entails building and maintaining a reputation for being effective and for having the capacity to deliver.

This emphasis upon *evidencing reputation* suggests that credibility, while partly dependent on the actual achievements of certain outcomes, is also largely *perceptual*.

Performance as a basis upon which to build credibility is highlighted as a means to shape perception in order to exercise influence and ultimately to widen the scope for action. For example, Pfeffer (1994) highlights the need to consider performance as the ability to exercise influence and to get something done. Performance therefore provides the scope to shape the perception of credibility and to establish reputation which in turn facilitates the enactment of influence.

Pfeffer (1994) argues that one of the reasons that many of us like to work for and with people who are perceived to be powerful and influential is that they are generally more pleasant. This is because the perception of power permits individuals more discretion, more ability to delegate to others and therefore more scope for action. In this sense Pfeffer argues that the ability to influence is a self fulfilling prophecy. The more we seek to influence others, the better we are equipped to influence successfully and the more powerful we are perceived to be. *Perceptions* of an individual's ability to exercise influence also affect how real resources are allocated, and therefore their *scope to act* in credibility enhancing ways.

1.1.2 Building credibility - through action

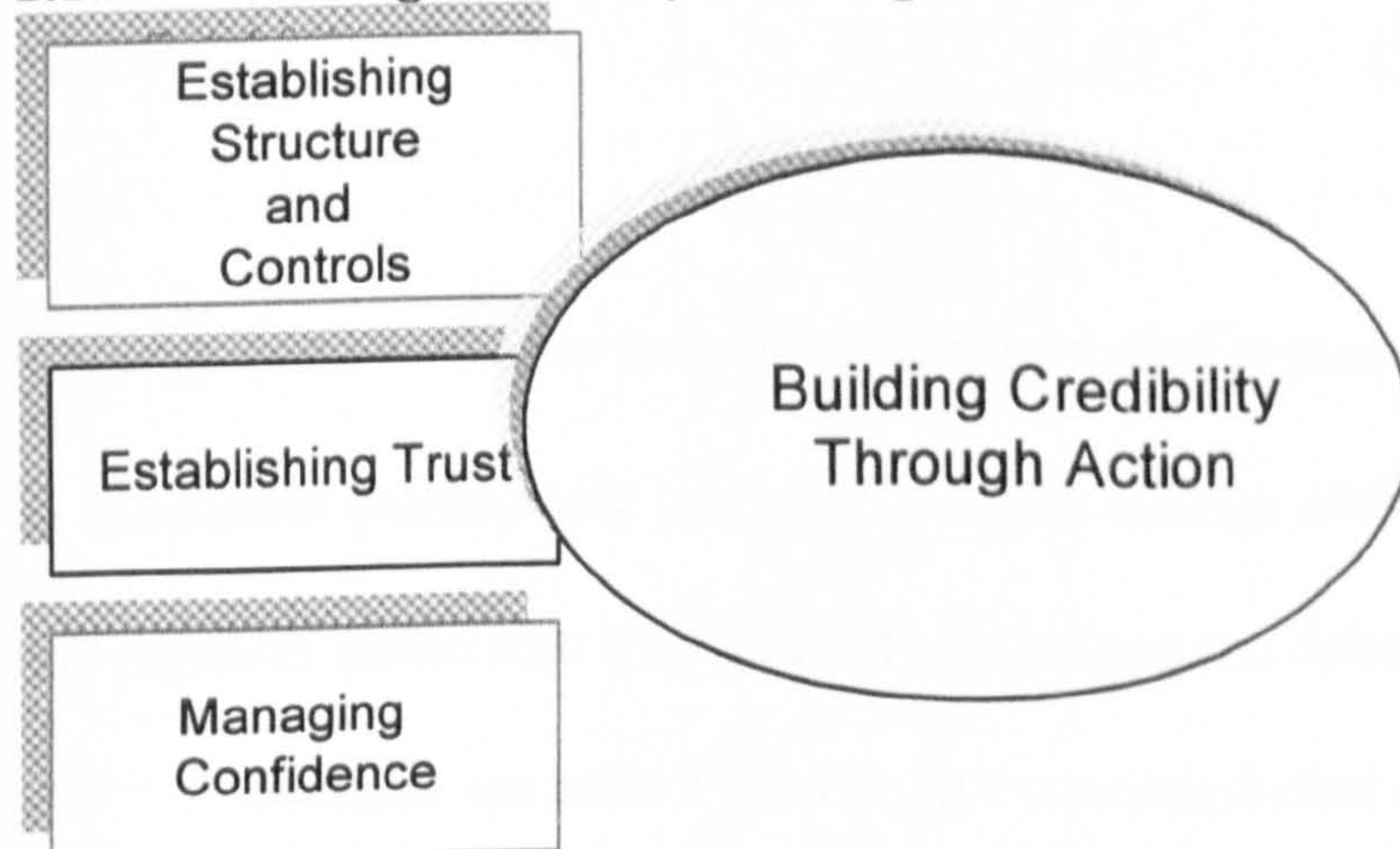


Figure 7.3: Building credibility through action

A common theme found in the extant literature is that certain actions and attributes are likely to predetermine the level of credibility of an individual (Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Denis and Langlely, 2001). Additionally connections are made between leadership attributes such as reputation, knowledge and skills and credibility. Kotter (1985) argues that credibility is an important dimension of leadership and leadership action. He posits that to be able to lead subordinates effectively one needs also to develop as much credibility as possible among as many of them as possible.

Additionally the literature reviewed reflects a re-iterated concern that actions can be either credibility *draining* or *enhancing* and in this sense actions can affect political positions and shape future scope for taking action (Pfeffer, 1994; Kotter, 1985; Denis and Langlely, 2001; Cohen and Bradford, 1991).

“Actions that tend to enhance survival prospects can be called credibility enhancing and those that tend to diminish it are credibility draining...Increased credibility widens the scope for action. Reduced credibility diminishes it and may lead to leader turnover.”

Denis and Langlely (2001 p826)

This idea of credibility enhancing action found resonance in the analysis of data and is illustrated particularly pertinently in the college and university joint venture where the partners stated that they failed to influence the debate among partners:

“because we didn’t go through a process that was sufficiently structured, we couldn’t influence the debate sufficiently....” AHHHWU/BC

While in certain situations authoritarian influencing tactics and actions are often seen as effective in achieving desired outcomes in the short term (Kotter 1985), in the long term they could be *credibility draining*. In contrast more sensitive behaviours can produce more sustainable outcomes and be regarded as credibility enhancing, thus widening the scope for political action. The contrast between behaviours that are likely to have impact in the short term and those that will have sustained positive impact in the longer term suggests a link between relationships, a sense of mutuality or reciprocity and credibility. These relationships are central to the Cohen-Bradford (1991) model of influence. Based on the incremental construction of mutually rewarding relationships, this model asserts credibility as a key success factor in influencing others.

Similarly, Denis and Langlely (2001) suggest that, in collaborative settings, credibility is associated with attitudes that promote alignment between participants and within relationships. Indeed attempts made by participants to align aspiration are features of relational processes that build credibility in collaborations. Denis et al (2001 p826) suggests that to build a *constellation* requires emphasising a type of alignment that will enhance credibility. This will enable members to acquire formal and informal power and develop a successful way of working together despite differences in their skills and sources of power.

Radin (2007) suggests that credibility is context dependent and leaders need to determine if they have the requisite credibility for each situation. Credibility is seen

to be linked to actively engaging people and gaining their support by exhibiting genuine interest in others and demonstrating concern for them.

Alignment between participants seems to be associated with actions that *establish adequate processual structure and mechanisms for control* in collaborative settings. Huxham and Vangen (2000) suggest that much of the influence of a leader is dependent upon underlying structures. They argue that structures play an important role in leadership in the inter-organisational domain since they determine key factors such as: who has an influence on shaping the partnership agenda, who has power to act and what resources are drawn upon. Structure aimed at achieving alignment is therefore likely to enable the enactment of influence on the basis of greater clarity and therefore enhanced confidence in the process.

This requirement for structure as a resource for influence was surfaced consistently by interviewees in the later stages of empirical engagement and gave rise to what is termed *constructed rationality* in the conceptual framework. For instance in the colleges merger case the leaders stated that they relied on rational approaches to influence supported by the use of diagrams and other visual material.

"We relied on constructed rationality if you like.. we helped people to understand complex developments by trying to interpret them and represent them through diagrams and so forth." CT2GR/F

Thus influencing others in the collaborative domain appears to involve working systematically towards mutually aligning aspirations through the use of rational forms of persuasion that *establish trust and inspire confidence*.

Osborne (2002 p60) highlights the importance of trust as both *an input* into relationship building and *an output*. It is an input because it lies at the core of a relationship and no relationship is likely to survive without it. It is an output because the experience of having worked successfully together reinforces trust and mutual confidence. This cyclical aspect of trust building is at the heart of Vangen and Huxham's 2003 conceptualisation of a *trust building loop*. This model encourages practitioners to pay attention to the issues involved in the trust building process: forming expectations; managing risk; managing dynamics; managing power imbalances and nurturing collaborative relationships. Vangen and Huxham agree that even in situations when collaboration is well under way and trust is relatively high continuous effort is required to sustain trust and to nurture the resulting confidence required to undertake more ambitious forms of collaboration in the future.

