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## **The Relevance of Traditional Leadership Paradigms for the Essex Fire and Rescue Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### **THESIS OVERVIEW**

This investigation is presented in four parts, each of which relates to a phase in the investigation's research design. Part I: The Scene – sets the scene for the study and forms phase one of the research. It has two chapters: Chapter 1 – The Introduction, provides an outline of why and how this research was undertaken. Chapter 2 – The Background, presents information on the micro and macro environment of the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) across time.

Part II: The Experts - relates to phase two of the investigation's research design, and considers the theoretical aspects of the study. It also has two chapters. The first, Chapter 3 examines organisational and social theory, and in Chapter 4 notions of leadership and followership are explored.

Phase three of the design, and Part III: The Research - sets out the approach taken to carry out the investigation and its subsequent findings. Chapter 5 – The Research Approach, looks at the implications of undertaking this research, and the strategy for gathering the evidence. Chapter 6 – The Findings is constructed from the evidence provided from the people and documents in the fire service both locally and nationally.

Part IV: The Outcomes - correlates to phase four of the investigation's research design, and has three chapters that examine the outcomes from undertaking this research. In Chapter 7 – The Interpretation, the previous chapters are drawn together in order to provide a new construction of events in the EFRS. Chapter 8 presents both factual and conceptual conclusions that have been derived from the evidence, and in Chapter 9 – My Doctoral Journey, my experiences are examined as a result of carrying out this programme of study.

## **PART I THE SCENE**

Part I of the thesis sets the scene for the study and has two chapters. Chapter 1 – The Introduction, explains who the author is and where the investigation is located. It also

describes the study and why it is important to the fire service and me, and provides an overview of when and how the research was conducted.

Chapter 2 – The Background, has two sections. Section 2.1 provides information on the fire service, spanning the period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, to a possible future state. This section also looks at the structures and functions of the Service both locally and nationally, before moving on to examine the relationship between the leaders and followers in the EFRS. Section 2.2 examines of the wider public sector environment and its impact upon the Service. This section also explores the Government’s endeavours to influence public sector leadership, and the processes by which it is held accountability.

## **Chapter 1 The Introduction**

*‘I keep six honest serving-men*

*(They taught me all I knew)*

*Their names are What and Why and When,*

*And How and Where and Who’*

*Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)*

### **Where, when and who**

The focus of the research is the traditional leadership paradigm in the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS), and its relevance to the organisation in modern times. The study is located specifically within the EFRS, although for contextual reasons it is also positioned within the wider perspective of the public sector and the fire service nationally. The investigation will concentrate predominantly on the EFRS's current leadership paradigm. However, because the fire service adopted this contemporary approach to training leaders in 1968, the study will also examine leadership from across this time period.

This research began in 1999, when I became a member of Anglia Polytechnic University's EdD programme. The EFRS's leadership approach, and its affect upon the Service had been of interest to me for some time. The organisation's leadership paradigm was central to both my MSc Dissertation, which explored change and conflict in the EFRS, and the EdD Stage One papers (see Appendices 1-3, Stage One Papers), which examined the organisation's strategic planning process of vision creation. The bulk of this evidence is from the last three years, but the fact that the current leadership development process began in the 1968 means that data has been collected from the past three decades.

I am a 42-year-old father of three young children, and a husband to a long-suffering partner Lorna, who has been extremely supportive during the last ten years of continuous study. In terms of my work role and its significance to the investigation, I have been a member of the EFRS for 24 years, and currently hold the rank of Divisional Officer (see Appendix 4 - Structures). It seems more constructive however, to discuss this in terms of role and not rank, because as a senior manager in the EFRS I am responsible for the Community Command of Southend and Rochford. Together with approximately 180 colleagues we look after a community of about 253,000 people, by providing fire prevention inspections, operational cover (fire and rescue), and community fire safety education, to a Borough that is in the 24% of most deprived areas in the Country.

There are many aspects to my life world, which in addition to being a father and a husband, also apply to my role as a practitioner researcher and a member of the EFRS. As a consequence I have many 'different' roles, all of which can and do have an influence on the investigation. For instance, I am a fire officer, and a Community Commander. But I am also a member of the Fire Brigades Union, a tutor on the EFRS leadership development courses, a frequent student at the Fire Service College, and rather importantly an insider to the research process.

Thus, included within the text will be reflections on my many different roles. As Trafford notes, 'Being part of our research field makes us also part of the evidence that is collected (and as practitioner researchers we)...should allow readers to see the author in context as well as the text' (Trafford, 2000a:3). The role of researcher as reflective practitioner is also consistent with my philosophical position, because as will be explored later, my interpretive and constructivist stance means I am not concerned with distancing the researcher from the subject. The '...investigator and the object (from the constructivist position)...are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999c:206).

### **What, why and how**

In examining the relevance of the traditional leadership paradigm to the EFRS in modern times, I should describe why this issue was so important to me. This will provide a context for the research questions and help to explain why and how the research will be undertaken.

Whilst it is possible to trace the roots of the EFRS's traditional leadership paradigm to its militaristic beginnings at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was not this historical feature that first attracted me to this subject. I was fascinated by the fact that the approach used to train fire service leaders is still based upon Adair's (1968) publication, 'Training for Leadership'. As a fire officer who has experienced fire service leadership training, both as a tutor and as a student, I could not understand why. I consequently asked how such an approach that was

developed for the military in the 1950's and 1960's could still match the requirements of the fire service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This topic was interesting for other reasons. It was significant that the Service had experienced considerable unrest in recent years, when most other brigades have not. The EFRS had three strike ballots between 1996 and 1998, all with a yes vote, and two years of discontinuous strike action. As a result conflict became the central focus in my 1999 MSc Dissertation, in which I was able to link conflict to the organisation's approach. I considered that this traditional leadership paradigm might have contributed to the general discontent in the EFRS, and so it became the main topic for this thesis.

In addition to issues of conflict, the MSc and the Stage One EdD papers, also considered the EFRS's approach to managing change. Despite the fact that concepts of change were again linked to the organisation's approach, it seemed significant that it was also said that we are experiencing times of great change. This appeared important because this point was invariably followed by the notion that traditional organisational approaches will no longer be appropriate for this new environment (Handy, 1991; Isaac-Henry et al, 1993; Pedlar et al, 1996). I therefore extended the original question, and asked whether this traditional leadership paradigm could still be relevant for the EFRS in such changing and turbulent times.

In order to delimit the investigation, boundaries were set by examining the two key areas of leadership and leadership development. However, given the temporal element in this investigation, the study also has time boundaries. It will not only look at leadership development from 1968 to the present day, but for contextual reasons it will also examine the Service's earliest times since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In exploring issues of leadership and development across time, I was attracted to a suggestion made by Crowther and Limerick, who said that it is useful to consider the development of leadership theory from the perspective of McKinney and Garrison's third wave metaphor, in which 'The first wave...stressed accountability within formal hierarchical systems...The second wave...focused on decentralisation and empowerment (and while they say they do not know what the third wave will look like, they propose that it will be)... poststructuralist and post-modern' (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27).

Crowther and Limerick consequently argue that ‘The dominant issue facing those who are working in the area of leadership and professional development...is how to offer programmes that equip...administrators to deal with the unique demands of massive change in their environments’ (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27). They suggest that administrators ‘...are caught between a modernist paradigm which is characterised by a belief in rationality, predictability, order and team work, and a post-modern paradigm which is characterised by discontinuity (and)...accelerating change’ (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27). This notion not only matches the view regarding the viability of traditional approaches in times of change, but it also links this to leadership and leadership development. Whilst I am not proposing that the future is post structuralist, a postmodern element will be included in the investigation. In the first instance, this should allow me to track the theoretical story of leadership and leadership development from its first wave beginnings, to the possibility of a postmodern third wave approach. In the second instance, it will provide another means of examining leadership and organisation, and in this way add depth to the investigation.

Given my interpretive and constructivist approach, i.e. a desire to understand the world from the perspective of the individual, and not as an objective reality external to them, then it also seems necessary to explore how people construct this reality themselves. Issues of followership and culture will subsequently be examined in order to see whether or not there is a match between the leadership paradigm and the followers’ needs or expectations over this same period. In the chapter examining the theoretical field, the cultural concept of individualism and collectivism will be used to examine followership, whilst treating culture and followership separately for the purposes of gathering evidence. This both recognises that many of the topic areas will interrelate and provides a method of broadening the investigation, and thus builds up confidence in the data. These factors cannot be considered in isolation, so they will also be explored in relation to the changing and turbulent environments in which they operate. All of these topics will be considered in relation to social theory, because philosophical paradigms are not only pivotal to this study but they also provide a means of evaluating the conceptual aspects of the investigation.

The following research questions have been posed:

- ✘ Does this traditional leadership paradigm meet the requirements of the environment and the EFRS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
- ✘ Has this concept matched the requirements of the environment and the organisation since it was first published in 1968?
- ✘ Does this traditional leadership paradigm match, or has it ever matched, the followers' needs or expectations of the leadership process?
- ✘ Is a new leadership paradigm appropriate for the EFRS?

These four research questions are cumulative in their effect, with the final question being addressed by its predecessors.

This process will use inductive analysis and grounded theory, so that a new conceptual framework can be constructed in the synthesis of existing theory and the evidence. The design will offer both a temporal and organisational contextualisation for the study, and a means of exploring what the micro and macro environments have got to reveal. It will also provide a method for looking at what the experts have to say on the topic areas of leadership, leadership development, followership and culture, and organisation. These five areas could each become a separate research study in the EFRS. However, in this study they are combined in order to explore, and explain, the way in which the EFRS has 'handled' changing and turbulent times, and this is the gap in knowledge practice, which this research addresses.

## **Chapter 2 The Background**

### **Section 2.1 Ships on Dry Land**

#### **Introduction**

To provide the background to this investigation, the EFRS will be presented from a number of perspectives. The leadership paradigm will be explained by exploring the structure, as well as the micro and macro environments in which the EFRS operates. These features will be explained in their respective temporal settings in order to account for that variable.

This overview will begin with an investigation of the Service's early days at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It will then move on to look at those factors that have shaped the modern fire service as it is known today, before finally examining the possible future state of the organisation as it develops in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Early days**

The traditions of the fire service are based upon the Navy, because recruitment into the London Fire Brigade (LFB) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century '...was restricted entirely to seamen (since)...ex-seamen were thought to make the best candidates' (Bailey, 1992:4). Although this requirement ended in 1899, even by 1920, of the 1,391 members of the LFB, one-third (444) were ex-members of the Royal Navy, one-third had been in the merchant Navy (454), and one-fifth (261) had served in the Army (Bailey, 1992).

This naval influence also went well beyond the recruitment process, because the '...lore and social rules (and)...the entire work culture was redolent of salt water' (Bailey, 1992:5; Lloyd-Elliot, 1992). As a result of this factor, not only were fire stations based around 'watches', 'crews' and 'messes'; but many facets of the fire service also reflected a naval heritage, and as such '...firemen (sic) were expected to be available for continuous duty' (Bailey, 1992:5). For instance in the 1920's fire fighters were on duty for 24 hours a day for fourteen days and nights, 'Every fifteenth day was technically free, although it was not unknown for the day off to be suddenly cancelled because of a fire call or drill' (Bailey, 1992:5). Fire fighters were therefore on duty for about 330 days per year '...confined to fire stations, under strict discipline' (Bailey, 1992:5). Not surprisingly, Bailey points out that fire fighters led an insular life, which meant that 'Until 1920 all London firemen (sic) lived on the station, single men in dormitories (and)...married men with families in small two-room flats' (Bailey, 1992:6).

The story in the provinces was much the same, although in many of these brigades fire fighters were technically part of the police force. Nevertheless conditions of service were similar, most brigades not only employed ex-seamen, but also operated the continuous duty system. 'Salford firemen (sic) were accordingly described by the *Manchester Courier* as 'municipal slaves'; imprisoned for fourteen days at a time' (Bailey, 1992:8). The fact that provincial fire

fighters were generally treated less favourably in terms of sick pay and pensions than their LFB counterparts led to difficulties in staff retention. Yet Bailey notes that it was ‘...not entirely bleak (since fire fighters)...In police brigades generally received the pay and pension of the police, albeit for longer hours of work’ (Bailey, 1992:9). Moreover, ‘...free uniform, free or subsidised rent (and a job)...secure from periods of unemployment (meant that it was)...never too difficult...for employers to fill vacancies in the ranks’ (Bailey, 1992:9).

Bailey says that ‘These were the conditions of professional firemen (sic)...shut up in small fire stations, residentially and occupationally segregated (with)...habits of obedience and sentiments of loyalty to the service...instilled by para-military regimes’ (Bailey, 1992:9). Against this background, Bailey suggests that ‘Fire stations were simply ships on dry land’ (Bailey, 1992:5).

### **The ‘modern’ fire service**

The modern fire service, at least in a form that can be recognised today, has its inception in the 1947 Fire Services Act. The Service took its current shape under local authority control, following the dissolution of the National Fire Service at the end of the Second World War (Wallington, 1989; Bailey, 1992). The ‘...success of the National Fire Service in wartime (resulted in)...the main organisational features, of a rank based, quasi-militaristic regime, (being)...largely enshrined in peace-time legislation’ (Her Majesty’s Inspector of Fire Services (HMIFS), 2001b:14). The modern post-war fire service also ‘...developed a powerful internal identity...out of its early connections with the Royal Navy (and this)... resulted in a military style (organisation)...enforced by formal discipline regulations’ (HMIFS, 1999a:20).

The 1947 fire service retained many of its earliest characteristics; and even though continuous duty periods were in the past, fire fighters still worked longer shifts than most other professions. Since the end of the Second World War, a fire fighter’s working week has gradually reduced from 72 to 60 hours in 1946, then to 56 hours in 1956 (still greater than 1920 national average of 54 hours), 48 hours in 1966, to the present day 42-hour working week in 1979 (Segars, 1989; Bailey, 1992; Darlington, 1998). While it may be difficult to

describe a modern day fire fighter as a ‘municipal slave’, the requirement to provide 24-hour cover means that a fire fighter’s two consecutive 15-hour night shifts are still reminiscent of past times. My own experience as a serving fire officer, albeit made up of office hours and standby hours, averages out at 72 hours a week over a three-week period. In one seven-day cycle during the three-week rota, I provide a total of 138 hours cover.

The government of 1947 also acknowledged the requirement for national pay and conditions of service. In setting up the fire service they consequently recognised ‘...the Fire Brigades Union’s (FBU) right to negotiate for fire fighters, and FBU authority on technical questions within the fire service’ (Segars, 1989:342). The FBU’s role can be illustrated by their involvement in the campaign to reduce hours that was described above. Baigent suggests that this campaign, and numerous ‘emergency calls only’ disputes that accompanied it, led to a militant workforce and a left-wing union. He notes that during these disputes, where fire fighters only attended incidents, it became common for them to refuse to take orders. As a consequence, Baigent argues that as fire fighters realised they could disobey orders, it ‘...had a marked effect on discipline (which)... demystified officers’ autocratic authority’ (Baigent, 2001b:14)

### **The future fire service**

When the Labour Party came to power in 1997, they set new objectives for the fire service, which were focused on reducing fires, deaths and injuries in the home. The Government followed up on these new objectives by setting out in the 1999 Public Service Agreements, targets for the fire service (Public Service Agreements, 1999). This changed the focus of attention from intervention to prevention.