Summary – Key Processes for building credibility and associated resources

The influence processes that help to build credibility in collaboration appear to be:

- ❖ those that build credibility through one's own reputation and by proxy through relationships with other credible individuals – *through perception*
- ❖ those that build credibility through credibility enhancing actions – *through action*

From the literature reviewed it is suggested that the resources that help to build credibility in collaboration appear to be: *reputation, leadership style, webs of influence and constructed rationality.*

DIMENSION 1 - 1.2 INFLUENCE PROCESSES THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND RECIPROCITY

Throughout the empirical engagement, discussed in chapter 6, respondents consistently made connections between ideas associated with the need to build *relationships and reciprocity*, of these, significant concern was expressed for influence processes that involve: *attitude towards risk*, building a genuine dialogue, building understanding behind the scenes and adapting to different organisation cultures. These ideas found resonance in the final review of literature. In the light of the extant literature it is suggested that these concepts could be integrated into two main categories in the following ways:

- ❖ **Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity by adjusting behaviour**
- ❖ **Building relationships and reciprocity by adapting to meet partners needs**

These two categories are discussed in the section that follows and are illustrated in relation to the appropriate component parts of the conceptual framework in figures 7.4 and 7.5 below:

1.2.1 Building relationships and reciprocity by adjusting behaviour

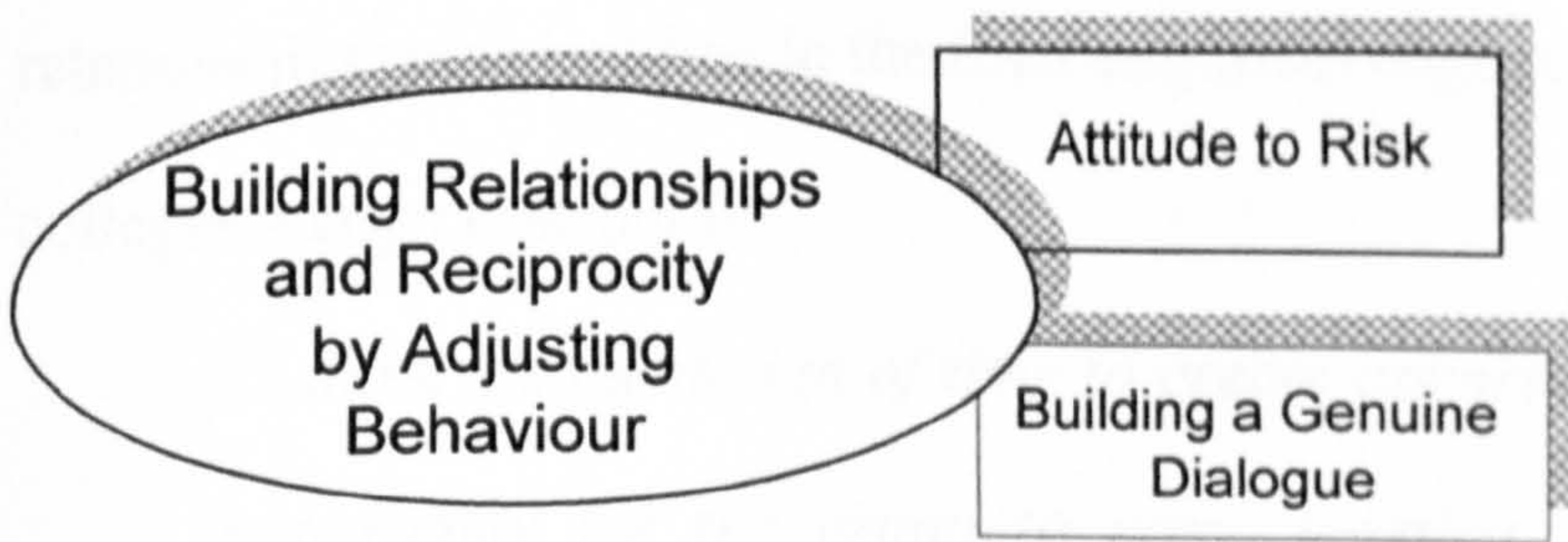


Figure 7.4: Building reciprocity and relationships by adjusting behaviour

The importance of processes that build relationships through reciprocity is evidenced strongly in the literature on collaboration, (McGuire, 2002; Faerman et al, 2000; Powell, 1998; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Oliver, 1990; Judge and Ryman, 2001). For example, Ring and Van de Ven 1994 stress the need to progress with caution and build mutual confidence gradually increasing the extent to which partners are prepared to take risks together. They suggest that, in practice, most collaborative relationships emerge incrementally, beginning with small transactions that involve no substantial risks. Thus it appears that attitudes to risk may change over time. As the partners gain more confidence they may feel more secure in deepening the commitment and become more inclined to *take risks* as the relationship matures. This is important as it builds a predisposition towards action that will result in progress. Osborne (2002) appears to concur in stressing that a relational approach takes account of different attitudes towards risk. In this way the exposure of each party to the relationship in terms of risks and costs may be reduced, providing a more secure basis upon which to share benefits.

The implication here is that the process of developing confident relationships by *building a genuine dialogue* that stimulates reciprocal acts and exchanges requires significant investment to be made in terms of time and other resources. The

expectation that a substantial amount of time will be required to develop critical relationships was identified in the final empirical engagement. As a respondent in the colleges merger case put it:

“I think it’s the design of time to create opportunities –if you don’t have the opportunity for the group to come together ... then ... their ability to influence or to exert power is diminished That time has got to be created it doesn’t happen accidentally. It’s got to be by design.” CT/GR/F/3

Influencing in the collaborative domain appears to involve effort, patience and willingness on the part of participants to *adjust attitudes*, expectations and *behavioural style* and to meet the differing needs of other partners. This appears to demand conscious efforts to determine: what behaviours to use, how partners’ reputations fit together, what requirements there are for behavioural adjustment and how much time needs to be dedicated to building mutual confidence in order to *be willing to take risks*.

The shift from prescriptions of leadership that stress the use of formal, legitimate sources of authority to achieve goals, to those that suggest more relational and democratic approaches to influencing others, is particularly evident in the literature concerned with the inter-organisational domain (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Denis et al, 2001; Pearce, 2000; Feyerherm, 1994; Fu and Yukl, 2000; Fu and Yukl, 2001). It is also a consistent message in the literature that is concerned with leadership and management theory in general (Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Yukl, 2002; Tichy and Devanna, 1990; Bennis and Nanus, 2003; Somech and Drach-Zavany, 2002; Gill,

2006). Beyond this generally recognisable shift there is also a recognition that the power that position brings can be leveraged to influence others in many ways:

"... the power of position and the use of that power is more than just formal authority" Pfeffer (1994 p128)

This perspective challenges previously held presumptions of the primacy of downward over upward influence (Franklin, 1975; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1974). It resonated strongly in the empirical engagement and was the focus of some substantial discussions around the successful handling of the merger of two colleges:

"And I think that's how we interpret our rolehow we play these things out through the power and influence that they perceive themselves as having ...to get them back into the point where they understand the dynamics of influence among peers.they have got to go and influence that person." CT3 GRF

Formal authority includes the notion that power, inherent in a formal position, has been invested in that position by the members of the organisation in which it is located. Leadership is therefore to some extent conferred by followers (Pfeffer, 1994). This carries the implication that the *behavioural style* of leaders should be adapted to the particular needs of followers, a challenging concept in inter-organisational collaboration where leaders may need to be prepared to adapt their style to the needs of participants from multiple contexts. The emphasis is therefore upon leaders being predisposed towards engaging with others to understand their needs.

Bridging both the fields of literature on leadership and on leadership in inter-organisational domains, with a specific focus on *behaviours and approaches to*

influence, Yukl (2002 p142) suggests that the scope of authority of a manager is related to the range of requests that can properly be made and the range of actions that can properly be taken. The scope of authority is therefore much greater for some managers than for others. Yukl (2002) suggests that this is usually related to the influence needed to accomplish role requirements and organisational objectives. As discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, it is widely acknowledged that in inter-organisational settings the scope to exercise influence through the leverage of formal authority is limited in comparison to single organisational settings (Huxham, 1996 p246) and this has real implications for the way individuals enact influence and the subsequent distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities in the collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Denis and Langlely, 2001; Feyerherm, 1994; Denis et al, 2001; Judge and Ryman, 2001).

The implications associated with managing complexity, diversity and inter-dependence for leadership style and the way in which leaders exert influence, are central to recent conceptualisations of transformational leadership (Bass et al, 1994; Tichy and Devanna, 1990; Bennis and Nanus, 2003; Bennis 1989). In this body of literature the role of the leader is conceptualised as one which transcends the traditional exchange relationship between manager and follower, in which either reward or negative feedback is given by the manager for performance by the follower (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998). Transformational leadership, it is argued, has a far greater and broader impact on the follower (Bass et al, 1994) and has turned the top down notion of leadership on its head. This conceptualisation of leadership is based on a central concern for the development of potential in others and the ability to unite different groups of stakeholders in articulating a joint vision. Central to the theory of

transformational leadership is the concern for *building a genuine dialogue* with followers.

At the heart of this theoretical frame lies Bass's conceptualisation (1994) of *idealised influence* which proposes that transformational leaders behave in ways that result in them being admired, respected and trusted to an extent that their followers wish to emulate them. These leaders are seen as capable, persistent and determined. It is a form of leadership characterised by a set of capabilities that enable organisations not only to cope with change but also to be proactive in shaping their future (Alban-Metcalf and Alimo Metcalfe, 2003, 2001). Leadership in this conceptual frame is extolled as an *authority bestowed on a manager by his or her followers* (Alimo-Metcalf, 1998, 2001). It is suggested here that the *transformational* conception of leadership - in which there is a shift away from the use of formal authority, to achieve goals, towards influencing behaviour that emphasises involvement, inspiration, logical persuasion, and *winning the support of followers* - is closely aligned with what Huxham and Vangen (2005 p215) term *Doing Leadership*. More specifically, it is argued that this alignment centres upon what Huxham and Vangen identified as four closely related leadership activities that contribute to a supportive or facilitative role: *embracing, empowering, involving and mobilising* (Huxham and Vangen, 2003 p66).

As one interviewee from the college and university joint venture saw it, this facilitative role often demands an acknowledgement that leaders with legitimate authority, those with position power, are not always best placed to lead in the collaborative domain. What is required is the willingness to take the risk of ceding

the role of *doing leadership* (Huxham and Vangen, 2005) to others according to their strengths and capabilities:

“ ... I was always conscious of a kind of directing intelligence but from the back seat as it were ... you know, the general directing his troops while keeping himself well out of the way ...he felt that was his role not to be the front line ... ” DK/BC/HWU/1

Thus participants in inter-organisational collaborations may leverage power to influence others indirectly. This suggests the need to encourage others to fill a leadership gap, fulfil a leadership role and by *doing leadership* in ways which emphasise involvement, empowerment and a distributed form of leadership.

As Gill's (2006) integrative, holistic model of leadership suggests: effective leaders empower people to be *able* to do what needs to be done, they influence, motivate and inspire people to *want* to do what needs to be done. This involves building a genuine dialogue and *over time developing different attitudes towards risk*.

1.2.2 *Building relationships and reciprocity by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs*

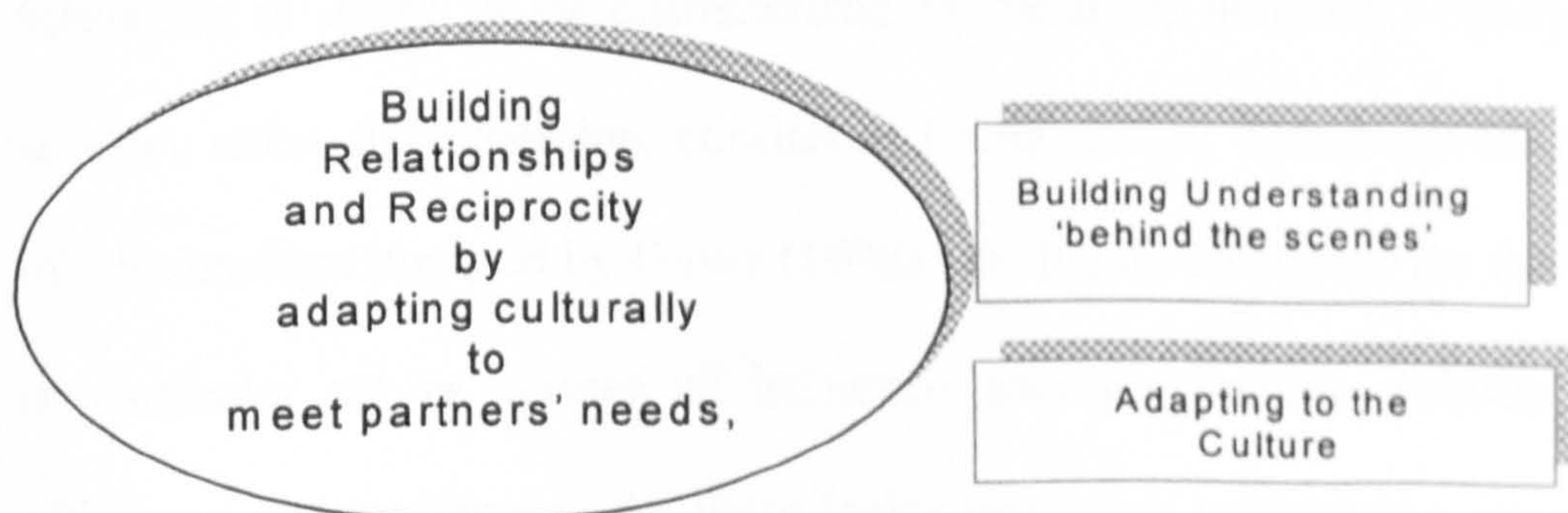


Figure 7.5: *Building relationships and reciprocity by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs*

The importance of building strong relationships and a sense of reciprocity between partners are conditions that are often linked in relation to each other in the literature (Oliver, 1990; Thorelli, 1986; Trist, 1983; Webb, 1991; Huxham and Vangen, 2005) and were also raised constantly as matters of concern to those interviewed in the later stages of empirical engagement. Oliver (1990) suggests that reciprocity is a critical contingency of relationship formation in inter-organisational collaboration. This is because reciprocity between participants predisposes attitudes and behaviours towards a form of influence that is characterised by softer approaches, ones which emphasise alignment and mutual gain:

“Motives of reciprocity emphasise cooperation, collaboration and co-ordination among organisations rather than domination, power and control. According to this perspective IORs occur for the purpose of pursuing common or mutually beneficial goals or interests.” Oliver (1990 p244)

Oliver suggests that two main assumptions underlie approaches to collaboration based on reciprocity. Resource scarcity is likely to induce co-operation rather than competition, and even more importantly to this research, the process of linkage formation is likely to be characterised by balance, harmony, equity and mutual support, rather than coercion, conflict and domination. Other critical contingencies of relationships explored by Oliver (1990) which have relevance for this research and in particular act as drivers of influence attempts include stability, asymmetry, efficiency and legitimacy. Of these legitimacy often represents a strong motive for the formation of relationships. This proved to be important to the motives behind the

university and college joint venture. The college's overtly expressed desire to enhance its reputation through association with the university is an example of this:

"...it enhances the respect that people hold for us as an organisation and I have no qualms about using (the university) to help us achieve that."

DKIBC/HWU

This concurs with Fiol's (2001 p237) assumption that outsiders will tend to construct reputation of group members based on the reputation perception of the group. In order to obtain benefits associated with the legitimacy of the university's profile participants from the college had to make efforts to *adapt to the culture* of the university. This involved efforts to *build understanding behind the scenes*.

Similarly, in the FEDD case a number of significant cultural adjustments were made by individuals in the effort to build relationships and reciprocity. This involved accepting some of the cultural conditions of partner organisations. These were somewhat reminiscent of what Hofstede (1985) termed *power distance* and *uncertainty avoidance*. The process of cultural adaptation identified by Hofstede (1985) appears to be an important aspect for individuals to consider in building relationships and reciprocity. Hofstede (1985) posits that if the fit between the individual's value set and the organisation's values is poor and they cannot integrate themselves into the culture ultimately they will separate themselves from the organisation.

Writers such as Oliver (1990), Trist (1983) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) appear to emphasise the same point when they argue that networks are social, relational

structures that are not characterised by hierarchy. Rather they are made up of individuals from many different cultural contexts and thus do not naturally lend themselves to cultural paradigms.

Writers such as Deal and Kennedy (1988) and Trice and Beyer (1991) argue that the leadership skills required to change or create new cultures are likely to be different from those that maintain organisation culture. More specifically, Trist (1983) suggests that those who create network based social systems need to be capable of forging and extending relational ties with others across boundaries. These are capabilities that involve aligning with others by *building understanding behind the scenes and being prepared to adapt to the culture* of the partner organisation. Indeed Trist (1982 p280) argues that networks are initiated by proactive individuals who *create new role spaces* around themselves. These individuals tend to locate and resonate with other individuals whose *appreciations* are moving in the same direction as theirs. This suggests that those who are capable of moving across and adapting to new cultural spaces in an inter-organisational setting need to be well equipped to sense, appreciate and work with cultural diversity.

The process of becoming attuned to organisation culture is strongly promoted by Johnson and Scholes (1993) who promote the idea of exploring the core of an organisation's culture as a paradigm consisting of three layers: values, beliefs and assumptions. These layers can be understood by building an understanding of the organisation's core culture. This can be perceived by getting behind the scenes and examining culture through the lenses of: the stories people tell; the routines and rituals that are enacted; the organisation's outward symbols; its structure; its control

systems and power structures. Profound appreciation of different organisation cultures emerges through the process of undertaking this analysis. From appreciation stems greater sensitivity and the capability to adapt to new cultural settings.

This image of the culturally aware, appreciative and reciprocal networker resonates with the idea of incrementally constructing, maintaining and repairing a web of relations and of building a reputation for influencing others. As Ring and Van de Ven (1994) argue, from a developmental perspective, co-operative IORs are socially contrived mechanisms for collective action, which are continually shaped and restructured by actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved.

The network or *web of influence* as a conceptual social space and structure for relationships building was viewed, in the empirical engagement, as essential to the process of building influence through iterative, reciprocal acts. This is reminiscent of the virtuous face of power which Foucault conceptualises as: a productive network, which is capable of crossing boundaries, producing forms of knowledge and discourse which run through the fabric of society (in: Rabinow, 1991).