The new objectives and targets have been responsible for driving forward many reviews and introducing changes into fire service functions. In terms of on-going review work into present activities, there has been a subsequent shift in focus in national policy, from saving property to saving life. This may be surprising, but this review work has started to look at things like the way that fire appliances are distributed, because the traditional practice has been to distribute

them on the basis of risk to property and not risk to life. In addition to this, because fire services ‘...receive 27% of their funding for the number of calls they attend’, they are almost ‘encouraged’ through the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) to attend as many fires as possible (Wilkinson, 2002).

It seems ‘paradoxical’ however, that targets have been introduced. In the first instance, the fire service has a statutory duty to attend fires, but it does not yet have a statutory duty to prevent death and injury. In the second instance, this ‘perverse incentive’, as it was termed by the Audit Commission, to attend as many calls as possible has not been removed ~ although it is expected to change in 2003/04 (Audit Commission, 1995:14).

As brigades attempt to reach these targets there has been a change in policy, which has led them to become more community focused. The result for the Service has been a shift in emphasis from dealing with incidents, to proactive attempts to reduce the number of calls; with particular attention being placed upon fires, deaths and injuries in the home (HMIFS, 2000a; 2001a). The impact upon fire service personnel has been a subsequent change in role; to one where they are encouraged to identify where the community is at risk and take positive measures to control those risks.

These changes can be illustrated by work that my colleagues have been undertaking. They identified that their station area is relatively quiet in fire terms, but has a significant number of road traffic accidents (RTA’s). The station personnel recognised that the group most at risk from RTA’s is that of 17-24 year olds, and they wanted to do something to address this. They decided that a trailer, carrying a car which had been in an RTA, could be taken to places where these groups congregate ~ such as Southend Sea Front on a Friday night, where 17-24 year olds ‘cruise’ along the ‘front’ in customised cars. The fire service’s positive image with the public, particularly the young, could then be used to educate this group as to the hazards of driving recklessly.

### **Fire service structures**

The fire service is structured around thirteen ranks, ranging from Fire Fighter to Chief Fire Officer (see Appendix 4). In practice most brigades do not use all of these ranks, for example in the EFRS Divisional Officer Grade I and III are not utilised. The uniformed service also carries out many functions other than attending emergency incidents. For instance, fire prevention and community fire safety have already been mentioned, but brigades are also responsible for procuring equipment and services, and training personnel. In the EFRS, on the uniformed side of the service, there are departments for Operations, Technical (R&D, Training and Health and Safety), and Fire Prevention / Community Fire Safety (see Appendix 4).

It should also be acknowledged that ‘The public face of the fire service is a mixed bag of emergency calls’ (Archer, 1998). The majority of people, including fire service personnel, would not focus on these other functions, but instead see the main purpose of the Service as saving life, saving property, and rendering humanitarian services.

### **Fire service leadership**

Leadership in the fire service is exercised in two distinct spheres. These are the fire ground ~ fire and rescue incidents ~ and the non-fire ground settings. On the fire ground leaders behave more autocratically, issuing direct orders and commands. The leaders expect the followers to obey these orders and respond compliantly. The followers will accept this relationship in this environment. In the latter non-emergency situation fire service leaders allow involvement in the decision-making process but still expect compliance and the right to make the final decision.

The fire ground takes up about 3% of a fire fighter’s time, so the non-fire ground setting represents the majority of working time for fire fighters. It is also significant that the majority of incidents that fire fighters attend are routine, and require little direction from fire officers.

However, when the situation is life threatening or time bound, the leader's approach can become extremely autocratic, and the followers will generally accept this.

### **The fire service environment in its national setting**

Whilst issues of change and complexity dominate the nature of the fire service environment nationally, these issues cannot be explored without some form of contextualisation. Thus to investigate this environment, and its inherent pressures for change, it is important to understand the relationships that exist between the various stakeholders in the fire service. Appreciating these relationships will not only help to identify where these pressures for change emanate, but also why they are so complex.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is ultimately responsible for the fire service, through both the Fire Services Act 1947 and more up to date legislation such as the 1999 Local Government Act. The Parliamentary Under Secretary has powers under these pieces of legislation to establish groups for both monitoring fire services activities and aiding them as they discharge their legal duties. Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire Services (HMIFS), the Fire Service College, and the Fire Experimental Unit are influential examples of such groups.

On the employer's side of the stakeholders there are two main bodies. These are the fire authorities, such as the Essex Fire Authority, which employ those who work for a local authority fire service, and the Local Government Association (LGA), who have an Executive Fire Committee made up of councillors from those fire authorities. On the employees' side, the FBU, representing the majority of fire fighters and officers, the Retained Fire Fighters Union, the Fire Officers Association, and The Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA) represent the interests of the workforce. All of the above groups nominate representatives to meet and form other prominent bodies. The National Joint Council, the forum for discussing pay and conditions, and the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC), where important national concerns are progressed, are examples of where

major stakeholders are brought together to shape the character and nature of the fire service environment.

In exploring the changing nature of the service, the Home Office Minister Mike O'Brien, in a Ministerial Speech to the LGA on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2001, illustrates the level of magnitude of that change. Mr. O'Brien said that it was the Government's intention '*...to publish a modernisation agenda for the fire service (and)...set the direction for the next ten years*' (O'Brien, 2001a). He went on to say that the 1947 Fire Services Act had stood the test of time, but he could not see '*...that it would remain un-amended*' (O'Brien, 2001a). He said that while much of the work to change the service was already underway, '*The move from cure to prevention was a major cultural shift for the fire service*' (O'Brien, 2001a).

Although the fire service is experiencing major change, with the 'shift' firmly focused on a move from intervention to prevention, this movement is being driven by '*...risk assessment, equal opportunities and fairness*' (O'Brien, 2001a). This agenda, together with the Government's desire to modernise all local government through the development of partnership working and Community Leadership, has led to a complex array of reviews, restructures, new legislation, and developments in almost every fire service function.

**Table 2.1 A Time of Change and Complexity** - shows a list of those areas of the fire service currently under review.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Background and Driving Force</b>
Emergency Cover Review 1998 -	A risk assessed approach to providing fire cover, based upon risk to persons, and not to property
Thematic Review – Equal Opportunities and Fairness Sept 1999	Has led to target setting for 'under-represented' groups, and focused on the Service's leadership. This recommended the Leadership Thematic Review (HMIFS, 1999a)
Local Government Act 1999 - Best Value	Designed to deliver sustained improvements in public services. It requires brigades to compare themselves with others and set targets for improvements over 5 years.
Thematic Review – Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) 2000	Designed to deliver a best practice means of reducing unwanted fire signals; based upon partnership working (HMIFS, 2000a)
Thematic Review – Fit for Duty Feb 2000	It focused on sickness absence and ill-health retirements. It also considered that the Service's leadership was responsible for high

	levels of stress and high sickness rates (HMIFS, 2000b)
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Race Relations Act 2000	This legislation extended the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act to the Fire Service
Thematic Inspection – Community Fire Safety (CFS) 2001	The central focus of the Government’s Objectives for the fire service; risk based, and drawing together work on Arson, UwFS, Sprinklers, and Community Education (HMIFS, 2001a)
Thematic Review – Managing a Modernised Fire Service May 2001	Recommended the development of an alternative recruitment and progression system for the fire service (HMIFS, 2001b)
HMIFS Restructure 2001	Restructured in order to meet demands of Best Value. The HMIFS was also moved to the DTLR from the Home Office in order to rationalise Best Value work. The DTLR has also restructured and the fire service has again moved to the ODPM
Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) Restructure 2001	The CFBAC has been restructured in order to deliver the Home Secretary’s vision for the fire service, and thus move from intervention to prevention
Integrated Personal Development System	A competence based training system within a performance management structure. Based upon Risk Assessment, and Equal Access (Fire Service Role Maps, 2002)
Private Finance Initiatives / Invest To Save Budgets	Intended to encourage joint ventures and public / private partnerships
Changes to Conditions of Service	Fire fighters Conditions of Service are thought to prevent modernisation, because they are seen as inflexible. The 2001 Merseyside Fire Service dispute, was part of this on-going ‘desire’ to obtain flexibility
New Dimensions Group	September 11 <sup>th</sup> has highlighted the role of the fire service, as an important contributor to Civil Emergency Planning. The Minister sets up the New Dimensions Group to examine the implications on the fire service post-September 11 <sup>th</sup>

### **The Essex Fire and Rescue Service**

The County of Essex covers nearly 400,000 hectares, and has a population of just over 1.6 million (EFRS Strategic Plan 2001-2004). This makes the EFRS one of the largest county fire services in the country. The EFRS is divided into 7 areas known as Community Commands; and has 51 strategically placed fire stations ~ 18 whole-time and 33 retained ~ employing 930 whole-time fire fighters, 430 retained fire fighters, 38 control staff and 171 support staff. The community commands group together fire stations, fire prevention resources and support staff into smaller community focused units, where commanders in conjunction with fire fighters determine priorities locally (see Appendix 4).

The county has numerous commercial and industrial areas that present a variety of potential emergency situations. Busy rail networks, expanding airports such as Stansted, overcrowded Motorways, docks and ports such as Tilbury and Harwich, rural communities, refineries and power stations all constitute many potentially high-risk areas.

### **The Essex Fire and Rescue Service's recent history**

The recent history of the EFRS is dominated by industrial relations problems, and a subsequent polarisation of views between the management and the workforce. A comment made in a recent HMI Inspection Report, illustrates much about the micro-environment in which the EFRS operates. The report said that 'The history of the success achieved by the union in preventing the authority from achieving even modest change at the conclusion of the 1998 strike, has had an understandable effect on the thinking of the Fire Authority' (HMIFS, 2000c:14).

The fact that Her Majesty's Inspector went on to say that this situation '...strikes at the heart of the right of managers to manage'; suggests that the HMI has a top-down view of leadership and followership (HMIFS, 2000c:14). Moreover, since it has also been noted that '...there is a belief amongst fire fighters that industrial relations...require an adversarial environment, with the associated resistance and suspicion of many of the important changes that are currently taking place', implies that this bipolar relationship may extend far beyond the EFRS (HMIFS, 2001b:21). It is not only argued that this 'us and them' mind-set is common feature in the British Fire Service, but it is also suggested that the 'hierarchical characteristics (of the service)...are divisive and conspire to divorce the officers from their fire fighters' (HMIFS, 1999a:21).

### ***The author's reflections as a union member***

*As a senior manager and a member of the FBU, I am in a rare position to comment on the condition of industrial relations in the EFRS. While the start of the industrial relations problems probably began with the disputes of the 1960's, the most recent problems began in 1996, when the Fire Authority proposed a budget cut of around £1 million; a reduction in the*

*overall establishment of the brigade (the number of whole time fire fighters) from 928 to 900; and a cessation in recruitment. The FBU balloted its members for discontinuous strike action, and this resulted in a yes vote of 69%. This vote did not lead to strike action due to an 'eleventh-hour' agreement, with both sides claiming victory. The FBU maintained the establishment at 928, and the Fire Authority got their budget cut.*

*1997 saw a similar pattern. The Fire Authority proposed a reduction in the budget of £1.5 million, a larger cut in the establishment from 928 to 887, a cessation in recruitment, and a decrease in training activities. The FBU went to ballot and achieved a yes vote once again; but this time reduced to 58%. On this occasion the ballot did lead to strike action, with seven separate strikes of varying duration. Yet the timing of the dispute was important to its outcome, because it coincided with the 'arrival' of the first Labour Government for eighteen years. While it was thought that this might have resulted in a government keen to show how strong it was against the 'power' of the unions, pressure was brought to bear to end the dispute. The establishment was again maintained at 928, and training was reinstated.*

*1998, and nothing changes. The Fire Authority proposed a budget cut of £1.2 million, a reduction in the establishment to 912, the loss of three specialist vehicles, and a decrease in training. The FBU's response was once again a vote for strike action ~ 70.2% yes. The Fire Authority raised the stakes and threatened suspension and dismissal (see Appendix 5 – 'Re-engagement' Letter). In response FBU members went on strike 36 times, with varying durations over a three-month period. The fact that the establishment was only reduced to 920, only one of the specialist vehicles was removed, and training was reinstated allowed the FBU to claim victory. But this is of small consequence when considered against the effect that*

*three years of industrial disputes have had on the organisation, and in particular the relationship between the leaders and the followers.*

*2002 and are things improving? The 2000 HMIFS report says 'Clearly the passage of time continues to assist the healing process' (HMIFS, 2000c:13). However, a report by C3 Consulting in 2001, which examined a particular industrial relations problem at one of the fire stations for which I am responsible, said that, 'Across the Service, the industrial relations climate since the dispute has continued to be fragile and confrontational. A lack of trust between station personnel and Senior Management is reflected in FBU/Management relationships and has made it difficult to re-establish constructive joint negotiating processes' (C3 Consulting Report, 2001:4). The report sheds light on the way that leaders in the EFRS are seen. It stated that; 'management is (viewed as)...remote from the front line (and)...top-heavy' (C3 Consulting Report, 2001:18).*

## **Section 2.2 The Public Sector Environment**

### **Introduction**

Section 2.1 explored aspects of the fire service, and how these features may impact upon the EFRS and its leadership paradigm. This section will now look at the wider public sector environment. The fire service along with all other public service organisations has seen as a result of the 'Modernising Government' White paper, a programme of renewal and change in the public sector. The Cabinet Office's Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) recently stated that 'Britain's public services face unprecedented challenges at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (PIU Report, 2001:4). Pressures to modernise, higher expectations on the part of the public, opportunities and incentives to enter into partnerships, and pressures to harness new technologies are just some of the challenges that now face the public sector.

However, since providing an overview of the public sector environment is beyond the scope of this thesis, just two components of the environment that impact upon the fire service, and in particular the leadership paradigm, will be examined. The first is the changing face of public sector accountability, and the way this has affected the fire service. The second is a recent Cabinet Office Report, which has attempted to influence the future nature of public sector leadership. These topics have been selected because they enable the EFRS leadership paradigm to be examined. The changing nature of public sector accountability illustrates much about the leader's role both past and present, whereas the recent Cabinet Office Report reveals much about where Government policy could take public sector leadership in the future.

### **Public Sector accountability**

The mechanisms by which the fire service is held accountable are examined in Chapter 6. An overview of how accountability has changed in the public sector is provided here. Painter asserts that the public sector environment has '...witnessed...qualitative, paradigmatic change in the structure and organisation...away from bureaucratic co-ordination...towards market type transactions' (quoted in Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:39). In examining this shift Sisson explores the macro environment, and posits that '...ever intensifying competition in an increasingly global economy (has meant that developed economies can not)...compete head-on solely in terms of cost with their competitors' (Sisson, 1994:3). He argues that the outcome has been a change of emphasis towards '...quality goods and services' (Sisson, 1994:3).