Summary – Key Processes for building relationships and reciprocity

The influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity appear to be:

- ❖ building relationships and reciprocity by adjusting behaviour
- ❖ building relationships and reciprocity by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs

The most important resources for influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity in collaborations appear to be: *leadership style, web of influence and temporal and financial resources.*

DIMENSION 3: BASES OF INFLUENCE – A TENSION BETWEEN INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS CHARACTERISED BY RATIONALITY AND BY EMOTIVE BEHAVIOUR

The third main dimension of the framework suggests that influence attempts may be characterised by rationality at one end of the behavioural spectrum or by emotive behaviour at the other end of the spectrum and a tension exists between these two extremes. This spectrum of behavioural possibilities provides a backdrop against which influence processes that build credibility, relationships and reciprocity are enacted.

The idea that influence behaviour may be characterised on a continuum between these potential extremes struck a resounding chord in the final stages of empirical engagement. It was also confirmed as an area of concern in the extant literature (Yukl, 2002; Pfeffer, 1994; Gill, 2006; Trice and Beyer, 1991; Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Goleman, 1998). For example, Pfeffer (1994) points to this dichotomy thus:

“Some interpersonal influence strategies rely on the emotional as well as the cognitive aspect of social life to affect behaviour.” Pfeffer (1994 p221)

In this vein Pfeffer (1994) suggests that there are three important aspects to the use of emotions to leverage interpersonal influence. Firstly, he posits that emotions that are displayed to others can be managed. Secondly, the behaviour of others is, to a degree, contingent upon the emotions we display. Consequently expressed emotions

can be effective in influencing others. Finally, people do not have equal levels of ability to influence others through the tactical use of emotions, but the skill can be learned or acquired.

A number of writers, for example Yukl (2002) and Keys and Case (1990), draw some tentative conclusions from a range of studies about the relative effectiveness of different influence tactics, which suggests a combination of rational and more emotive approaches. Their conclusions suggest that the most effective tactics for influencing target commitment to carry out a request or to support a proposal are: rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration and inspirational appeals. The particularly effective nature of a strong form of rational persuasion, such as that supported by a detailed proposal or documentation, is highlighted.

An approach to influencing others which is based on rationality and communicated with emotion is integral to Gill's (2006 p91) integrative, holistic model of leadership which holds that:

"Effective leaders develop, get commitment to and ensure the implementation of rational strategies that enable people to pursue the vision and mission that reflect the values they share." Gill (2006 p91)

Goleman (1998 p169) stresses that it is critical to be able to sense when logical arguments are falling apart and when appeals that are more emotional may add impact. This suggests that as well as being aware of the impact that a chosen

approach may have it also may be important to be able to shift between the two opposite ends of the spectrum.

There are many theoretical frameworks in the extant literature which explore the impact that the influencing behaviour of the agent of influence has upon the target. These mostly derive from the literature on leadership (Kotter, 1985; Yukl, 2002; Pfeffer, 1994). The frameworks that appear to be most relevant to the inter-organisational domain are those that approach influencing behaviour from a processual perspective (Yukl, 2002; Trice and Beyer, 2001; Farmer et al, 1997; Ferris, 1991; Franklin, 1975; Somech and Drach Zavany, 2002). As Trice and Beyer (2001) point out, leadership involves a process, enacted in certain situations, in which some individuals are active in influencing others. They see leadership as a social process the essential components of which are: leaders, followers and situations.

Practice related developments in what is known as *organisation development* - often described as a planned organisation wide programme to support and enable change efforts (Schein, 1988) - promote the idea of processes in which participants jointly diagnose problems and generate solutions. This approach has become known as *process consultation*. Accepting that leadership in any context involves influencing goals, mission, and culture - developing skills of joint diagnosis and problem solving will enable the leader to better understand how to *intervene facilitatively* to influence people to accept change, in the context of the role responsibilities. Becoming aware of one's own assumptions is crucial. The kinds of assumptions that the leader holds about people will determine to a large extent *how* he will attempt to influence them

and the balance of rational and emotive behaviours that are used (Schein, 1987; 1988).

Most writers acknowledge that a combination of rational and non rational approaches is used to influence others to achieve organisational goals (Ansari and Kapoor, 1987; Somech and Drach Zavany, 2002; Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Schein, 1988). The use of these is predicated by a wide range of variables such as leadership style, contextual factors such as organisational culture and national culture, the self concept, personal qualities and predisposition of the agent (Roa and Hashimoto, 1997).

Trice and Beyer (2001) point out that leaders who seek to change organisation cultures must demonstrate exceptional personal qualities and skills, often associated with charismatic or transformational leadership (Bass et al, 1994; Tichy and Devanna, 1990; Bennis and Nanus, 2003; Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998) including: effective role modelling, high levels of performance, articulating ideological goals, communicating high expectations, expressing confidence in followers and motivational behaviours.

Many writers suggest that at least some charismatic behaviours are required by leaders who seek to change cultures (Trice and Beyer, 2001; Gill, 2006; Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998). For example Trice and Beyer (2001 p159) suggest that: certain qualities are needed to arouse positive emotions in followers. Since culture involves emotionally charged ideas it therefore makes sense that

cultural leaders should have some basis for emotional appeal. Without such appeal, they argue, leaders are unlikely to be able to influence followers at a cultural level.

Other writers such as Gill (2006) locate the concept of spirituality at the centre of the process of influencing others through leadership. According to Gill spirituality is thought to be more powerful than charisma alone, as it is based on the higher motivations associated with transformational leadership.

“The concept of spirituality, to do with meaning, purpose and value in what we do, is key to intrinsic motivation and to leadership. Inspiration comes from leadership that provides meaning, purpose and value.” Gill (2006 p87)

Thus the extant literature appears to acknowledge the dilemma that leaders are faced with in selecting approaches to influencing others and appears to confirm that a tension exists between the use of rational and emotive behaviours.

Summary

It is suggested here that influencing processes normally consist of influence behaviours, enacted through a combination of approaches, behaviours and the use of resources which are likely to vary according to the situation. The behaviours used may be characterised at one end of the spectrum by rationality or at the other by emotive behaviours. Leaders may use a structured, considered approach to jointly diagnose and generate solutions to collaborative issues to ensure that the right balance is struck between the use of rational and emotive influencing behaviours. Rational approaches include the development of detailed written proposals, business

cases, strategies and the use of structured consultation processes aimed at: jointly diagnosing problems and solutions; sharing information; discussing alternatives; aligning expectations and jointly establishing goals. Approaches using emotive behaviour often involve: inspirational appeals; the articulation of ideological goals and values; and the use of motivational techniques to arouse positive emotions and to evoke a sense of spirituality or higher level of meaning.

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF COLLABORATIONS

The nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations appears to be strongly affected by particular conditions that characterise the collaborative domain:

- ❖ interdependence
- ❖ asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power
- ❖ temporal implications
- ❖ cultural differences

Throughout the later stages of the empirical engagement, interview respondents consistently spoke of the challenges they face in their efforts to collaborate with partners. The perceived challenges were often consistent with issues that are highlighted in the literature on inter-organisational collaboration as being particular to collaborative contexts. It appears that these issues have implications for the way in which influence is exercised by participants. As Schein (1988 p93) argues:

“No easy generalisations can be made about influence processes, except that they are highly contingent on the particulars of the situation.”

Schein (1988 p93)

In particular respondents were concerned with: *interdependence; asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power and temporal implications*. Taking these issues in turn, in the following section the discussion centres upon the apparent links between how they are conceptualised in the literature and the significance they appeared to have for respondents, according to the data gathered and analysed in the later stages of the empirical engagement.

4.1 *Interdependence as a driving force behind the need to enact influence within collaborative settings*

Interdependence is a central and pervasive theme in the literature on inter-agency collaboration (Pettigrew, 2000, 2003; Thorelli, 1986; Gray, 1985; Trist, 1983; Webb, 1991) and one that is closely linked to motives for exercising influence. Indeed it is often cited as a main reason for engaging in collaboration, as Gray (1985) argues, collaboration may be the only feasible response at certain levels of interdependence.

Interdependence as a driver of influencing behaviour also features increasingly in the literature that is concerned generally with leadership and management within organisations (Pfeffer, 1994; Kotter, 1985) as Pfeffer (1994 p49) states:

“To be successful in getting things done in organisations, it is critical that you be able to diagnose the relative power of the various participants and comprehend the patterns of interdependence.” Pfeffer (1994 p49)

Given the particularly high levels of interdependence associated with inter-organisational collaborations in the contemporary world environment, a factor highlighted by writers such as: Pettigrew (2000, 2003), Trist (1983) and Thorelli

(1986), - the ability to diagnose and chart the dependencies of the various partners and to harness this knowledge as a basis for influence - appears to be particularly important (Kotter, 1985). This is one of the capabilities associated with *boundary spanners* or *reticulists* (Williams, 2002; Trist, 1983; Powell, 1998), terms which have been discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. These terms are used to describe individuals who are particularly competent in harnessing interdependence as a driver of collaborative effort. As Trist (1983) argues, *boundary spanners* learn the art of transcending traditional boundaries between organisations.

Writers such as Kotter (1985) and Pfeffer (1994) also recognise the implications of interdependence on managerial action. They argue that when a high degree of interdependence exists, it is rarely possible for partners to take unilateral action. For decisions of any consequence, there is likely to be a need to consider those who will be in a position to retard, block or sabotage action because they have the potential to influence the situation (Kotter 1985).

Thorelli (1986) suggests that the network is a special type of system in which interdependencies change over time. This perspective highlights the need for participants to demonstrate high levels of current knowledge, engagement, awareness and understanding. The resulting implications include the range of skills, capabilities and behaviours that leaders in the inter-organisational domain need to demonstrate (Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Williams, 2002). Kotter's (1985 p40) description of the demands of leadership in today's politically complex business environment suggests that the complexity and interdependence associated with the inter-organisational

domain makes it a valuable training ground for future leaders who seek to build their influence. Kotter suggests that success means knowing what sources of power each group has in order to pursue its own interests and to what extent people are prepared to use that power. It also means that individuals need the power associated with credible relationships. Finally he argues the greater the dependence between the individuals, the more important the relationship.

4.2 Asymmetrical Relationships and Perceptions of Power

A number of writers argue that patterns of power relations, in both inter-organisational and intra-organisational settings, are often determined in very subtle ways for example: Webb (1991), Huxham and Vangen (2005), Kotter (1985), Pfeffer (1994), Oliver (1990), Fiol (2001). The approach taken to influencing others therefore should be sensitive to the micro politics of power relationships. As Webb (1991) states it is a mistake to treat all transactions between two organisations as equally important to both. This was a central theme in the case of the joint venture between the college and the university. In this case an early assumption made by one partner, about the relative importance of the joint venture project to both parties, was at the root of a fundamental misunderstanding between participants in the early stages. As one interviewee put it:

"..in the face of it you would expect the university to have much greater influence than it perhaps was having ... despite the fact that they were much bigger, bigger resourced, bigger infrastructure...." ADHIBC/HWU

Many writers on leadership and management (Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Yukl, 2002) argue that the greater the diversity and complexity, the more difficult it is to

chart a course of action. Differences in objectives, priorities, values and outlook will lead people to different conclusions about what is important. Having knowledge of the distribution of power is in itself an important advantage; those who have more accurate information about the nature of the network of relations are better equipped to influence behaviour and outcomes (Pfeffer, 1994; Kotter, 1985).

Differences in size, status and resource power are also framed as critical issues in the literature on collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Webb, 1991; Oliver, 1990; Everett and Jamal, 2004; Waddock and Post, 1995). As Huxham and Vangen (2005) point out, diversity brings both reasons to collaborate and reasons why collaboration is difficult, such as perceived differences in the power to influence outcomes:

“Common wisdom is that ‘the power is in the purse strings’, which suggests that those who do not have control of the financial resource are automatically deprived of power.....Issues concerned with control of the purse strings are significant but there are many other points at which power is, in practice, enacted in collaborative settings.”

Huxham and Vangen (2005 p64-66)

Writers such as Kotter (1985) and Lukes (2005) make a distinction between *direct and indirect influence*. Lukes (2005) explains this potential to exercise influence indirectly as the *mobilisation of bias*. This means harnessing a predominant set of values, assumptions and procedures or *rules of the game* that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons or groups at the expense of others. These underlying forces can lubricate the power of *non decision making* as a

response to perceived or potential conflicts of interest. Lukes (2005) also suggests that leaders shape preferences, to the extent that conflict is prevented from arising, through deliberate attempts to keep issues *out* of the decision making arena. Equally this can be achieved by taking steps to ensure that people do not have grievances, through a process of interventions that:

“shape their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things” Lukes (2005 p21)

This implies that individuals can indirectly influence the collaborative process by shaping perceptions and expectations, thus ensuring that certain issues do not arise or are not perceived to be important. Individuals may indirectly influence the process of collaboration by: controlling which issues are subject to decision making processes and which are not. Thus they may condition the expectations of others by constraining the range of options that are the subject of decision making processes or conversely by ensuring that certain issues receive attention. For example, in the university and college joint venture certain individuals, despite the fact that they had relatively low levels of position power or formal authority, exercised personal influence to ensure that the issue of collaboration remained both on the institutional agenda and central to colleagues' expectations.

4.3 Temporal Implications

Of the many reasons cited by writers in the field as to why collaboration is both difficult and problematic and why exercising influence is particularly complex, is that objectives that are tackled in collaborative settings take longer to accomplish, for

example: Trist (1983), Thorelli (1986) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994). Trist (1983 p275) acknowledge this constraint:

"Can we improve the work of appreciation (of emergent trends and issues; developing a shared image of a desirable future) ...can we learn to speed it up?" Trist (1983 p275)

Thorelli (1986 p41) concurs stating that it takes time to establish trust, *manifested by mutual feelings of belongingness and interdependence* between participants. He adds that:

"building networks involves expenditure of money and executive talent over many periods of time." Thorelli (1986 p41)

Similarly, Ring and Van de Ven (1994 p91) place considerable emphasis on the time implications of influencing partners within a collaborative context focusing on the importance of understanding how collaborative relationships *unfold over time*.

This contextual feature of collaborations was experienced widely by participants in the research settings and was evidenced by the fact that in the colleges merger case where adequate time and a realistic time frame had been dedicated to the process of collaboration the merger progressed successfully. By contrast one of the main reasons for the early difficulties encountered by the college in the joint venture with the university was that not enough time had been dedicated to building a genuine dialogue.

4.4 Cultural Differences

A number of writers (Deal and Kennedy, 1988; Trice and Beyer, 2001; Hofstede, 1985; Johnson and Scholes, 1993; Judge and Ryman, 2001; Schein, 1996) argue that

any failure to understand and appreciate cultural differences in organisations has the potential to undermine progress. Schein argues that new forms of organising demand advances in learning which develop deeper insight into organisation culture. The new forms of knowledge and understanding include: how to collaborate; how to become more trusting and open in communications; how to deal with dependency in the new kinds of fluid relationships; how to wield personal as opposed to positional power and how to design organisations with fluid boundaries. He also argues that members of a culture are often not fully aware of their own culture until they encounter a different one.

This is an issue of particular importance in collaborative settings where each participant is likely to be conditioned by a distinctive organisation culture. Judge and Ryman (2001) suggest that the complicated nature of collaborations often requires executives to accept that they may need to be prepared to lose battles in order to win wars, even though they may come from a culture in which winning is the only acceptable outcome.

Williams (2002) suggests that competence in working in cross boundary roles involves being able to work across organisational cultures and emphasises the skills of brokerage and facilitation as key to this capability. Other writers such as: Waddock and Post (1995) and Gray (1985) emphasise the importance of building a shared vision, articulating shared values and creating a sense of common purpose to manage the complexity introduced by cultural differences between participants.

This approach was adopted from the outset of the collaboration in the colleges' merger case. In one of the early interviews undertaken in this case a high level of awareness was articulated as the importance of the impact that differences in culture would inevitably have upon the participants and the collaborative process:

"We got people moving in despite all the problems and anomalies, for example there were two different cultures operating under one roof and two systems and they had to sort it out....." JMcI G/F

In both the colleges merger case and the FEED case those who had responsibility for nurturing the collaboration towards and through merger became particularly adept at detecting and managing cultural differences among participants.

Summary

From the foregoing analysis, it is suggested that the conditions typically found in the inter-organisational domain, characterised by interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences are likely to have implications for the enactment of influence. In the case of asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, it is suggested that these conditions may facilitate the exercise of influence between participants. This is because the participants often recognise both the need to collaborate to achieve certain objectives and the need to enact influence attempts in order to collaborate successfully. Once these primary level needs have been recognised partners are then more likely to draw upon certain resources, to use processes to enact influence and to manage the temporal implications and cultural differences involved. It seems that successful approaches to enacting influence are typically associated with

circumstances that combine: high levels of interdependence, a strong network of relations, sound knowledge of participants, awareness of asymmetrical relations and perceptions of power, the potential to dedicate adequate time to the process of collaboration and the ability to manage the complexity associated with cultural differences among participants.

REVIEW

The final analysis of data reported in chapter 6 of this thesis provided the basis upon which to review the conceptual framework in the light of extant literature. The review process provided the scope to advance the development of the conceptual framework. The resulting developments are as follows:

The influence processes that help to build credibility in collaboration may be summarised in two categories that combine, merge and synthesise the analysis that resulted from both the empirical engagement and the engagement with the literature:

- ❖ Influence processes that build credibility by proxy, through relationships with other credible individuals and through one's own reputation – *through perception*
- ❖ Influence processes that build credibility through credibility enhancing actions such as establishing structure and controls, establishing trust and managing confidence – *through action*

The resources that seem particularly relevant to influence processes that build credibility in collaboration appear to be: *constructed rationality, webs of influence, leadership style and reputation.*

Similarly, the influence processes that appear to build relationships and reciprocity may be summarised in two categories that merge, synthesise and combine the analysis that resulted from the empirical engagement and the engagement with the extant literature, as follows:

- ❖ Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity through assessing attitudes towards risk and through building a genuine dialogue - *by adjusting behaviour*
- ❖ Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity through building understanding behind the scenes and through adapting to the culture - *by adapting culturally to meet partner's needs*

The resources that seem to be particularly relevant to influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity in collaborations appear to be: *webs of influence, leadership style and temporal and financial resources.*

Most influencing strategies appear to combine influence behaviours that may be characterised by either rationality or by emotive behaviours. Leaders may use structured processes to jointly generate solutions to collaborative issues to ensure that the right balance is struck between the use of rational and emotive behaviours.

Characteristics of collaboration such as interdependence and asymmetrical relationships typically act as drivers that give rise to influencing behaviours among participants, while other characteristics such as temporal implications and cultural differences appear to affect the way influence is exercised by participants.