When the Conservative Government came to power in 1979, 'Attempts were ...made to create within the public sector an environment similar to that which prevailed in the private sector' (Jowett and Rothwell, 1988:2). The Audit Commission Report of 1986 however, identified the lack of a profit motive as a particular problem in the public sector, and as a consequence developed '...performance...as surrogates for profit and loss', in order to '...provide a form of quasi-competition...with other local authorities (in the form of)...league tables... the comparison with national averages, yardsticks, standards or benchmarks' (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:66,68). The outcome for the public sector has been a subsequent shift away from the

paternalism and professionalism of the welfare state, towards ‘being kept to account, meeting targets and providing performance indicators’ (Aspinall et al., 1992:125).

In examining the paradigm shift that has occurred, Trafford (1997:4) provides a useful model for looking at accountability:

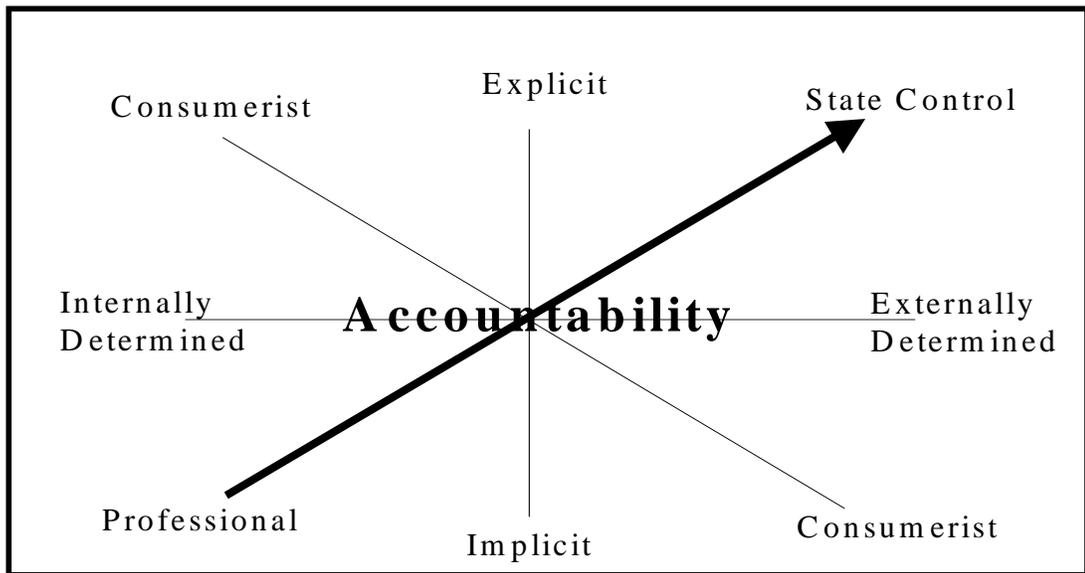
**State control systems**...hierarchical, clear lines of control, one-way information...

**Professional control**...responsive to the demands of external review whilst also extending and protecting their professional autonomy...

**Consumerist systems**...or operating through market mechanisms...(a midway point)

This model can be adapted to illustrate how accountability in the public sector has shifted in the past twenty years. In Figure 2.2 the arrow indicates how the process of accountability has shifted from professional to state control, and demonstrates how an internally determined, implicit method of professional evaluation has shifted to an explicit externally driven process of state control. It also suggests where performance indicators may fit into this process, as their nature certainly appears to be in keeping with a top-down, one-way process of state controlled accountability.

**Figure 2.2 Changes to Public Sector Accountability**



[Couch (2002), after Trafford (1997)]

The outcomes from the paradigm shift are significant, since it is argued that ‘the uncertainties engendered by a rapidly changing environment (have)...called for a reappraisal of the suitability of hitherto dominant bureaucratic structures, in favour of more flexible, adaptive and innovative organisational forms’ (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:40). Lumby has gone further, and suggested that the changes have been so profound ‘...that any attempt to respond to them using established principles and processes is likely to be dysfunctional’ (quoted in Bush and Middlewood, 1997:32).

### **Public Sector leadership**

In March 2001, the Cabinet Office’s Performance and Innovation Unit published a report on ‘Leadership in the Public Sector’, which was intended, as the press release indicated, to shape the nature of leadership in the public sector in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It maintained that the public services face unprecedented challenges with:

- Demands to modernise...to orient them more closely to the needs of the customer;
- Higher expectations on the part of the general public;
- Increased opportunities, and requirements for partnerships;
- Pressures to harness new technologies and deliver service electronically;

The report acknowledged that ‘More was being asked of public sector leaders than ever before’ (PIU Report, 2001:4,5). The report also argued that although ‘Leadership (is)...a key determinant of organisational success’ it was thought to be ‘...too scarce in the public sector’ (PIU Report, 2001:9). The report cited the work of Ofsted, the small number of good candidates for critical public sector leadership posts, and the difficulty that the public sector has in finding leaders to carry through major change programmes, as indicators of their conclusion.

The PIU report was not able to determine a single style or type of leadership best suited to the public sector. Instead it identified that the public sector is ‘...diverse in character, governance and size’, and such departments and agencies should use the PIU report as a starting point to develop their own leaders (PIU Report, 2001:69). Yet the report was able to suggest that in developing leaders, there were common features across all sectors of the public service, which distinguished it from the private. The ‘...political context; funding arrangements and accountability; the lack of market competition; the pressures to collaborate horizontally; (and)...the distinctive ethos of the public services’ were all mentioned as key differences (PIU Report, 2001:15).

Due to the above commonalities, the PIU report posited that public sector leaders should have; ‘Personal characteristics (based upon the ability)...to motivate and bring the best out of others...Organisational skills that recognise the complexity of modern organisations and focus on defining and communicating mission and strategy, rather than issuing commands (and)... The ability to work well with other organisations to define and achieve common goals’ (PIU Report, 2001:15). As a result of these characteristics, skills and abilities, the report stated that leaders should not only possess certain qualities, but development programmes should be specifically designed to develop these qualities.

In addition to identifying qualities as part of a leadership development model, the report also examined leadership styles and organisational climate. In respect of ‘style’ it was suggested that ‘...most effective leaders are able to use a range of styles’, from highly coercive through to coaching (PIU Report, 2001:21). The report refers to evidence from the Department for Education and the Employment (DfEE) leadership development programme, which says that ‘...heads from high achieving schools demonstrated five dominant leadership styles (whereas)...heads from schools in ‘special measures’ only demonstrated one dominant leadership style: coercive’ (PIU Report, 2001:21). The report observed that this programme used a linkages model based upon leadership style, organisational climate and ‘...research into

characteristics (or qualities expressed as competencies)...displayed by outstanding head teachers' (PIU Report, 2001:21).

So whilst the PIU Report did not propose an overarching model for public sector leadership, it did provide a framework based upon certain qualities, a range of styles, and a recognition of the organisational climate. Nevertheless, the report was able to state one factor unequivocally, and that is that leaders in public sector need freedom to lead, and clear accountability for performance.

Chapter 2 has provided background information on the environment in which the fire service functions. Section 2.1 has illustrated that the EFRS operates within a hierarchical structure, characterised by change and uncertainty. This section has shown that the public sector is undergoing significant change. An externally driven process of state controlled accountability, and a linkages model of leadership development based upon styles and competencies, have and will shape the leadership paradigm and the organisational approach in the fire service. Thus in order to comply with the requirements of the macro environment, professional autonomy within the fire service is weakened. Part I has set the scene for the investigation by explaining what the study is about, and why and how it was undertaken, as well as supplying micro and macro environmental contextualisation.

## **PART II THE 'EXPERTS'**

Part II of the thesis examines what the ‘experts’ have to say with regard to the fields of organisational and leadership theory. In Chapter 3 concepts of organisation will be examined, and in Chapter 4 notions of leadership, followership and culture. However, since the purpose of this thesis is to explore the relevance of the EFRS’s ‘traditional’ leadership paradigm in both changing and turbulent times, then a conceptual framework must be constructed that enables this evaluation to take place.

This thesis contains diagnostic practice orientated research, where the researcher is concerned with understanding the world as it is. As a consequence, the conceptual framework presented in Chapters 3 and 4 is used to provide comparison between theories and practice. Part II will construct a conceptual framework to show where practice meets theory, and then if possible influence future practice.

## **Chapter 3 A Consideration of Organisational Theory**

### **Section 3.1 Organisations - Underlying assumptions**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the conceptual framework is to provide a theoretical basis in which the research can be undertaken. If one also accepts that the conceptual framework can provide a link between theory and practice, then the decision to examine the underlying assumptions that underpin organisational theory may have wider implications than first considered. I

initially chose to examine these underlying assumptions in order to locate the development of the conceptual framework within a philosophical context, but on further examination other issues became apparent. This philosophical framework will not only allow relationships between the key conceptual variables to be constructed, but it will also provide an important link to the research design and the research methodologies.

In building this theoretical perspective Burrell and Morgan's (1979) conception of philosophical and social theory have been presented largely unchanged. This approach has been utilised because the four paradigms that they offer are not only argued to be mutually exclusive but they have also been used to form the skeleton of the conceptual framework upon which the fabric of 'expert' theories have been assembled. Moreover, since the purpose of the thesis is to examine a traditional paradigm, then it is appropriate to use a paradigmatic means of evaluation. Burrell and Morgan are able to provide this means of comparison.

### **Social theory**

Burrell and Morgan maintain that '...all theories of organisation are based upon a philosophy of science and theory of society (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). They expand this point and suggest that this '...can usefully be conceived in terms of four key paradigms based upon different sets of metatheoretical assumptions' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:viii). They say that with '...regard to organisations (these four paradigms are)...mutually exclusive (and bring)...us face to face with the nature of the assumptions which underwrite different approaches to social science' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:viii). They note that '...it is convenient to conceptualise (this as)...four sets of assumptions related to ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1).

All four sets of assumptions have objective and subjective dimensions. The first assumptions concern ontology and relate to '...the very essence of the phenomena under investigation (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). The two extremes ask '...whether the 'reality' to be investigated is external to the individual...or the product of individual consciousness' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). Cohen and Manion say that these questions come from what is known in philosophy as the 'nominalist-realist debate (where)...objects of thought are merely words

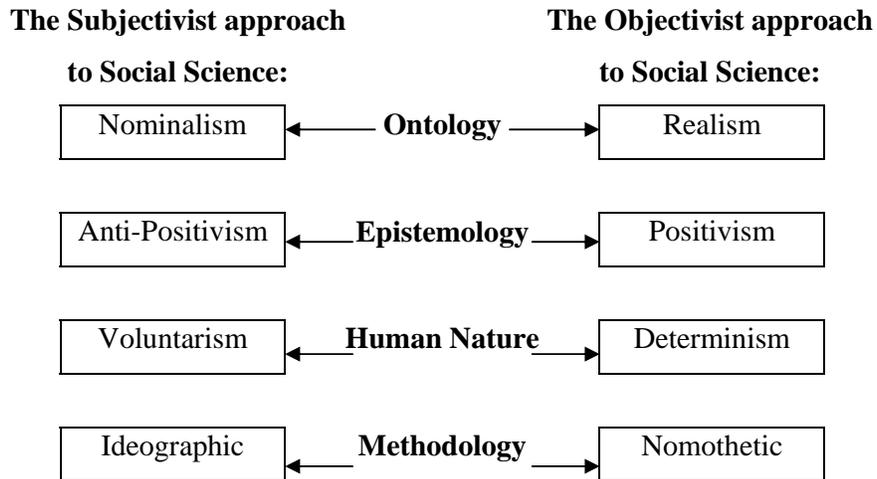
(the nominalism or the subjective viewpoint ~ or the realist position, where)...objects have an independent existence and are not dependent for it on the knower' (Cohen and Manion, 1998:6).

Secondly, the epistemological assumptions concern the nature of knowledge, and cross a positivistic / anti-positivistic spectrum. Burrell and Morgan explain that positivists view '...knowledge as hard, real and capable of being transmitted in tangible form (whereas the anti-positivists perspective sees knowledge as)...softer, more subjective (and)...based on experience and insight' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). Cohen and Manion maintain that 'How one aligns oneself in this particular debate profoundly affects how one will go about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour' (Cohen and Manion, 1998:6).

The third set of assumptions relate to human nature and the '...relationship between human beings and their environment' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:2). The objective dimension sees '...human beings and their experiences as products of their environment...as opposed to the view that sees man as the creator of his (*sic*) environment...the controller (and not)...the controlled' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:2). The fourth set of methodological assumptions emerge from the first three, and have '...direct implications for the methodological concerns of researchers' (Cohen and Manion, 1998:7). Burrell and Morgan describe Nomothetic and Ideographic dimensions. The former 'objectivist' approach chooses '...from a range of traditional options – surveys, experiments, and the like (whereas the latter) ...subjectivist (and ideographic stance)...will select from a range of comparable emerging techniques – accounts, participant observation and personal constructs' (Cohen and Manion, 1998:7).

Burrell and Morgan argue that 'These four sets of assumptions...provide an extremely powerful tool for the analysis of social theory' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:7). In Figure 3.1 below, these four sets of assumptions, and their respective subsequent objective and subjective dimensions are presented.

### **Figure 3.1 The Subjective – Objective Dimensions**

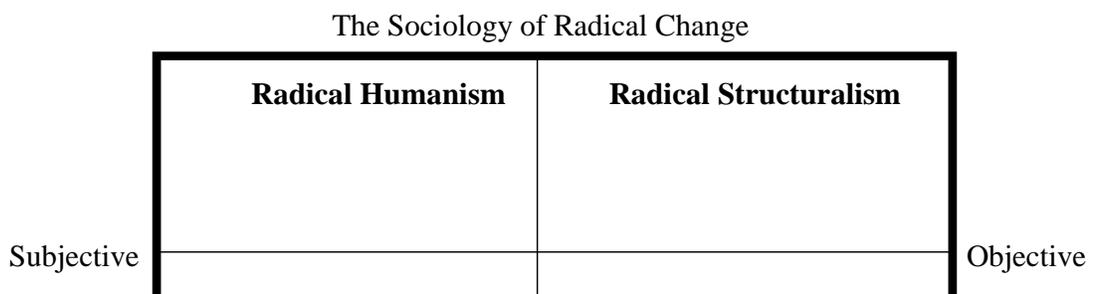


(Burrell and Morgan, 1979:3).

The second strand to Burrell and Morgan’s thesis revolves around the assumptions that underpin the nature of society. They introduce the terms ‘Sociology of Regulation’, referring ‘to the theorists who are primarily concerned (with)...explanations of society (which)... emphasise its underlying unity and cohesiveness’; and ‘Sociology of Radical Change’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:17). This ‘...stands in stark contrast’ in that it ‘its basic concern is to find explanations for the radical change, deep seated structural conflict, modes of domination and structural contradiction which its theorists see as characterising modern society’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:17).

They offer this ‘...regulation – radical change distinction as the second principal dimension of (their)...scheme for analysing social theories (which)...along with the objective – subjective dimension (of social science, present)...a powerful means of identifying and analysing the assumptions which underlie social theory’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:17). They use these two sets of dimensions to create four mutually exclusive paradigms, which, they say, offer four different ways of understanding social reality. Figure 3.2 presents the four paradigms in relation to the two sets of dimensions.

**Figure 3.2 Two Dimensions: Four Paradigms**



(Burrell and Morgan, 1979:29)

The Functionalist Paradigm is objectivist, rooted in the sociology of regulation, '...characterised by a concern for explaining the status quo (and tending to seek)...rational explanations of social affairs' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:26). The Interpretive Paradigm is also concerned with regulation, but this time from a subjectivist standpoint. As a consequence, this view attempts to understand '...the world as it is (but)...as an emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:28).

The Radical Humanist Paradigm '...is defined by its concern to develop a sociology of radical change from a subjectivist standpoint' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:32). It also sees the world as an emergent social process, but is '...committed to a view of society which emphasizes the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:32). Similarly, the Radical Structuralist paradigm concentrates on change and potentiality, but like functionalism tends to be rational and pragmatic in its approach.

Burrell and Morgan say that these four paradigms are mutually exclusive, because they '...are based on at least one set of opposing meta-theoretical assumptions' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:25). They provide a way of both identifying where social theorists sit within the four paradigms, and where one's own personal frame of reference is for undertaking research. This not only provides a means of locating the overall conceptual framework within philosophical

theory. But it should also be possible to plot where the various theorists who will contribute to this investigation fit within this overall picture.

### **Organisational theory and postmodernism**

Postmodernism has been identified as a possible future approach for training leaders. However, Hassard asserts that in order ‘...to examine the possibilities for postmodern paradigms in organisational analysis, we must first explore the characteristics of another generic concept; Modernism’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:3). Cooper and Burrell describe this as ‘...the triumph of the scientific over the theological (or)...that moment in time that man invented himself; when he no longer saw himself (sic) as a reflection of God and nature’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:4,96).

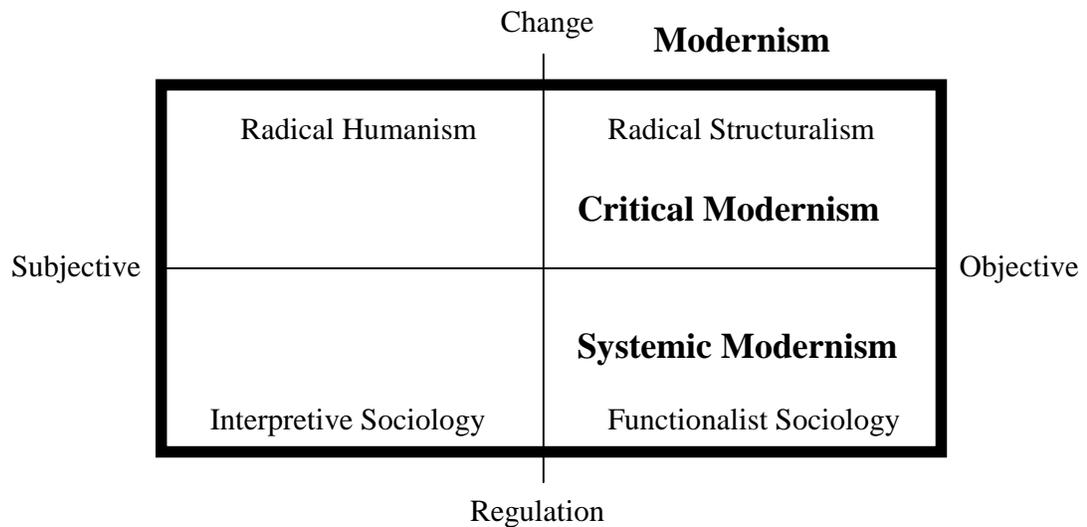
This modern age, which became known as the Enlightenment Project ‘...was grounded ...in an unflinching faith in the power of rational thought (whereby)...truth was to be discovered in the causal relationships of a transcendent and pre-existing natural world (that)...could be controlled and rationally ordered if only they could picture and represent it rightly’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:13,169). Reed says that at an epistemological level ‘...modernist thinking is based on the assumption that rational principles and practices of knowledge production...will lead to social progress and personal growth’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:169). For this reason, Hassard argues that modernist theories are ‘...founded on the belief in the factual nature of a knowable universe (and a)...single truth’ (Hassard and Parker, 1993; Stronach and McClure, 1997). And although Hassard posits that modernism is in decline, Gergen says that it is ‘...far from exhausted (and remains)...central to Western culture’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:18).

Hassard offers two theories of modernism. The first, ‘Systemic Modernism...represents the dominant form of reason (where)...theoretical knowledge offers a rational methodology for administering the large scale systems which control the patterns of activity in the modern world’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:4/5). The second, ‘Critical Modernism (is located by Cooper and Burrell)...within the radical tradition (and a)...concomitant belief in the faculty of reason to expose man-made (sic) restrictions upon individual autonomy’ (Hancock and

Tyler, 2001:68). The latter Marxist view is based on a ‘...faith in the power of reason (and a belief that)...truth would set us free’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:68).

Thus it is possible to position modernism on the objective side of the conceptual framework. In Figure 3.3 systemic modernism is shown as matching the rational characteristics of the functionalist paradigm, and critical modernism as corresponding to the Marxist tenets of radical structuralism.

**Figure 3.3 Four Paradigms and Modernism**



[Couch 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Hassard and Parker, 1993)]

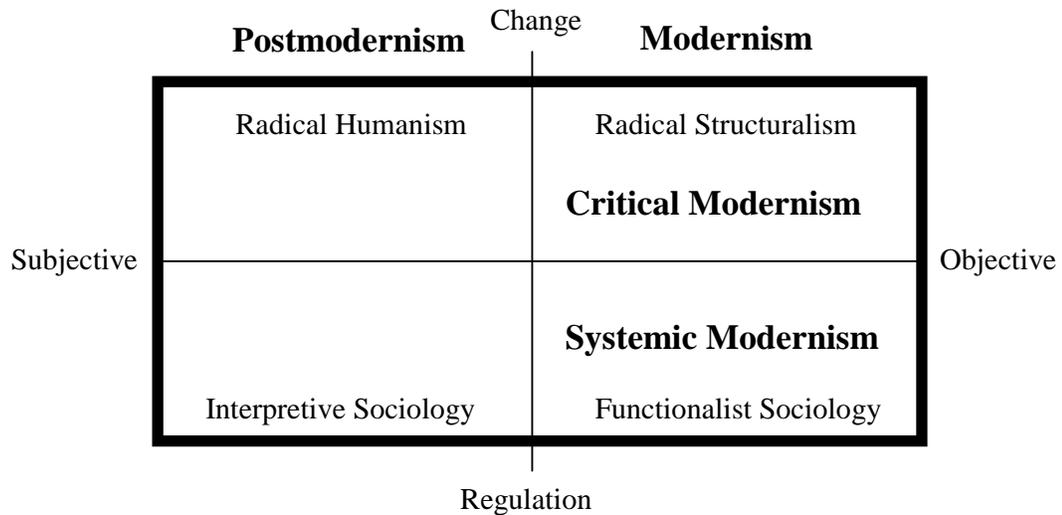
Creswell notes that if postmodernism is anything, it is a ‘...reaction to or a critique of the...Enlightenment (and its emphasis on)...technical rationality, reason, universal science and the positivist scientific method’ (Creswell, 1998:79). Cooper and Burrell remark that it ‘...emphasizes the futility of totalising tendencies. The idea of a superior objective standpoint is completely rejected, emphasis being placed on the inherent instability of organisations’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:18). However, in rejecting modernism, postmodernism does not necessarily offer a divergent concept, since ‘Postmodernists’ maintain that ‘...positivist methods are but one way of testing a story about society or the social world’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:10). Hancock and Tyler consequently assert that ‘In the context of such a Post-Enlightenment project (postmodernism)...might be understood not just as a

different way...but as a direct assault on the rigid epistemology of one-best way' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:1). Yet it can be observed that critical themes do emerge, such as the '...social construction of reality' (see Klein, 1998; Samuels, 1998; Mantilla, 1999), which emphasises '...paradox, irony, eclecticism, and pluralism' (Kilduff and Mehra, 1997:453).

Kilduff and Mehra strike a note of caution, and say that 'Within the social sciences...the spectre of postmodernism has aroused widespread anxiety (because it is)...viewed as an enterprise that calls for the death of all scientific inquiry; the end of all new knowledge; the dissolution of all new standards that may be used to judge one theory against another; a banishment into utter relativism wherein a clamour of fragmented and contentious voices reigns' (Kilduff and Mehra, 1997:453). Carspecken argues that this position has '...led researchers to appropriate postmodern insights while retaining some notion of truth and some standards for valid augmentation' (Carspecken, 1996:15). Although, since Hoksbergen makes a distinction between extreme relativists '...who upon the discovery that there is no objectively certain foundation for the true, the good, or the beautiful, jump to the conclusion that nothing matters (and less extreme relativists)...who accept the demise of foundationalism and acknowledge the existence of many different traditions of understanding but still have a deep sense that it does matter' this may explain why these two positions exist (quoted in Samuels, 1998:823).

Whilst postmodernism argues for no one-best way, it does nevertheless exhibit dominant characteristics that enable postmodernism to be placed within the conceptual framework. Its emphasis on relativism, whether this is extreme or less extreme places it ontologically on the subjective dimension of the conceptual framework, as does its rejection of rationality, and its emphasis on a socially constructed reality. The conceptual framework has been updated, and postmodernism positioned on the subjective dimension, in Figure 3.4

### **Figure 3.4 Four Paradigms and Postmodernism**



[Couch 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Hassard and Parker, 1993)]

Section 3.1 has examined the assumptions that underpin social theory, and offered a postmodernist and modernist perspective to the conceptual framework. This has not only provided a structure for the conceptual framework, but it will also enable the theoretical aspects of the investigation to be positioned within a philosophical context.

### **Section 3.2 Organisations – From Unitarism to Pluralism**

#### **Introduction**

So far the conceptual framework has been located within a theoretical and philosophical context. This section will position concepts of organisation within those underlying assumptions of social theory, and provide a means of linking forthcoming concepts and theories within an organisational model. Moreover, given the purpose of this investigation it is also necessary to consider how different approaches to organisation manage issues of change and conflict. Yet since it may prove difficult to make sense of the vast array of concepts and models that are available I have chosen to do two things. The first is to examine organisational theory from the perspective of social theorists. The second is to focus on Morgan's (1997) metaphor of organisations as 'mini-states'. This should allow the

forthcoming theories to be positioned within the conceptual framework, and also provide contrasting frames of reference for examining organisational theories.

### **Organisational theory and social theory**

The majority of organisational theories stem from the functionalist paradigm. It is argued that this viewpoint has provided the vast majority of management theories in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries (see Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Mendenhall, 1999). Although it can also be recognised that functionalism's single truth, '...predict and control' emphasis has been criticised for its management bias (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:85).

Radical structuralism treats structures '...as hard and concrete facilities (existing)... independently of men's (sic) consciousness of them' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:368). Burrell and Morgan say that organisational theories from this viewpoint are '...likely to offer...new perspectives on processes of organisational control; the dynamics of organisational change; the relationship between substructural and superstructural elements of organisation; (and)... new typologies for understanding the role and significance of different organisations within the wider social formation' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:389). The radical humanist perspective, endeavours '...to unmask the alienations reflected in the organisational mode of life. It seeks to stress how alienations are intimately linked with the nature of the totality in which they are located' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:324). As such embracing '...radical humanism involves the rejection of organisation theory as a naïve, misconceived and a political distasteful enterprise' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:324).

The frame of reference for undertaking this research is from the interpretative and constructivist standpoint. It is therefore significant that the term has many variant and interchangeable forms, in which the terms '...constructivist, interpretive, naturalistic, and hermeneutical are all similar notions' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:242). Burrell and Morgan argue however, '...that the paradigm can be considered in terms of four distinct but related categories...distinguished for the most part by their degree of subjectivity (they identify these categories as)...Solipsism; phenomenology; phenomenological sociology (and)... hermeneutics' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:235). Burrell and Morgan also suggest that it is

‘...possible to draw a distinct line between the highly subjective...solipsism...and... phenomenology on the one hand, and phenomenological sociology (and)...hermeneutics on the other’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:254). The ‘...former embark on a journey into the realm of pure subjectivity, and...philosophical discourse (whereas)...the latter are more concerned with the life-world’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:254).

Identifying the different positions that exist within the interpretive paradigm makes it possible to examine the consequences for organisational theory. Burrell and Morgan say that the interpretive and functionalist paradigms ‘...reflect a common concern for the sociology of regulation (with interpretive theories concentrating)...on the study of ways in which social reality is meaningfully constructed and ordered from the point of view of the actors directly involved’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:254). The interpretive paradigm is consequently considered as a ‘...perspective in which actors negotiate, regulate and live their lives within the context of the status quo (and where social reality is viewed as)...an emergent process (constructed from)...human consciousness and subjective experience’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:253, 254).

Since the ‘...social world is essentially intangible in nature (and)...does not allow for the existence of ‘organizations’ in any hard or concrete sense’, approaching research from an interpretive stance is not without its difficulties; (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:260). The least subjective schools of thought within the interpretive paradigm, do ‘...accept the concept of organization, and its use as an ‘accounting practice’ by which people make sense of their world’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:260). Burrell and Morgan recognise that this is ‘...somewhat contradictory because by accepting organisational theory they almost accept that certain aspects exist’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:260). They explore this contradiction and contend that the rationality derived from these practices is not as a result of ‘...direct correspondence with some objective world, but from the abilities of the hearers (readers) to make sense of the socially organised occasions of its use (and as such this reflects a)... nominalist ontology characteristic of the interpretive paradigm’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:268).

Burrell and Morgan describe a form of ‘...ontological oscillation’ in which a ‘...highly subjectivist stance denies the existence of social structures (but attempts)...to operationalize... ideas within an empirical context’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:266). They assert that the contradiction evident within ontological oscillation is ‘...resolved...through the recognition of a dimension of power and domination beneath the ongoing process through which social reality is created and sustained’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:270). Yet as will be explored in Chapter 5, my constructivist standpoint aligns itself with hermeneutics on the least subjective portion of the interpretive paradigm. This stance is concerned with understanding the emic point of view, but it is significant in terms of organisational research that it does so from the perspective of the life world.

### **Organisations as ‘mini-states’**

Morgan suggests that organisations can be ‘...understood as mini states where the relationship between individual and society is paralleled by the relationship between individual and organization’ (Morgan, 1997:202). He offers three frames of reference, which he argues ‘...have considerable relevance for understanding organisations and the ideologies that shape management practice’ (quoted in Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:212). He says that the political image of organisations ‘...emphasizes the plural nature of the interests, conflicts and sources of power that shape organizational life...The pluralist vision is of a society where different groups bargain and compete for a share in the balance of power’ (quoted in Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:212).