These points gave rise to the final changes made to the conceptual framework elaborated and discussed in chapter 6 (see 6.2), to further integrate and align the outcomes of the empirical research with the review of literature. These changes are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The foregoing analysis suggests that *influence processes that build credibility and those that build reciprocity and relationships* can be simplified and expressed in four principal categories. These may be used to combine the concepts discussed in chapter 6 relating to dimension 1 of the framework as shown below:

- *Influence processes that build credibility - through perception*
- *Influence processes build credibility - through action.*

These two categories appear to combine the concepts associated with the first component of dimension 1 of the framework – influence processes that build credibility in collaboration, as discussed in chapter 6: building credibility by proxy, evidencing reputation, establishing structure and controls, establishing trust, managing confidence.

Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity in collaboration are similarly expressed in two categories which combine the concepts discussed in chapter 6, as follows:

- *Influence processes that build reciprocity and relationships by adjusting behaviour*

- *Influence processes that build reciprocity and relationships by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs*

These two categories appear to combine the concepts associated with the second component of dimension 1 of the framework as elucidated in chapter 6: attitudes to risk, building a genuine dialogue, building understanding behind the scenes, adapting to the culture.

It also seems that influence processes that build credibility, reciprocity and relationships should be more overtly inter-connected in the diagram to demonstrate the highly inter-linked and inter-related nature of these influence processes with the associated resources and activities for influence, situated at the centre of the framework. For this reason the resources and activities for influence represented in dimension 2 of the framework have been explored, in this chapter, as aspects of influence which are integral to the enactment of the influence processes and not independently.

Dimension 3 of the framework - Bases of Influence - conceptualises the tension between influencing behaviours characterised by rational behaviour or those characterised by emotive behaviour, provides a basis for understanding *the way in* which influence behaviour is enacted.

Contextual features of collaborations represented by dimension 4 of the framework, specifically *interdependence; asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power; temporal implications; and cultural differences* conceptualise the particular

characteristics of collaboration, which may affect the way in which influence is exercised by participants.

The developments described above are reflected in the refined conceptual framework set out below. The graphics have been adjusted to emphasise the inter-connected and fluid nature of all four main dimensions and associated components of the framework. The arrows indicate the dynamic, variable and context dependent nature of influence enacted by participants in the context of inter-organisational collaboration. Finally, all dimensions and components of the framework are shown as overlapping, integrated and cyclical to suggest the complex and continuous nature of the processes underlying the enactment of influence in inter-organisational collaboration.

The refined four dimensional conceptual framework

The refined framework therefore consists of the following four dimensions:

Dimension 1

Influences processes that build credibility in collaborations – *through perception and through action.*

Influence processes that build relationships and reciprocity in collaborations – *by adjusting behaviour and by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs.*

Dimension 2

Resources and associated activities for building influence in collaborations

Dimension 3

A continuum representing the tension between influence attempts characterised by rational behaviour and those characterised by emotive behaviour

Dimension 4

Particular contextual features of collaborations that affect the degree to which influence is likely to be enacted by participants: *interdependence and asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences*.

These dimensions are set out in the final conceptual framework in figure 7.6 below:

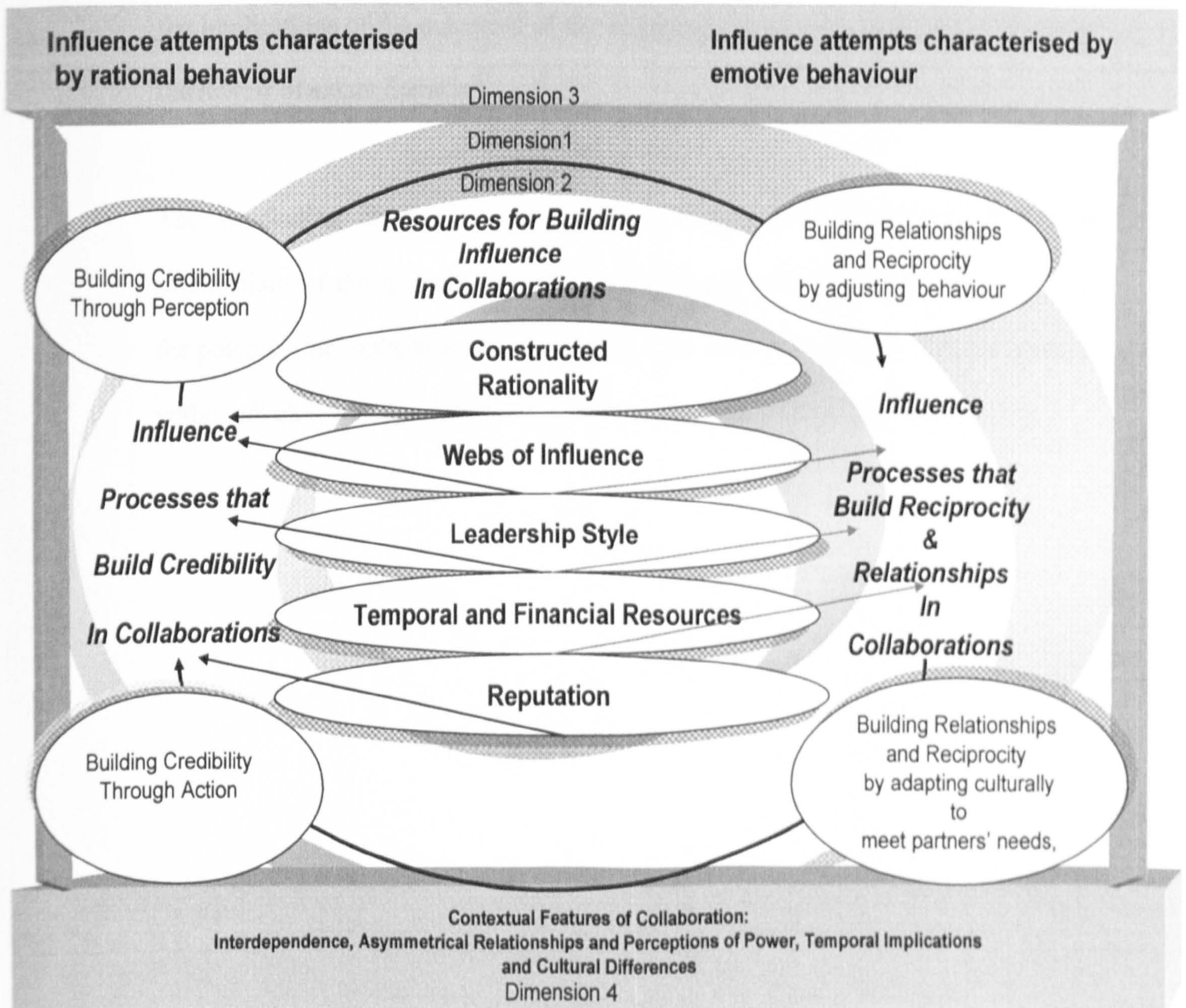


Figure 7.6: A four dimensional framework of the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaborations

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter was concerned with the final stage of the process of the elaboration and refinement of the conceptual framework, in the light of the extant literature. A number of insights have emerged from this process. These have potential implications for the way in which practitioners enact influence in collaborative settings. These insights gave rise to the refinement to the conceptual framework. It is suggested here that the final adaptations made to the conceptual framework align the implications of the outcomes of the empirical engagement with the outcomes of the review of extant literature.

The concluding chapter of this thesis is dedicated to identifying: the main implications of the research in terms of both theory and practice, its shortcomings, the potential for application of the conceptual framework beyond the limited contexts within which it was developed and the potential future directions of the research.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the research by summarising the main implications which have arisen in terms of theory, practice and the possibilities it opens out for future research. Central to this final chapter is a discussion of the main areas of contribution that the research has sought to make. Importantly the chapter also identifies the main limitations of the research. The final section of the chapter highlights a number of important and unresolved issues and suggests how these could form a future research agenda. To draw the research to a close, the final section of the chapter sets out the personal impact that the research has had. Specifically this final chapter concludes the thesis by providing a review of:

- ❖ The main implications of the research
- ❖ Areas of potential contribution
- ❖ The limitations of the research
- ❖ The potential for application of the conceptual framework beyond the specific contexts within which the research was conducted
- ❖ Potential future directions for this area of research

DISCUSSION - THE MAIN IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR THEORY

Through the discussion and analysis presented in the preceding chapters it is acknowledged that the field of inter-agency collaboration is widely regarded, by both practitioners and writers, as complex and problematic for participants. For all its complexity and challenges, collaboration also offers the potential of reward and advantage for those who make concerted efforts to appreciate its special nature and develop strategies for managing the complexity it entails (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Among other adjustments, the effort to collaborate involves being willing and

prepared to understand the critical relationships and interdependencies upon which successful collaboration depends, adapt behaviours and attitudes to the social and political realities of the collaborative context and to approach the challenge of influencing others with sensitivity and political astuteness.

Contribution

By addressing the acknowledged scarcity of research that treats influence as a focal concern within inter-agency collaboration, this research seeks to make a contribution to the field in a number of ways.