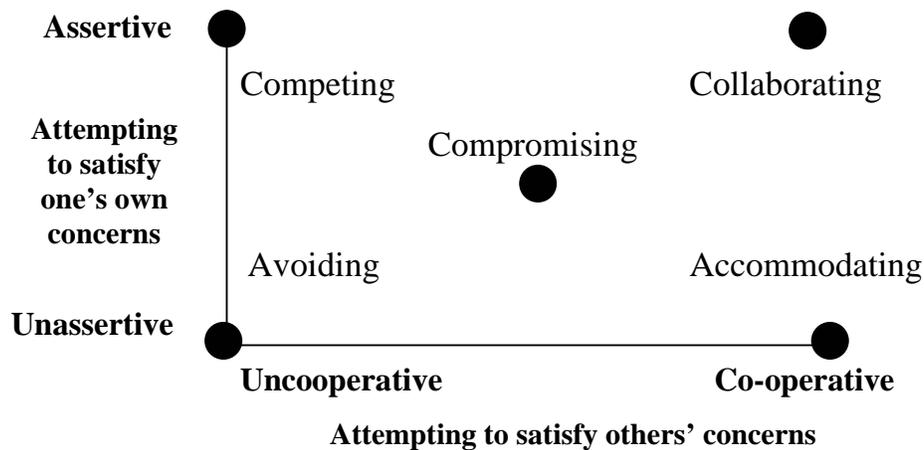
This view ‘...stands in contrast with the unitary frame of reference (which)...pictures society as an integrated whole, where the interests of individual and society are synonymous. The unitary view emphasizes the sovereignty of the state, and the importance of individuals subordinating themselves in the service of society’ (Morgan, 1997:200). The third perspective, the radical frame, views society ‘...as comprising antagonistic class interests, characterised by deep-rooted social and political cleavages and held together as much by coercion as consent’ (Morgan, 1997:200).

Morgan asserts that the ideology in use will ‘...determine the character of the organization’, with each frame of reference inevitably leading ‘...to a different approach to management’ (Morgan, 1997:201). ‘Some organizations tend to function like unitary teams...others as vibrant political...pluralist systems...and others as battlefields where rival groups engage in ongoing warfare’ (Morgan, 1997:200). Morgan suggests that organisations which are ‘...made up primarily of white-collar staff, particularly where there is room for staff to acquire considerable autonomy, often tend to fit the pluralist model’ (Morgan, 1997:200). The unitarist characteristics, ‘...are most often found in organizations that have developed a cohesive culture based on respect for management’s right to manage, especially those with a long history of paternalistic management (whereas organisations which have had)...a history of conflict between management and labour, tend to reflect the characteristics of the radical model’ (Morgan, 1997:200).

Although the three frames of reference will influence the conflict management model, it can be emphasised that ‘...sometimes the three models apply to different parts of the same organization’ (Morgan, 1997:201). In the unitary model ‘...managers tend to see formal authority as the only legitimate source of power, and thus rarely acknowledge the right or ability of others to influence the management process’ (Morgan, 1997:201). Conflict is seen as a source of trouble, so the unitarist manager will use ‘...legitimate authority’ as a tactic to achieve control in the ‘...pluralist and radical power plays that characterise their organizations’ (Morgan, 1997:204).

By contrast, the pluralist manager ‘...accepts the inevitability of organizational politics... management is thus focused on balancing and co-ordinating the interests of organizational members so that they can work together within the constraints set by the organization’s formal goals’ (Morgan, 1997:204). The pluralist manager may consequently ‘...seek ways of using conflict as an energizing force...to stimulate learning and change’ (Morgan, 1997:205). In approaching the task of conflict management Morgan says that the pluralist manager ‘...is faced with a choice of styles, which hinge on the extent to which he or she wishes to engage in assertive or cooperative behavior’ (Morgan, 1997:205-207). The conflict management positions that are available to the pluralist manager are shown in Figure 3.5.

### **Figure 3.5 Conflict Management Styles**



(Morgan, 1997:205-207)

Morgan declares that 'Many organizational conflicts can be fruitfully resolved through pluralist means but not all. This is particularly true in radicalised organizations where conflicts between managers and employees run deep, and there are no win-win solutions (because)...The underlying power relations and bitterness between the parties involved often encourage a winner-take-all or fight-to-the-death attitude' (Morgan, 1997:208). Everard and Morris state that this type of conflict can '...become a dangerous and disruptive force (because)...personal glory is staked on the outcome' (Everard and Morris, 1996:89). This means that '...the further a conflict develops the more glory is staked (and)...decision taking is paralysed because neither party dares to make any concessions for fear that these will be seized upon by the other party as a victory or a bridgehead for further advances' (Everard and Morris, 1996:89,90). At this point we begin to consider conflict in terms of 'win-lose situations', whereas 'in reality the solution is often 'lose-lose' (Everard and Morris, 1996:90). Everard and Morris suggest that 'There are basically four attitudes to conflict...based on whether or not they believe that they can avoid confrontation and whether or not they believe that they will be able to reach agreement (and while)...behaviour depends on how high the stakes are...certain behaviours are liable to provoke an unnecessary degree of conflict' (Everard and Morris, 1996:92,96). Figure 3.6 depicts these four attitudes, and dependent on the stakes ~ the approaches taken to manage the conflict.

**Figure 3.6 Attitudes to Conflict**

	1	2	3	4	
<b>Confrontation</b>	<b>Inevitable</b>	<b>Avoidable</b>	<b>Avoidable</b>	<b>Inevitable</b>	<b>Personal Stakes</b>
<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Impossible</b>	<b>Impossible</b>	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Possible</b>	
	Power battle	Increasing communication problems and muddles which are more or less frustrating and lead to increasing tension and stress for all concerned	Fool's paradise Avoiding Smoothing Postponement	Problem-solving Compromise Give and Take	High ↑ ↓ Low
	Arbitration				
	Fate				

(Everard and Morris, 1996:92)

If the organisation's style influences its approach to managing conflict, will it then influence its approach to managing change? Given the research questions this seems particularly relevant, since '...the accelerating pace of change and the stark reality of a turbulent and uncertain environment mean that skills in the management of change are now at a premium' (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:46). Blundell and Murdock corroborate this view, and extend it to the public services manager, who they say is now '...expected to be an expert of change rather than a guardian of the status quo' (Blundell and Murdock, 1997:139). Everard and Morris perhaps illustrate why; 'In the past most training has been aimed at helping managers to manage the status quo more efficiently, but, as the environment becomes more turbulent, so it becomes more important to develop their skills in coping with change' (Everard and Morris, 1996:215).

Given the propensity for organisations to be '...dynamically conservative: that is to say, they fight like mad to stay the same', this raises the fundamental question of how change can successfully be brought about (Everard and Morris, 1996:213). Mabey and Mayon-White propose that 'One way of getting things to happen is through hierarchical authority (so)... Many people think power is merely an exercise of formal authority' (Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:46). In '...the context of the public sector (managing change has accordingly been viewed as)...breaking resistance to change'; which indicates that the public sector

manager has approached the process in a unitary fashion, and as one of managing resistance (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:46).

Morgan says that ‘The idea of managing or removing resistance was pioneered in the 1940s by social psychologist Kurt Lewin, who suggested that any potential change is resisted by forces working in the opposite direction’ (Morgan, 1997:294). Goodstein and Burke state ‘...organisations - like living creatures – tend to be homeostatic, or continuously working to maintain a steady state (they assert that)...this helps to understand why organisations require external impetus to initiate change and...why that change will be resisted’ (quoted in Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:165). According to Lewin ‘...the forces tend to be external to the change, holding situations in states of dynamic equilibrium. His solution was to advocate that successful change rests in ‘unfreezing’ an established equilibrium by enhancing the forces for change, by reducing or removing resisting forces, and then ‘refreezing’ in a new equilibrium state’ (Morgan, 1997:294).

Yet many writers recognise inherent problems for managing change hierarchically. Pfeffer identifies three principal difficulties with hierarchy as a way of getting things done. Firstly ‘...it is badly out of fashion (secondly)...virtually all of us work in positions in which...we need the co-operation of others who do not fall within our direct chain of command’ (Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:201). And finally ‘...what happens if the person at the apex...is incorrect...when authority is vested in a single individual the organisation can face grave difficulties if that person’s insight or leadership begins to fail’ (Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993:201). Kets de Vries states that for ‘...many people the term bureaucracy has become a dirty word, evoking memories of red tape, rigidity, frustration, helplessness and resistance to change’ (Kets de Vries, 1995:46).

Nevertheless, it is said that mechanistic ‘unitary’ approaches to organisation can work well; such as in stable times, and ‘...when the human ‘machine’ parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to’ (Morgan, 1997:27). Morgan suggests that ‘Such constructions on events bring concepts of power and interests to the surface, alerting us to the utility of political

imagery in analyzing the management of organizational change' (quoted in Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:46).

Peters and Waterman illustrate the value of political concepts. They say '...the world of management seemed easier when we drew parallels with the military, (because)...old management theories...were not laden with ambiguity and paradox' (Peters and Waterman, 1982:90). The '...new wave of management thought leads us to an ambiguous paradoxical world (where)...the excellent companies, if they know any one thing, know how to manage paradox' (Peters and Waterman, 1982:91). This takes us to a dialectical viewpoint, which does not perceive change as a rational process, but as an emergent pluralist approach that manages paradox. 'It sees paradox as a product of internal tensions produced by the fact that elements of the paradox may embrace equally desirable states' (Morgan, 1997:294). This view acknowledges that paradox is inevitable, since it reflects the struggle of opposites, and the fact that any development tends to generate its opposite, '...the management task is to find ways of integrating the competing elements (because it is argued that the)...paradox cannot be successfully removed by eliminating one side' (Morgan, 1997:294).

Morgan declares that 'The first step in the successful management of paradox rests in recognising that both dimensions of the contradictions that accompany change usually have merit' (Morgan, 1997:293). The crux of the matter lies in '...finding ways of creating contexts that can mobilize and retain desirable qualities on both sides, while minimizing the negative dimensions' (Morgan, 1997:294). He goes on to note that 'It is unlikely that...you would want to build your organisation around one side of the dimensions presented. It is likely that you would want your organisation to incorporate both...This requirement distinguishes the management of paradox from the management of the resistance to change' (Morgan, 1997:294).

A useful notion for understanding the process of change is the biological metaphor of autopoiesis. Morgan suggests that '...organisations are able to self-reflect and enact new more systemic identities that break the rigid boundaries between organisation and environment' (Morgan, 1997:298). He asserts that it helps us to appreciate that the '...way we see and manage change is ultimately a product of how we see and think about ourselves' (Morgan,

1997:256). As a consequence the ‘...problems that organisations encounter in dealing with their environment are intimately connected with the kind of identity they are trying to maintain’ (Morgan, 1997:298). Unlike the rational process of managing resistance, Morgan says that these pluralistic ‘...ways of viewing change...share the view that change self-organizes and is an emergent phenomenon that cannot be predetermined or controlled. Even though our actions shape and are shaped by change, we are just part of an evolving pattern...the challenge...is to cope with this paradox’ (Morgan, 1997:299).

In terms of the radical frame of reference and the management of change, the fact that management will tend to take either a unitary or pluralist approach is unimportant, because it is the outcome of the attempt to introduce change that will distinguish the radical standpoint from pluralism and unitarism. The plural view leads to active involvement in the management of change, the unitary approach to passive acceptance, and the radical outcome is ‘all-out-war’.

### **Mini-states and social theory**

The three frames of reference will reflect the underlying assumptions of social reality. The unitary frame, with its pragmatic and rational elements, mirrors the dominant functionalist paradigm. Glynn et al (2000) explain that the development of unitarism ‘...hinged on the ability...to institutionalize – that is formalize, standardize...and homogenize’ (Glynn et al, 2000:726). Therefore, rather than examine ‘...a heterogeneity of culturally differentiated membership, scholars’ emphasis has been to stress the unifying organisational principles and activities that lend cohesion and coherence to the collective’ (Glynn et al, 2000:726).

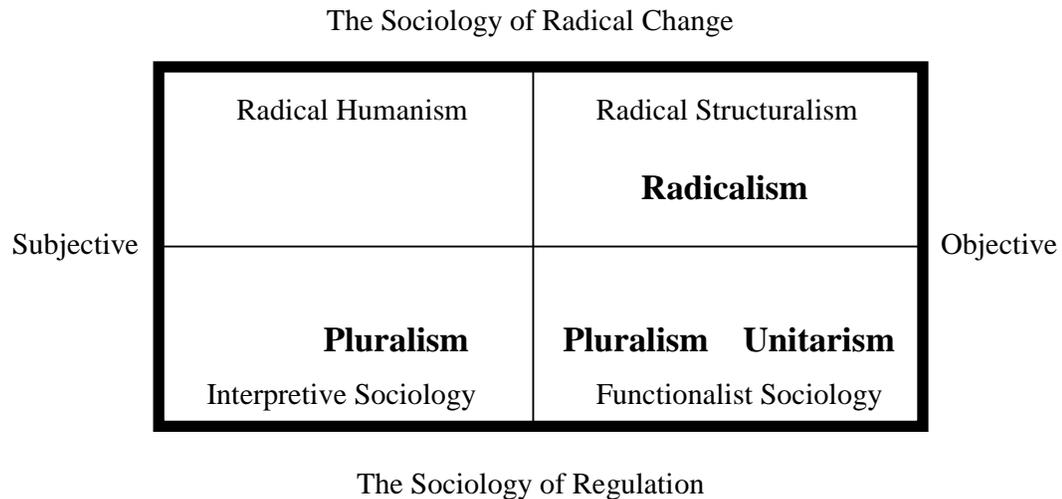
This unitary view has been vehemently attacked in some quarters, because of its ‘...mechanistic and reductionist view of nature, which by definition excludes notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility (Cohen and Manion, 1994:23). It is consequently said to ‘...present a misleading picture of the human being (in that it concentrates on)...repetitive, predictable and invariant aspects of the person (and does so)...to the exclusion of the subjective world’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994:25).

The radical frame of reference reflects the Marxist tenets of radicalism, and is concerned with the relationship between 'white-collar' and 'blue-collar' workers, from an objectivists' view point. Hence, the radical standpoint concentrates on the structural relationship between management and workforce. The pluralist perspective seems to sit within the emergent nature of the least subjective portion of the interpretive paradigm. Glynn et al observe that '...researchers have begun to acknowledge...ambiguity and the emergent way in which problems are framed' (Glynn et al, 2000:726). They suggest that this move towards pluralism has been '...propelled by dramatic changes in the workforce demographics, corporate expansion into global markets, and greater interconnectedness of cultures' (Glynn et al, 2000:726).

Burrell and Morgan have placed pluralism alongside unitarism within the functionalist paradigm. They argue that pluralism emphasises '...power as a variable within social system theory', being based '...the belief that an understanding of the subject may facilitate better managerial control' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:213). Yet they do acknowledge that this pluralistic view reflects '...a move away from (unitarism, but say that)...this movement has been incomplete' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:205). It is this 'incompleteness' that has kept Burrell and Morgan's concept of pluralism within functionalism. The notion of pluralism as presented in this thesis is wider than the concept of power alone, because it represents both the emergent nature of organisational life, and the individual's role in constructing this reality. The fact that Glynn et al note that 'The complexity of organizational and everyday life warrants a variety of interpretations, as well as rich frameworks for understanding and acknowledging plurality and differences', tends to support the assertion that pluralism does not reflect the one-best way of functionalism (Glynn et al, 2000:726).

Having compared the three frames of reference to social theory, it is now possible in Figure 3.7 to place Morgan's 'mini-state' metaphor of organisations within the 'skeletal' conceptual framework. However, for the reasons explained above, pluralism has been positioned within the least subjective 'life world' portion of the interpretive paradigm, and the least objective position of functionalism.

**Figure 3.7 Mini-States and Social Theory**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Morgan, 1997)]

Chapter 3 has provided a structure upon which to develop the conceptual framework. Examination of Burrell and Morgan’s four mutually exclusive paradigms; and comparison of these with notions of modernism, postmodernism and organisational theory, has provided a theoretical means for investigating what the experts have to say on the subjects of leadership and followership. This preliminary structure will be added to in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4 An Examination of Leadership and Followership**

### **Section 4.1 Followership and Culture**

#### **Introduction**

In examining where the follower fits into the overall question of leadership and the EFRS. Hofstede makes a useful proposition. He posits that ‘...understanding the differences in the ways that leaders and their followers think, feel, and act is a condition for bringing about... solutions that work’ (Hofstede, 1997:4). In order to access this information, a means of finding out how people within the EFRS ‘think, feel, and act’ must be established.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggest where this information may reside. They say that ‘...the very essence of culture is not what is visible on the surface. It is the shared ways groups of people understand and interpret the world’ (Trompenaars and Hampden Turner, 1997:3). For this reason, I have elected to examine notions of individualism and collectivism in order to explore issues of culture and followership. Hofstede (1980, 1984) has ‘...conceptualized individualism vs. collectivism as a bipolar, unidimensional variable that distinguishes between...cultures’ (Ramamoorthy and Carroll, 1998:571). Similarly, Wagner sees ‘...individualism – collectivism (as)...an analytical dimension that captures the relative importance people accord to personal interests and to shared pursuits’ (Wagner, 1995:152).

Whilst I do not necessarily accept Hofstede’s view of culture, this standpoint does seem consistent with an interpretive view of the world, and since my philosophical frame of reference is consistent with the interpretive stance, there appears to be a certain congruence in selecting this view of culture.

### **Individualism and collectivism**

The above view of culture is not entirely representative of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s original conception. Yet Chen et al are able to fully represent this standpoint, with the ‘layers’ view of culture whereby ‘...assumptions, beliefs and values constitute the deep core elements of culture, whereas tangible artefacts and patterns of activities and behaviors are culture’s outwardly visible manifestations’ (Chen et al, 1998:285).

Hofstede initially agrees with this view; arguing that nationally ‘...cultural differences reside mostly in values less in practices (where practices are the visible elements of culture)’ (Hofstede, 1997:182). Organisationally he reverses this, and suggests that ‘...cultural differences reside mostly in practices less in values’ (Hofstede, 1997:182). This seems to be at variance with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s notion of culture, until Hofstede asserts that entering an occupation, ‘...means the acquisition of both values and practices’ (Hofstede, 1997:182). It is therefore conceivable that the ‘layers’ view of culture, and Hofstede’s standpoint are not conceptually very different.

Yet Hofstede's bipolar, unidimensional conception of individualism and collectivism is in stark contrast with Earley and Gibson's view, where the construct '...is bi-dimensional' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). They contend that this allows us '...to explain anomalous behavior in a given situation, e.g., the individualist who displays collectivist behavior; or a collectivistic society in which people act individualistically' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). Chen et al concur with this view; they see individualism and collectivism as '...a continuum rather than a dichotomy (whereby)...individualists and collectivists may have individual and collective goals, but they differ in the relative priority placed on goal types' (Chen et al, 1998:285). It can be argued that the bi-dimensional view of individualism and collectivism appears to offer greater utility to this investigation, particularly in helping to describe what is after all an extremely complex situation, and not a simple bi-polar conception.

Chen et al qualify this view of individualism and collectivism as a cultural rather than individual construct. For an individual's view of individualism and collectivism, Triandis has proposed the term 'ideocentrism – allocentrism'; where ideocentric people '...behave, feel, and act very much like individualists (and the allocentric)...believe, feel, and act very much like collectivists' (Triandis, 1995:5). The trend in '...individualistic societies is to be ideocentric and conduct most situations into social relationships of separateness', and conversely, collective societies tend to be allocentric (Triandis, 1995:5). This proposition, like the bi-dimensional view of individualism and collectivism is useful, since it also helps to explain anomalous behaviour.

Having recognised that there is some debate as to what constitutes individualism and collectivism, what exactly do the concepts mean? In an extensive review of the available literature, 'Triandis (1995) summarizes four defining attributes of individualism and collectivism:

Conception of self: Individualists define the self as an autonomous entity independent of groups, whereas collectivists define the self in terms of its interconnectedness to other various in-groups

Goal relationships: Personal goals have priority over group goals in individualists, but they are subordinated to the collective goals in collectivists. Where there are conflicts between self interests and collective interests, individualists find it permissible to give priority to self-interest, whereas collectivists feel obliged to give priority to collective interests

Relative importance of attitudes and norms: Social behaviors of collectivists are more likely to be driven by social norms, duties and obligations. Whereas those of individualists are more likely to be driven by their own beliefs, values and attitudes

Emphasis on relationships: Individualists are...orientated toward achievement, sometimes at the expense of relationships, whereas collectivists put more emphasis on harmonious relationships, sometimes at the expense of the task' (Chen et al, 1998:285).

Although Triandis has provided us with a useful overview of individualism and collectivism, he extends its analysis further with a valuable exploration of the concept of 'self'. He argues that, 'There are four kinds of self: independent, interdependent, and same and different. The combinations of these four types can be characterised as 'horizontal individualism (independent/same), and horizontal collectivism (interdependent/same), vertical individualism (independent/different), and vertical collectivism (interdependent/ different)' (Triandis, 1995:44). It may be of use to identify that where individualism and collectivism are horizontal, the concept of 'same' refers to a sense of serving the ingroup, and a sense of social cohesion respectively, whereas in the vertical dimension, the concept of 'different' refers to an acceptance of inequality and a sense of 'rank has its privileges'.

In looking at the EFRS's traditional leadership paradigm, Earley and Gibson's comment maybe relevant, because it emphasises that '...individualism or collectivism typically depends on factors such as its task, environment, history, industry, and primary nation in which it operates' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). Many of these notions have already been explored, so maybe the issue is now one of relating notions of individualism and collectivism to the principal interests of this study; namely, national culture (or macro environment), the organisation, leadership, followership, change, conflict, and social theory.

A classification of national culture that has been extensively supported is that of 'Chinese-based societies as collectivist, contrasting them with Anglo-American societies as individualist' (Harrison et al, 2000, 489). For instance Harrison et al suggest that, '...the self-interest motive (is)...central to all Anglo-American management theories and practices... while the subjugation of self to group interests has been identified as a key characteristic of (Chinese societies)' (Harrison et al, 2000, 489). Running in tandem with this concept is the notion that 'At a general level, individualism and collectivism is related to the wealth and economic development of societies' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). It is argued that 'Individualism is often regarded as a characteristic of a modernising society, while (collectivism)...reminds us of...more traditional societies' (Trompenaars and Hampden Turner, 1997:52).

Brown (1990) analysed the situation in Britain, and '...commented about the swing from...the Labour Party to the acquisitive individualism of the 1980's. World War II had cemented relationships because there was a common interest and common fate...the Labour Party emerged...But as Nationalization resulted in inefficiency and the lack of competitiveness of British products worldwide, the pendulum swung to Margaret Thatcher' (quoted in Triandis, 1995:141). This appears to depict a change from collectivism to individualism, but if one considers this in terms of the concept of self, then the change seems like one from horizontal individualism, to vertical individualism; where the nation moved from an individualistic society, which served the ingroup, to one where there has been an acceptance of difference and inequality. And even though there has been a change of government since the 1980's, would many commentators describe a change back to serving the ingroup, and horizontal individualism? Particularly if one were to also include the issue of wealth and individualism, since Britain has the fourth largest economy on the planet.

Hofstede, provides views of individualism and collectivism, which he argues influence culture in organisations. These are '...Power distance (which)...represents the extent to which the unequal distribution of power is accepted in society...Uncertainty avoidance (which)... represents the degree of tolerance for uncertainty in a society...Individualism (which)... represents the extent to which individuals consider themselves more important than the

collective (and)... Masculinity (which)...represents the extent to which assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and a lack of concern for others are dominant values in a society' (Yeh and Lawrence, 1995:655).

He maintains that individualism and power distance are negatively correlated, and other factors will be linked. This implies that in an individualistic organisation such as in Britain, there should be a low tolerance for power distance, it tends to be low on uncertainty avoidance, and masculine in its approach. It seems worthwhile noting, that 'Several empirical studies have suggested that matching an employees' culture and the organisational culture results in positive outcomes' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265).

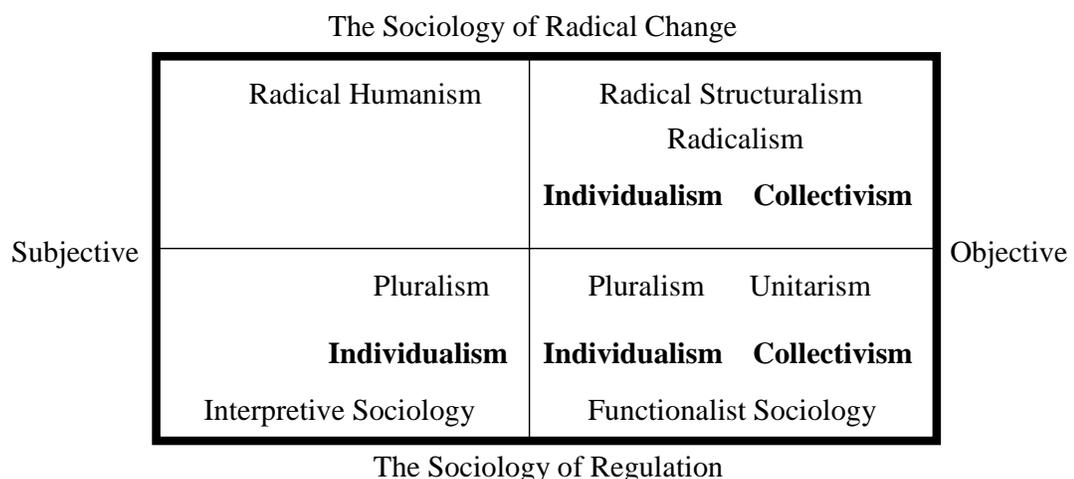
In an extension of the above view, 'Erez (1986)...(has proposed that)...the congruence of leadership and culture was shown to be a critical factor in obtaining the best performance' (quoted in Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). While all leadership behaviours are present '...across individualist and collectivist cultures. In collectivist cultures, leadership should expect and encourage employee and group loyalties; incentives should be given collectively, and their distribution should be left up to the group...in individualist cultures, people can be moved around as individuals and incentives should be given to individuals' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265).

The collectivist notion of leadership has a lot in common with the unitary frame of reference. The fact that 'Collectivists accept and respond more positively to authoritarian leadership (and expect)...a more paternalistic and 'fatherly' role' for the leader, may support this assertion (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). Moreover, since '...individualists...use an equity approach in their negotiations regardless of group membership...respond less favourably to authoritarian leadership (and) expect...participation', this suggests a more pluralistic approach (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265).

The examination of current knowledge that has been undertaken, strongly predicts how individualistic and collective groups approach the management of change and conflict. The individualistic tendency to concentrate on ‘self’ leads me to conclude that the management of change and conflict tends to be approached in a pluralistic manner; whereby the leader will attempt to manage the many self-interests of the group. Collective cultures on the other hand, see change and conflict in a unitary way, and so expect organisational members to subordinate themselves to the will of the organisation.

These key concepts can be related to the underlying assumptions that underpin social theory. Collectivism tends to follow the objective rational view of organisation as typified by the unitary and radical frames of reference, and as such has been positioned on the most objective side of the framework in Figure 4.1. Individualism appears somewhat more complex. Although many facets of individualism are in keeping with the plural frame of reference, the fact that the concept is just as much about power and conflict, and the realization of potentiality, may perhaps extend its scope to the radical viewpoint. It seems conceivable that the style of organisation in which the individualists are working, will be related to the paradigm that is in operation. As a consequence of these factors individualism has been aligned with pluralism; on the least subjective part of the interpretive paradigm, and the least objective portions of radical structuralism and functionalism.

**Figure 4.1 Individualism and Collectivism and Social Theory**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Morgan, 1997; Hofstede, 1997)]

Individualism and collectivism has predominantly explored the concept of culture from the perspective of the follower. Culture can also be considered from the standpoint of the organisation, which, although based upon the same notions of values, beliefs, stories, norms and rituals, does bring us to a position where we can consider both the culture itself ~ beyond individualism and collectivism ~ and the manner in which the ‘...values that guide the organization’ are shaped (Morgan, 1997:132).

In exploring organisational culture, Morgan says that ‘in any organization there may be different and competing value systems that create a mosaic of organizational realities’ (Morgan, 1997:137). He portrays two of many possible realities, in the ‘cut and thrust’ and the ‘lets bury our differences’ cultures (Morgan, 1997:135). The former being shaped in a ‘male’ power organisational structure, and the latter, emphasising ‘female’ values and ‘...more organic forms of behaviour’ (Morgan, 1997:136). And although it seems interesting to note that ‘female’ values are said to have emerged in order to cope with the uncertainty and turbulence of modern environments, this does not describe how these realities are constructed. In considering how these realities may be constructed, perhaps Lukes can help when he explores the concept of power. He proposes that we use the notion of power to map ‘...our social world...assign responsibility (and evaluate)...social inequalities’ (Lukes, 2002:491). From these respective viewpoints, Lukes says that power is used to identify ‘... those (who can)...assist or obstruct us (those who can limit)...others freedom (or one’s own ability to)...shape and control one’s own life’ (Lukes, 2002:491). The latter two practices seem useful, because it suggests that culture can be controlled by others, or be shaped and controlled by oneself.

Schein explores the 'shaped by others' viewpoint of culture. He suggests that leaders create cultures '...when they create groups and organizations (in fact he contends that)...it is the unique function of leadership...to manage cultural evolution' (Schein, 1992:15). Similarly, Peters and Waterman note that 'Pettigrew sees the process of shaping culture as the prime management role: 'The [leader] not only creates the rational and tangible aspects of organisations, such as structure and technology, but also is the creator of symbols, ideologies, language, beliefs, rituals and myths' (Peters and Waterman, 1982:104). As a consequence, Morgan observes that theorists who see culture in this way, view it as a '...phenomenon with clearly defined attributes (which they)... reduce to a set of discrete variables such as values, beliefs, stories, norms and rituals that can be documented and manipulated in an instrumental way' (Morgan, 1997:151). This concept of organisational culture is therefore clearly concomitant with the notion of 'top down power' (De Angelis, 2000) and modernism.