The central contribution of this thesis is the conceptual framework. It is suggested that the conceptual model may help to develop understanding of influence as an issue of focal concern in any organisational setting but in particular it is intended to deepen understanding of the nature of influence exercised by participants in the context of inter-organisational collaboration, through the following four key dimensions:

- **Influence Processes that Build Credibility, Relationships and Reciprocity**
- **Resources for Building Influence in Collaborations**
- **Bases of Influence** - a tension between approaches to influence based on rationality and those based on emotive behaviour.
- **Contextual Features of Collaboration:** interdependence, asymmetrical relationships, temporal implications and cultural differences, which affect the way that influence is exercised in the collaborative domain.

The Theory of Collaborative Advantage

In the light of its firm grounding in the context of collaboration and its resonance with matters of concern to those involved in collaboration, the conceptual framework

central to this research is offered as an extension of *the theory of collaborative advantage* (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). As discussed in chapters 1 and 4 of this thesis, this is an extensive body of theory, centring on a thematic approach to exploring and conceptualising the issues which are of profound concern to practitioners, including those that cause anxiety and difficulty and those that deliver rewards. The themes include concerns such as: *membership structures, common aims, power, trust, leadership, learning, culture and identity* among many others. These strands of theory are not intended for prescriptive use but to aid reflexivity, particularly in situations which present dilemmas or involve tensions between competing concerns or interests.

A strand of the Theory of Collaborative Advantage with which this research appears to be particularly compatible, is the theme of power. This issue of concern to participants within collaborations was discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis in particular in relation to the work of Huxham and Beech (2003) conceptualising the notion of *points of power*. To identify the points at which power can be exerted, Huxham and Beech (2003) conceptualise *the power infrastructure of collaborations*, providing a contextual frame within which to consider the types of issues that participants, within collaboration, may seek to influence. This frame establishes a basis upon which to explore whether influence is typically enacted in relation to the opportunities inherent within what Huxham and Beech term "*the power infrastructure of a collaboration*". This conceptualisation provides insights into collaboration practice that highlight *where* there is potential to influence in the collaborative process and *what* participants may seek to influence. Given that the research documented in this thesis is upon *how* participants seek to influence each

other within collaborations, there appears to be scope for positioning the theoretical output of this thesis as closely overlapping with the theme of power within the Theory of Collaborative Advantage.

The framework that forms the central contribution of this research is therefore offered as the basis of a new theme to add to those that have already been developed as constituent parts of the Theory of Collaborative Advantage. It is both differentiated from and consistent with the established themes in content and in form. The conceptual framework generated by this research is differentiated from the existing themes within the Theory of Collaborative Advantage because of its focus on influence as the phenomenon of interest within the context of collaboration.

It is consistent with the themes that are established within the Theory of Collaborative Advantage in a number of ways. Firstly, in common with the themes conceptualised by Huxham and Vangen, it offers a rich picture of a theme of interest within the context of collaboration. Secondly it avoids the potential for over simplification by emphasising the multifaceted, complex nature of the context of collaboration. Thirdly the framework demonstrates the conceptual inter-linkages and overlaps integral to the theoretical portrayal of the issues related to the nature of influence in collaborative settings. Fourthly although action research was not used as the main method throughout the research, the conduct of the research process was very close to practice and generated a similar form of rich data. Finally, as I will demonstrate in the next section, the data produced what is termed by Huxham and Beech (2003) *handles for reflective practice* to aid intended use by practitioners.

The conceptual framework offered through this research may therefore be positioned as belonging to the constellation of themes which were identified by Huxham and Vangen as being of *genuine concern* to practitioners and as issues that therefore merit in-depth consideration and understanding.

Theories of Influence

While it is not the main purpose of this research to make a contribution to the literature on organisational influence the research has provided some insights which may be of interest to the field.

The research has generated a perspective on the term influence specifically for the purpose of exploring the nature of influence exercised by participants in inter-agency collaboration as follows:

The behaviours and approaches that are adopted by an individual intentionally for the purposes of conditioning the way others react or respond to events, acts, proposals or circumstances.

This draws upon and synthesises the rich but confusing array of definitions in the extant body of literature reviewed. In particular this perspective was shaped by a synthesis of definitions drawn from the work of authors such as: Pfeffer (1994), Mowday (1978), Kotter (1985), Keys and Case (1990), Wrong (1979), Tedeschi et al (1972), Pondy (1988) and Bacharach and Lawler (1980), and may provide a basis for practitioners to develop their understanding of influence enacted by participants in inter-agency collaborations.

The process of engagement with extant literature has revealed a field which is both complex and difficult to navigate. In particular it lacks coherence in the use of terms which are important to the development of an understanding of the nature of influence in inter-agency collaborations. An illustration of this complexity is revealed in the discussions of influence provided by authors such as, Pfeffer (1994), Mowday (1978), Kotter (1985), Keys and Case (1990), Wrong (1979) and Bacharach and Lawler (1980) who highlight the close, complex and intricate relationship between influence, power and organisational politics.

Within the landscape of extant literature this research targets the interface between managerial and leadership theory which focuses specifically on influence and literature which is concerned with the concepts of leadership, influence and power in inter-organisational domains. Influence is treated as a subordinate concern in studies of organisational collaboration that focus on leadership or power (Williams, 2002; Feyerherm, 1994; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Pearce, 2000; Hardy et al, 1998, 2005). However these studies do not treat the nature of participant influence, in the context of collaboration, as a focal concern. While there are some important existing frameworks that are focused on the concept of influence from a managerial or leadership perspective (Keys and Case, 1990; Mowday, 1978; Yukl 2002; Kipnis et al, 1980; Pfeffer, 1994; Kotter, 1985; Farmer et al, 1999, 1997), these frameworks do not examine the complex and multifaceted nature of influence exercised by participants in the context of inter-organisational collaboration. The contribution that the framework central to this research therefore makes to the field of literature on influence is to address this gap by providing a rich theoretical framework that is of

particular relevance to issues of influence in collaborative contexts but may also be of relevance to issues of influence in other contexts.

DISCUSSION - THE MAIN IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR PRACTICE

In terms of its implications for practice, the framework that has resulted from the research is distinctive in nature because of its potential to aid practitioners in a practical way to explore the nature of influence enacted by participants specifically within a collaborative context. It is also intended to provide a structured approach to navigating the complex field of relevant extant literature. The framework that results from this research draws upon extant theory in an effort to offer insights to practitioners as to the nature and importance of key concepts relating to the enactment of influence between participants in inter-organisational collaborations.

In particular this research has been influenced by the practice oriented approach developed by Huxham and Vangen (2005) in the form of the Theory of Collaborative Advantage which *provides a basis for participants to consider how to manage in order to collaborate* rather than prescribing what to do in specific situations (Huxham and Vangen, 2005 p13). The conceptualisations developed by Huxham and Vangen as the centre piece of the theory are offered in the spirit of *handles for reflective practice* (Huxham and Beech, 2003p 88). This approach is based on the argument that the concepts central to the theory provide *handles* for deciding on action in a situation of complexity by helping the practitioner to stand back from the situation and to engage in reflective learning.

Similarly, the framework offered as the centre piece of this thesis seeks to reflect the ambiguities and complexities that practitioners face while providing some *handles* which help them to appreciate and work with the complexity. Additionally the research documented in this thesis has generated conceptualisations which have the potential to provide practitioners with *handles for reflective practice* (Huxham and Beech, 2003).

Handles for Reflective Practice

The key terms assigned to the main dimensions and components of the framework set out in this section are intended for use by practitioners as *handles* to explore the nature of influence enacted by participants in collaborative contexts.

Specifically, dimension 1 of the framework highlights the particular importance of influence processes that build *credibility, relationships* and *reciprocity* in collaborations. It also identifies constituent elements of these processes in the context of collaboration. These have been conceptualised, in chapter 7 of this research in a *practice oriented* way, in four main categories. These categories may be used as *handles for reflective practice* to enable the practitioner to focus on and explore *influence processes that: build credibility - through perception; build credibility - through action; build reciprocity and relationships - by adjusting behaviour; build reciprocity and relationships - by adapting culturally to meet partners' needs.*

Dimension 2 of the conceptual framework focuses on suggesting how practitioners may draw upon a range of *resources for building influence*. These may include the use of: *constructed rationality, webs of influence, leadership style, temporal and financial resources and reputation.*

Dimension 3 of the framework seeks to raise awareness among practitioners of the relative efficacy of influence behaviour that is based on *rational behaviour* and by contrast, behaviour that is based on *emotive behaviour*.

Finally, the fourth dimension of the framework is intended to help practitioners appreciate that certain characteristics, which are strongly associated with the context of inter-organisational collaboration, are particularly important to the enactment of influence between participants. This dimension of the framework emphasises that *interdependence, asymmetrical relationships and perceptions of power, temporal implications and cultural differences among partners*, features typically found in the inter-organisational domain, are likely to create a set of conditions that affect the way in which influence is exercised.

As the foregoing analysis suggests the main dimensions of the theoretical framework are highly inter-related and inter-linked. As a consequence of their intimate inter-relationships, in the literature, they often appeared to elide. Thus the final version of the framework elucidated in chapter 7 and shown in figure 7.6 of this thesis seeks to illustrate the intrinsically inter-connected nature of the concepts central to the framework and to offer *practice related* insights into the nature of the key concepts that constitute the four main dimensions of the framework.