Morgan examines an opposing viewpoint when he argues that culture is '...not something that can be imposed on a social setting (but is an)...evolved form of social practice that has been influenced by many complex interactions between people, events, situations, actions, and general circumstance. Culture is self-organised and always evolving' (Morgan, 1997:151). Lukes makes a similar point, when he suggests that 'All cultures (are)...settings within which their members, individually and collectively, engage in a cognitive enterprise of reasoning and face the predicament of getting their world right: of understanding, predicting and controlling their environments, natural and social' (Lukes, 2000:18). In contrast to the above top down view, these standpoints consequently seem more consistent with the notion of 'bottom up power' (De Angelis, 2000), and the interpretive paradigm.

Beerel suggests that the leader's role in a self-organising model is one of recognising these patterns, and subsequently '...focusing values and core competencies to new realities' (Beerel, 1998:111). In this context she says that leaders '...are perpetually testing that their realities are congruent with the new realities while aligning their organizational cultures to these new realities' (Beerel, 1998:111). Yet since Beerel's standpoint still attempts to 'control' the culture, it does not appear that different to the concepts of Pettigrew or Schein, whereas Morgan offers a divergent view. He suggests that when leaders ask, '...what impact am I having on the social construction of reality in my organization (they)...penetrate a new level of understanding about their significance and what they are truly doing (because the leader

is)...what they are seen and experienced as being' (Morgan, 1997:148). Morgan posits that this viewpoint '...obliges the leader to understand their role and significance in terms of actual impacts on the reality construction process' (Morgan, 1997:148). As a consequence, the leader does not create the reality, but is part of it. Although Morgan does imply that in understanding their role, the leader may be able to influence the construction of reality.

Postmodernist and modernist conceptions of culture not only appear to confirm the above alignment of individualism and collectivism within the conceptual framework, but they also support the above views of organisational culture and its creation. Indeed, the term 'Corporate culture' (a modernist's view) is used '...to describe a set of cultural values, norms and their symbolic manifestations, devised by management and transmitted, both formally and informally, to the rest of the workforce' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:100). 'Organisational culture' on the other hand, which is a postmodernist view, is used to refer to the '...more organic nature of organisational life, one that grows and emerges from the lived experience of organisation and which emphasizes the creativity of organisational members' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:100).

A final thought, and perhaps a link forward to the next sections on leadership; Hofstede suggests that 'Culturally a manager is the follower of his or her followers...she or he has to meet the subordinates on the subordinates' cultural ground...There is a free choice in managerial behaviour, but the cultural constraints are much tighter than most' admit (Hofstede, 1997:239).

## **Section 4.2 Leadership – Traditionalism to Post-Modernism**

### **Introduction**

This section will provide a theoretical backdrop to the critical field of leadership. Crowther and Limerick have suggested that 'The dominant issue facing those who are working in the area of leadership and professional development...is how to offer programmes that equip... administrators to deal with the unique demands of massive change in their environments' (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27). They assert that the problems facing organisations hinge on the advancement of programmes that develop leaders able to operate in these turbulent times. They also contend that it is useful to consider McKinney and Garrison's third wave

metaphor for examining leadership. The theoretical story of leadership and leadership development will be traced from its first wave beginnings to the possibility of a third wave approach.

## **Leadership**

*'Leadership...remains the most studied and least understood topic in all the social sciences'*  
(Handy, 1991:106)

McGregor provides a means of examining the assumptions that underpin the process of leadership. Whilst 'McGregor laid out his vision...more than three decades ago (it is argued that)...The world that Douglas McGregor spoke of is here' (Heil et al, 2000:3,5). He noted that 'Formal theories of organisation have been taught in management courses for years... hierarchical structure, authority, unity of command, task specialisation, division of staff... span of control (which)...comprise a logically persuasive set of assumptions which have had a profound influence upon managerial behaviour' (McGregor, 1985:15). In developing his ideas, he suggests that these traditional models may no longer be relevant, since not only were they '...derived primarily from the study of...the military and the Catholic Church (but they also suffer from '...ethnocentrism (ignoring)...the political, social, and economic milieu in shaping organisations and influencing managerial practice' (McGregor, 1985:16). The fact that he also maintains that they are based upon a set of assumptions '...about human behaviour...which are at best only partially true' seems quite significant, because if there is a '...single assumption which pervades conventional organisational theory (it is that)...authority is the central, indispensable means of managerial control' (McGregor, 1985:16,18). Yet as McGregor observes, the 'Effectiveness of authority as a means of control depends...upon the ability to enforce it through the use of punishment (or in industrial terms)...the threat of unemployment' (McGregor, 1985:21).

McGregor terms the notions that underpin the traditional view 'Theory X' assumptions, where: 'The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can (sic)... most people must be coerced, controlled, directed (and)...threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organisation objectives...The average human prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little

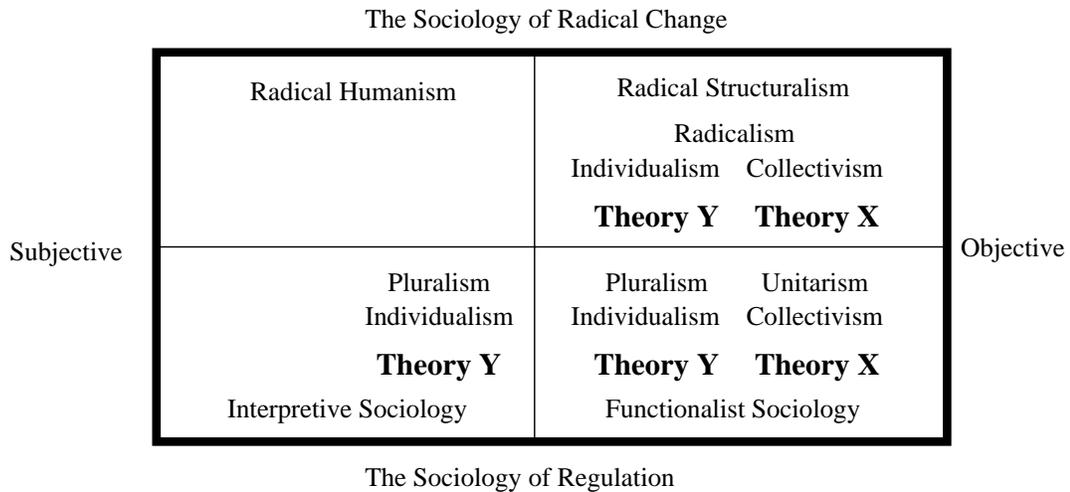
ambition (and)...wants security above all' (McGregor, 1985:33). Heil et al note that McGregor believed that '...most managers used authority to effect behavioural change through threat or reward, both of which he saw as limiting the employees ability to realize their needs' (Heil et al, 2000:14).

Due to the limitations of Theory X, McGregor offered a second set of assumptions that he called 'Theory Y'. He says that if Theory X is about direction and control, then Theory Y is about integration of organisational and individual goals. Anderson explains that Theory Y '...is a more democratic philosophy where leaders 'believe the best' about employees, and treat them as people at work, rather than workers who also happen to be people' (Anderson, 1999:265). As a result Theory Y assumptions see: 'The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work as natural as play or rest...Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed (sic)...Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement...The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility... The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity...is widely not narrowly distributed in the population...Under the conditions of modern life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized' (McGregor, 1985:47,48).

In linking these assumptions to social theory, McGregor aids this process by saying that these '...assumptions involve sharply different implications for managerial strategy...they are dynamic rather than static...they indicate the possibility of human growth and development (and)...the limits on human collaboration in the organisational setting are not the limits of human nature, but of management's ingenuity in discovering how to realize the potential represented by its human resources' (McGregor, 1985:48). Hence these assumptions have much in common with the concepts of individualism and collectivism, whereby the former involves self-direction and achieving potentiality, and the latter involves rationality and subordination. However, in stressing management's role in the equation they are also clearly functional concepts. It may also be helpful to consider the postmodern / modern dimension in this process. Carter and Jackson say that whilst some theories plainly exhibit modernist '...pretensions, epistemologically and methodologically (others)...clearly represent a theory of the individual... rather than a theory of management (in which labour is)...homogenous (and)...reactive (whereas

the individual theories are)...proactive (and thus deny)...the possibility of collectivist approaches to managing' (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:93). In Figure 4.2 Theory X has been matched with collectivism, and Theory Y with individualism. This places Theory X and Y on the most and least objective portions of the radical structuralist and functionalist paradigms, and Theory Y on the least subjective side of the interpretive paradigm.

**Figure 4.2 Theory X and Theory Y and Social Theory**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; McGregor, 1985; Morgan, 1997; Hofstede, 1997)]

Before examining the development of leadership theory, it may be helpful to first differentiate between notions of leadership and management. Yet since the fire service is a uniformed disciplined organisation, this differentiation should be extended to include notions of command. The 'Sudbury Report', a report that examined fire service command, leadership, and management training, as such seems significant, since it stated that these concepts could be '...distinctly defined' and discussed as separate subject areas (Sudbury Report, 1990:3-1). Whilst this distinction cannot be made easily, these definitions from the Sudbury Report are commonly used throughout the fire service, and as such should reveal something about the assumptions that underpin these notions.

The Sudbury Report defined command as the '...exercise of authority, rule...power of control, disposal and direction'; management as the '...application of skill in the use, manipulation,

treatment or control or in the conduct (of an enterprise, operation etc)'; and leadership as '...the action or influence necessary for the direction or organisation of effort in a group or undertaking' (Sudbury Report, 1990:3-3). Yet there are numerous other definitions. Flin takes his definition of command from the Oxford Dictionary, and says that it is; '...to order, (and)...to exercise supreme authority over' (Flin, 1996:32). The Home Office provide a similar definition; and suggest that command '...means the authority for an agency to direct the actions of its own resources' (Home Office 1992:52). While these definitions are similar to that provided by the Sudbury Report, in that the commander has the authority to direct activities, they do not reveal much about the activity itself. However, as Flin observes, the '...operation of command is the foundation of all warfare operations and is a prime topic of military writings' (Flin, 1996:32). This link to the military may be significant, because it has already been noted that the fire service is organised on a militaristic model, in which its officers are often called commanders (Brunacini, 1985; Flin, 1996).

Murray, a senior fire officer, may provide some help in looking at the issue of command in more depth. He asserts that '...the ability...to quickly make sense of the confused and dynamic picture presented at every incident, separates fire service management from other forms of management' (Murray, 1994:67). Similarly Flin remarks that '...command has to encompass a whole range of extra skills, mostly concerned with the rapid assessment of people who have changed under pressure and of things which have failed to operate or activate as might have been expected' (Flin, 1996:32). This seems to link management to command, and in fact the fire service is in the process of changing the terms 'Incident Command' to 'Incident Management', and 'Commander' to 'Manager' (Fire Service Role Maps, 2002). Although these notions introduce an element of urgency to the definition, the fire service does recognise the concept of 'command' in a 'non-operational situation'. This is less urgent but just as directive (Fire Services Examination Board, 1998:11). In spite of this, the emergency paradigm forms the dominant perspective of command in the fire service. Grint may illustrate why: he says that high stress situations induce '...a high level of dependency on the part of subordinates towards their leaders...followers exchange their own feelings of insecurity in return for the leaders securing high levels of power and status' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:11). This may explain why the above definition of command is used within the fire service.

Grint states that ‘There are many who argue that management and leadership are diametrically opposed (Grint, 1995:125). The perceived differences are set out in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 Leadership Vs. Management**

<b>Managers</b>	<b>Leaders</b>
Do right things	Do things right
Carry out position responsibility and exercise authority	Influence commitment
Routine administration	Construct a vision
Are interested in efficiency	Are interested in effectiveness
Think short-term	Think long-term
Deal with Complexity	Deal with change
Support and Monitor organisational activities	Maintain culture and interpersonal relationships
Administer	Innovate and motivate

(Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Yukl, 1989; Grint, 1995; Day et al, 1999; Buss, 2001; Harvey, 2001; Dowding, 2002)

Given the above perceived differences, it is not surprising that there should be so many definitions. Sims and Lorenzi see management as a ‘...process of using resources to accomplish goals’ (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992:14). On similar lines, Stogdill defines leadership as the ‘...process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in the efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement’ (quoted in Grint, 1997b:114). Yet Lippit perceives leadership as ‘...getting people moving in a direction’, whereas Larson views it quite differently, as involving ‘...creativity, inspiration, entrepreneurship, and achieving a shared sense of commitment’ (Larson, 1999:37; Lippit, 1999:18). While there are fewer command definitions, Bennis suggests that most people cling to the myth of leadership, ‘...as the larger-than-life (leader)...shouting commands, giving direction, inspiring the troops’ (Bennis, 1999:71).

Clearly it is not as simple a process as envisaged by the Sudbury Report, but, perhaps Fairholm’s perspective is useful. He asserts that definitions ‘...reflect a mind-set (some established)...over 100 years ago (which places)...science, order and control at the centre of any definition’ (Fairholm, 1998:xiv). He maintains that defining leadership is an intensely

personal activity limited by our personal paradigms (and proposes that definitions be ranked)...in hierarchical evolutionary order along a continuum from management control...to spiritual holism' (Fairholm, 1998:xvii, xix).

Fairholm proposes the following categories...

- Leadership as Management...control over others' behaviours and actions
- Leadership as Excellence...high quality management as the real function of leadership
- Values Leadership...set and enforce values for the group...values trigger behaviour
- Trust Cultural Leadership... culture of shared values where people...trust each other
- Spiritual Leadership...the ability to have a transformational effect on the organisation

(Fairholm, 1998:xxi, xxii).

It can be argued that this hierarchy of leadership definitions are from the functional paradigm, because each takes an entitative view of leadership. This perspective allows us to view leadership, management, and command as similar activities, but located at different points along a leadership continuum. This places management and command at the more directive end of the spectrum, and leadership at the other. On similar lines Chester Barnard considered '...command or supervision of personnel...as opposed to management or administration, as secondary aspects of leadership' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:91).

In exploring the differences between leadership and management, Grint examines how the two activities may interact. He says that '...organisations with too many leaders and not enough managers, are likely to tear themselves apart in the search for different goals or wither as the supply lines are stretched beyond the capacity of managers to manage them' (Grint, 1995:126). Nevertheless, since the purpose of this investigation is to examine the relevance of the traditional leadership paradigm as it applies to the EFRS, Fairholm's functional concept of leadership should suffice.