The conceptual framework at the heart of this thesis may be helpful in encouraging practitioners to reflect upon the processes they can use and resources they can draw upon in developing strategies for building their influence in inter-organisational collaborations. It is suggested that the conceptualisation of influence, as a process,

may be particularly appropriate in the inter-organisational domain. This is thought to be because in a collaborative context, a combination of variables is likely to affect the way in which influence is enacted by participants. For instance, because of the complexity involved in the collaborative domain, influence enacted in a structured manner over a period of time is more likely to be successful than ad hoc, isolated attempts. Influence enacted in this way may demand the use of a variety of tactics and a mix of approaches within a series of attempts. Additionally, to build influence participants may need to invest time in developing relationships with others and to create *time space* for the enactment of influence.

The key concepts central to the framework are intended to assist practitioners in formulating structured influencing strategies, on the basis of an enhanced understanding of the multi-faceted nature of influence processes in collaborative contexts. The framework is intended for practical use in the following ways.

- In workshop settings with groups of practitioners. The purpose of the workshops could be to encourage discussion and reflection on how individuals may develop strategies to influence each other within a collaborative setting. The main dimensions of the framework could be presented as *handles for reflective practice* (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). In this sense the framework could be used both as a diagnostic tool and a developmental tool.
- As a tool for reflective practice in executive coaching sessions. The purpose of using the framework as a centre piece in coaching interventions would be to help individuals to identify and consider ways to build their influence

within the context of an inter-organisational collaboration. The framework has already been trialled in this way and has produced thought provoking discussions and provided a strong basis for reflection.

The main dimensions of the framework could be used to stimulate thought about how individuals could enhance their influence in a collaborative setting by using influence *processes* and by drawing upon a range of resources. For example, the framework could be used to stimulate thinking about how individuals could harness the resource of a network of relations - a *web of influence* – to influence others.

- In the design of collaborative activities. The aim of using the framework as a planning tool would be to help individuals and groups to anticipate and consider potential opportunities or problems associated with enacting influence within a collaborative setting. The framework could be used in advance of initiating a collaboration to explore the potential for and implications of the enactment of influence.

The framework is not intended to be used in a prescriptive way, rather as a conceptual device to stimulate thought processes and dialogue, to aid reflection and to encourage individuals to consider a range of possibilities for achieving objectives in the collaborative domain, through the enactment of influence between participants.

THE MAIN LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Since the empirical engagement has been largely conducted in organisations which belong to the Scottish College sector, an obvious limitation relates to the potential for

a more generalised application of the framework. Throughout the research, attempts were made to collect data, in methodologically consistent ways, in other public sector environments, specifically both in the health and economic development sectors. Additionally, a small number of interviews were conducted in private sector settings. Some of these interviews were conducted in organisations located in other geographic areas of the UK and two interviews were held in a private sector multinational company. The data that was collected and analysed from the health and economic sectors and from the private sector was highly consistent with the data collected from the college sector and the conceptual framework resonated as strongly with those who were interviewed. It therefore would seem that there may be potential for the application of the conceptual framework in other sectors, environments and in other geographic settings where the additional variable of other national cultures comes into play more significantly. This possibility among others could be explored as part of a future research agenda.

From the outset of the research I was keenly aware of the potential limitations associated with interviewing as a chosen methodology and these concerns have been highlighted and discussed in previous chapters. In relation to interviewing in particular, the accounts that respondents provided have been treated consistently as products of their own form of social reality and the social reality that results from an act of co-production with the interviewee (Silverman, 2004; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003).

Criticisms of the interview as a research method capable of providing a reliable source of valid data normally centre on the problem that interviewees are not

observed *actually doing* what they say they do, or *actually saying what they say they said*, they are simply giving their version of the event, conversation or action. However if it is accepted that interview talk is *in itself* action, then it is suggested that *the contrasts* between *doing* and *acting (actively engaging in the interview)* become superfluous (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995 in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003).

This research employs interview data in the context that narrative can be viewed as a collective, shared phenomena and cultural resource (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995 in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). The methodology used therefore assumes that interviews generate accounts and narratives that are forms of social action in their own right and in this way contribute to the development of knowledge. In the collection and analysis of data there has been a consistent effort made to capture dialogue in which individuals recount their own recent experiences of enacting influence in relation to others. Similar emphasis has been placed upon capturing the accounts interviewees gave of their direct observations of others enacting influence. This approach has ensured that the collection and analysis of data has been focused on particular instances of the enactment of influence rather than reporting generalisations. The individuals were selected for interview on the basis of their reputations as participants who were perceived by others to have developed considerable influence in collaborative settings. In this sense they appeared to be well qualified to discuss their own experiences and their close observations of others.

It is acknowledged that the constituent acts of selecting respondents, managing the dialogue, interpreting responses and analysing the data may be prone to contamination by the subjective world of the researcher (Silverman, 2004; Gubrium

and Holstein, 2003; Alvesson, 2003). I have posited that the inherent subjectivity that runs through the fabric of the interviews produces a richness which is of value in its own right (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). While the effort to generate a framework that is conceptually consistent has been reflected in a rigorous approach to the research process, the subjective nature of the methodology must be openly acknowledged.

The awareness of the potential weaknesses involved in both the use of interviews as a source of reliable data and in the various stages of the process of analysis, has stimulated the high levels of reflection and reflexivity which have characterised the approach taken to the methodology as a whole.

In an effort to remediate the potential weaknesses of the methodology and in order to strike a balance between the concerns of retaining richness and ensuring rigour, the approach to the collection, management and analysis of data has been conducted with care, consistency and a highly critical approach.

The conceptual framework at the centre of this research has been developed, elaborated, adjusted and reviewed as a result of the various different stages of the research. It is therefore reasonable to anticipate that further adjustments are likely to be appropriate in the process of exploring its implications in other settings. This may be a natural consequence of the nature of the phenomena of interest and demands both continual honesty about the shortcomings of the research, openness to emerging possibilities and a pragmatic approach to managing the implications. That said, there appears to be a high level of consistency in the four main dimensions of the framework, in both the more detailed version of the framework, elucidated in chapter

6, and in its final form discussed in chapter 7 (figure 7.6). It is argued that this level of consistency is reflected in both the outcomes of the empirical engagement and the review of literature.

The conceptual framework is intended as a means for stimulating thought and encouraging reflection among practitioners who wish to explore strategies for becoming more influential in collaborative settings. In particular the detailed elaboration that emerged from the final analysis of data, set out in chapter 6 of this thesis, highlights some areas of interest that could be pursued further. These issues may well be interpreted differently as a result of their application in different settings, which for example may involve other national cultures.

Additionally, a number of questions remain unresolved which relate in particular to the themes that arose in the empirical engagement in relation to *influence processes*. As would be expected in discussions on the nature of influence enacted by participants in inter-agency collaborations, the issues of *trust* and *identity* arose. These themes are more fully developed in the extant literature. Because they did not arise as consistently as the other issues that have been explored in this thesis they were not given detailed consideration in their own right, rather they were considered in relation to other themes such as reputation and leadership style. Both trust and identity provide potentially rich thematic material for a future research agenda.

POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THIS AREA OF RESEARCH

Future research could be directed towards exploring the dimensions of the conceptual framework and associated concepts in relation to the inter-organisational domain. For example *webs of influence* could form a particular focus. While it would be possible

to extend the research using positivist methods, the acknowledged paucity of research in this area based upon methodology which is consistent with the social constructionist paradigm, suggests that the use of an appropriate blend of qualitative methods such as: participant observation, semi - structured interviews, research diaries and case studies may be of greater benefit to the field.

It would also be important to consider the extent to which the framework, conceptualised in this research, could be applicable to other public sector settings, private sector organisations and other sectors in other geographic areas. Beyond the nature of the settings in which future research could usefully be conducted in this area, there is also potential to explore the application of this framework to inter-organisational collaborations in which there is a mix of national cultures. This would acknowledge and build upon the contribution of writers such as Roa and Hashimoto (1997) and Fu and Yukl (2000) and Fu et al (2001) whose focus is not explicitly upon inter-organisational contexts but who provide valuable insights into cross cultural issues relating to the use of influence behaviour, as a concern of leadership and management in organisations.

Unanswered questions – some specific issues

A number of important issues remain unresolved which relate in particular to the dimension and components of the conceptual framework that are concerned with *influence processes*. The role that issues such as *trust* and *identity* play in the exercise of influence in inter-agency collaborations has already been identified as opening out two potentially worthwhile areas to include in a future research agenda. Additionally, given that the focus of interest here has been upon the relationships between

individuals, in relation to the enactment of influence in collaborative contexts, the role that group dynamics play in the influence process could form another strand of future research.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH

Having re-examined and reflected upon what my motives were when I first set out on this research project I realise that they have remained constant. The primary motive was to gain a more extensive and profound appreciation of the field. Ultimately the aim was to make a contribution that would be of value to practitioners engaged in the arena of inter-organisational collaboration, which is and always will be a focus for addressing issues that extend beyond the remit of single organisations and are critical to the economy and to society as a whole. Four years on I am more sensitised to the political intricacies of partnerships and better equipped at helping clients to anticipate, manage and lead collaboration. Whereas previously, as a practitioner, I tended to see inter-organisational collaboration as both confusing and impossible to navigate, I now see the characteristics of collaboration at work. Rather than first seeing the problems I now see opportunities to work with complexity. Having gained insight into a wide range of theoretical frameworks, which I have drawn upon to suggest how participants may build their influence in inter-organisational collaborations, I am better equipped myself to support others in appreciating the *nature, art and craft of exercising influence in inter-organisational collaborations.*

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