The notion that leadership is the most studied but least understood social science is so often said it is almost an apocryphal statement. Bass said many years ago, that '...there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:332). Calas and Smircich may be able to explain why this situation has

arisen. They note that ‘...organisational research and theory keep on asking for new approaches and innovation, and... reconceptualising leadership has been a central focal point of these endeavours’ (quoted in Grint, 1997b:339). This suggests that it might be a difficult task to critically evaluate the available theoretical field. As Bennis points out, ‘...those who write about leadership have tended to become embroiled in one or more of the now familiar controversies on the subject’ (Bennis, 1998:22). He says that three false dichotomies have preoccupied those concerned with leaders and leadership. The first of these is ‘...whether leaders are larger than life’ (Bennis, 1998:22). The second ‘...is whether leaders are born or made (and the third)...of the false dichotomies is the perceived conflict between expedient and idealistic leadership’ (Bennis, 1998:22). It does seem a complex task, and maybe the reason why there are so many definitions. However, because of these comments, the definition of leadership offered above, and the fact that the passage of time is a significant factor, an overview of the evolutionary stages of leadership theory will be drawn from Sadler (1997) and Anderson (1999). Yet since I am principally concerned with understanding how the members of the Service socially construct their view of leadership, and I have also identified a possible third wave approach, leadership will also be examined from a postmodernist and constructivist perspective.

The first stage is identified as the ‘Great Man’ Period. Adair asserts that ‘...once or twice in its history every nation produces a person with a genius for leadership (quoted in Syrett and Hogg, 1992:34). The theory ‘...advances the idea that certain people are born stronger, more intelligent’ (Anderson, 1999:269). Such a view was captured in these words: ‘Those of the right breed could lead, all others must be led’ (Bennis and Nanus, 1985:5). Great leaders in history were therefore studied ‘...on the assumption that the route to becoming an effective leader was to study their lives and emulate them’ (Sadler, 1997:28).

The ‘great man’ theory contained certain inherent problems. In the first instance, the great people had vastly different characteristics, and in the second they were extremely difficult to emulate. This gave rise to Trait Theories, which ‘...abandoned the attempt to link leadership qualities with particular individuals (and involved)...listing a number of traits which are believed in general to relate to effective leadership’ (Sadler, 1997:28). However, not only does Sadler point out that these theories ‘...draw on virtually all the adjectives in the dictionary

which describe some positive or virtuous human attribute', but they also '...failed to take situations into account (and ignored)...the followers' (Sadler, 1997:31; Kanji and Moura, 2001:701). Anderson says that 'These theories were sometimes inter-mixed with racial; sexual and class discrimination to promote supremacy of one race over another, one sex over another, or one social class over another' (Anderson, 1999:270). Whilst Kotter has suggested that '...leadership has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits' (Kotter, 1999:51). Kouzes and Posner have administered over 20,000 questionnaires on four continents; and their research has indicated that people will '...willingly follow leaders who are Honest, Forward Looking, Inspiring and Competent' (Kouzes and Posner, 1997:22).

The next stage in the development of leadership theory is termed the 'Influence Era'. Sadler states that this phase '...recognises that leadership is a process involving relationships between individuals and cannot be understood by focusing solely on the leader' (Sadler, 1997:29). It proposes a top-down view of the world; since the theory focuses '...on the exercise of power and influence, and assumes a passive role for subordinates' (Sadler, 1997:31). But as Helgesen points out; 'Position is a crude way of measuring power; it fails to reflect the subtleties of actual alignment' (quoted in Hesselbein et al, 1996:23).

The Leader Behaviour Theory Stage, '...strikes out in a fresh direction by focusing on what leaders actually do...looking at typical leader behaviour patterns and differences in behaviour between effective and ineffective leaders' (Sadler, 1997:29). Sadler notes that this phase can be subdivided into the early behaviour period and the late behaviour period. The former '...led to the identification of two important dimensions of leader behaviour: initiating structure (or) concern for the task...and consideration (or)...concern for individual satisfaction and group cohesion' (Sadler, 1997:29). During the latter period the findings '...were adapted and applied to industry, most notably by Blake and Mouton, whose Managerial Grid (which illustrates the relationship between the concern for people and the concern for production)...was adopted as a tool in leadership development' (Sadler, 1997:29).

Anderson terms this phase, the Humanistic Theories of Leadership period, and in addition to Blake and Mouton, also cites Argyris, McGregor and Likert as prominent theorists. Anderson

explains that these theorists ‘...focused on the development of effective organisations through a humanising process of structuring the work or living environment so that individuals can meet personal needs and organisational objectives at the same time’ (Anderson, 1999:271). Anderson provides a possible link back to the beginning of this section, when he asserts that this ‘...approach can contribute much to our understanding of the people side of enterprise’ (Anderson, 1999:271).

Anderson calls the next stage the Situational or Contingency approach to leadership (Fiedler, 1967; Vroom and Yetton, 1973). He says that ‘These approaches reflect important advances over more simplistic ‘one best way’ methods (proposing) ...a more complex diagnosis of the situation at hand, and more complex leadership interventions’ (Anderson, 1999:272). Handy argues that these theories ‘...take more specific account of the other variables involved in any leadership situation, in particular the task and / or the work group, and the position of the leader within that work group’ (Handy, 1993:103). Anderson notes that ‘The basic premise of these approaches is that if we understand the factors that impact on employee morale and performance, and apply that understanding successfully, we can have more direct influence and control over morale and – many believe – productivity’ (Anderson, 1999:272). This comment about productivity conceivably suggests why leadership is studied so much, because a great deal of the work appears to be driven by a search for excellence and a desire to succeed or even merely survive.

This period of development gave rise to a number of prominent theorists. Sadler posits that Fiedler and Vroom are ‘...among the most important contributors’ (Sadler, 1997:30). Anderson contends that Fiedler’s Contingency Model ‘...serves three main purposes...it supports the idea that effective leadership is situational in nature...that a leader has to attend to a wide range of situational variables to make a wise choice of leader behaviour...that more directive leaders were effective in certain situations (and it opened up)...the issue of leader versatility, and the replacement of a leader in a situation where he or she can capitalize on his or her strengths’ (Anderson, 1999:273). Similarly, Vroom and Yetton’s Decision Making Model suggests that it ‘...is critical for the leader to decide how much participation subordinates should have when making decisions (the theory argues)...that acceptance of decisions by subordinates is an important issue in regard of their productivity’ (Anderson,

1999:273). It can be noted however, that increased involvement is a concession forced on the leader by circumstances.

The next stage is termed the Transactional Leadership Phase. Kakabadse and Kakabadse say that Burns first ‘...coined the phrase Transactional Leadership (namely)...the skill and ability required to handle the more mundane operational day to day transactions of daily life’ (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999:5). They state that it ‘...refers to the interactions between individuals and groups in the performance of their job, but within a particular context’ (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999:5). Atwater and Yammarino explore the concept, and explain that ‘...it is contingent on rewards and promises (since it)...involves positive transactions in which leaders emphasize what rewards subordinates can expect to receive for certain levels of performance’ (Atwater and Yammarino, 1993:645).

Kakabadse and Kakabadse examine the ‘Essence of Transactional Leadership’ [and say that it resides in the work of Fayol (1841 - 1925) and Barnard (1886 – 1961)]...(Fayol)...identified management as being composed of five elements... Forecasting and Planning, Organising the Enterprise, Commanding, Co-ordination, (and)...Control’, whereas Barnard suggested ‘...that co-operation and command are vital proponents to achieving purpose in an organisation’ (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999:27,29). Braverman asserts that it is ‘...impossible to overestimate (the importance of these theories)...in the shaping of the modern corporation (and says)...popular notions that (assert they have)...been superceded... represents a woeful misreading of the actual dynamics of the development of management’ (Braverman, 1974:86).

Sadler describes four phases in the transactional period of leadership. The first, the ‘Exchange Period’, is explored by White et al who assert that this view sees leadership ‘...like a bag of golf clubs...when the occasion demanded a particular skill it was extracted from the bag and put to use’ (White et al, 1996:19). The second, the ‘Role Development Period’, proposed that leadership could also reside in the subordinate, before moving on to the ‘Anti-Leadership Era’, and the Ambiguity Period’. The former questioning the concept of leadership itself, and the latter suggesting that it only ‘...existed...as a perception in the mind of the observer’ (Sadler, 1997:30).

Van Seters and Field describe the Transformational Leadership Era (Burns, 1974; Bass, 1985), as the ‘...latest and most promising phase in the evolutionary development of leadership theory’ (quoted in Sadler, 1997:30). Sadler states that the focus here is on ‘...leader behaviour during periods of organisational transition, and on processes such as creating visions of a desired future state and obtaining employee commitment to change’ (Sadler, 1997:30). Sadler subdivides this ‘Era’ into the ‘Charisma Period’ and the ‘Self-fulfilling Prophecy Period’. The former focusing on strong leadership ‘...which both creates the vision and empowers subordinates to carry it out (and the latter which emphasises)...the way in which transformational leadership involves the building of positive expectations’ (Sadler, 1997:32).

The creation of ‘vision’ in the EFRS was a matter explored in all of my Stage One EdD papers (see Appendix 1 – Chapter 2). Although the papers examined the creation of ‘vision’ in relation to strategic planning, it seems just as relevant for issues of leadership in the EFRS. The process of creating the vision, and Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s Decision Making Continuum were linked in these papers (see Appendix 2). This suggests that the notion of transformational leadership as depicted above in the ‘Charisma Period’ could be considered as a top-down or ‘telling’ method for creating the vision. Pearce on the other hand presents a ‘selling’ view, when he argues that ‘Good leaders...share their thoughts with all the major stakeholders in the organization...they have an almost evangelical ability to present their vision and have it accepted’ (Pearce, 2000:82). Finally, Ackoff offers a participative approach, in that ‘...the transformational leader... must encourage and facilitate formulation of organizational vision in which as many stakeholders as possible have participated’ (Ackoff, 1999:20).

Whilst Sadler’s comments on transformational leadership are possibly dated, the latest conceptions on leadership still appear to be from within this ‘transformational era’. For example, ‘Leadership from the inside out’, or ‘leading as a whole person – with your strengths, vulnerabilities and career history’ is intended to allow the leader to ‘...inspire others (and)...create value’ (Hays, 1999:27). The notion of the ‘...co-leadership culture (with)... power and responsibility...dispersed, giving the enterprise a whole constellation of...co-

leaders (working)...for positive change at every level of the enterprise' appears about achieving the organisation's future state (Bennis and Heenan, 1999:38). And finally, the Industrial Society's notion of Liberating Leadership, or '...unlocking the skills and capabilities of all the people in an organisation' seems once again to be empowerment by another name (Turner, 1998:18).

Many of the 'newer' concepts regarding leadership, have, like Bennis and Heenan, focused on the follower. Heifetz has proposed the notion of leadership without authority. He argues that 'Our language no longer serves us. The logical construct in the terms of leadership and followership is bankrupt...the best leadership does not generate followers...the best leadership is one that generates other leaders' (Heifetz, 1999:19). Maurik suggests that this view of leadership emphasises humility, and a process whereby '...the leader is one who listens and meets the needs of the follower' (Maurik, 2001:33). This reminds me of Lao Tzu's words in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC...

As for the leader at the top,  
it is best if people barely know he exists.  
Because he says very little  
His words have more value:  
And when the work is done,  
The people are pleased,  
Because they think they did it all themselves.

It is apparent that there has been '...a veritable flood of literature promising a new vision... the terms may vary – empowerment, transformational leadership, servant leadership, stewardship, spirit, caring leadership, but the underlying motives are similar; an effort to argue that...firms must embrace moral behaviour, that they must treat workers not merely instrumentally but as moral ends' (Harvey, 2001:36). Harvey posits that '...this utilitarian perspective (which attempts to)...develop humanistic structures and cultures' is almost part of conventional management wisdom for today's firms (Harvey, 2001:36). As a result Kennett asserts that to be effective in 2002, '...the art of leadership is focused on achieving things through other people' (Kennett, 2002:64). Although once again, this not only appears to be a top-down model, since it is the leaders choice to allow others to do the work, but it is also redolent of Lao Tzu's 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC concept of leadership, where the leader is in control but allows the followers to think that they have 'achieved it themselves'.

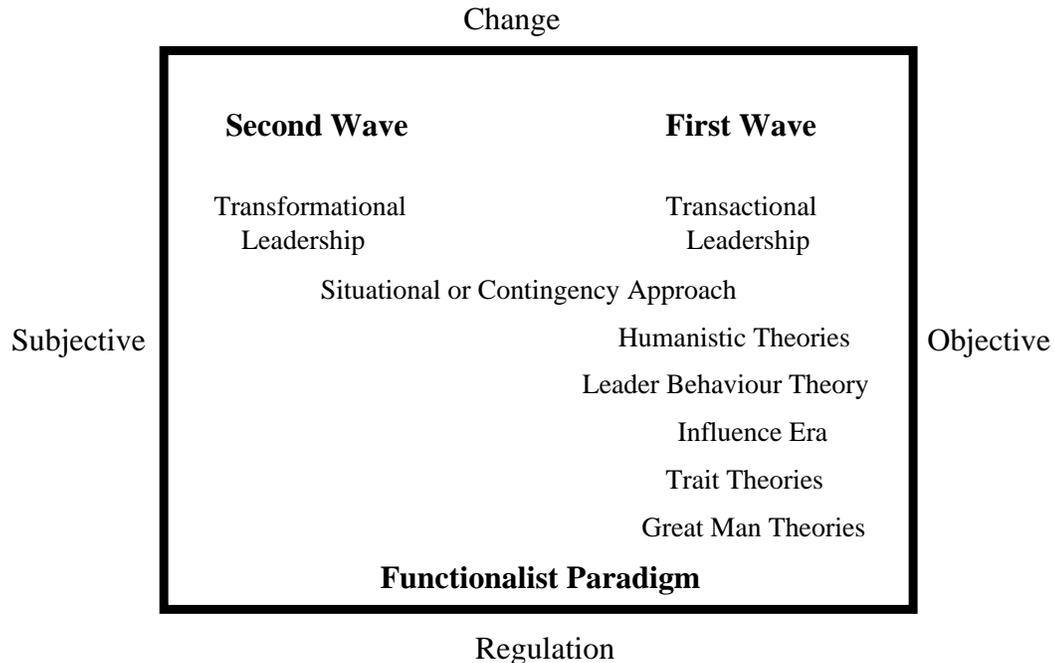
Also focusing on the follower is the notion of the followers' preferred leadership style in terms of individual and collective organisations. Jung and Avolio have suggested that '...collectivists tend to have a stronger attachment to their organizations and tend to subordinate their individual goals to group goals' (Jung and Avolio, 1999:208). They contend that 'Transformational leaders emphasize the importance of subordinating individual needs to group goals (from this perspective)...collectivists are expected to identify with their leaders goals and the common purpose of shared vision of the group and the organisation' (Jung and Avolio, 1999:208). Individualists on the other hand '...are expected to be more motivated to satisfy their own self-interests and personal goals (so)...individualists are expected to be more motivated by transactional leadership' (Jung and Avolio, 1999:208).

If we return to McKinney and Garrison's third wave metaphor of leadership, it can be argued that what has been presented so far is wave one and wave two. With transactional leadership rooted within the first wave of formal hierarchies, and transformational leadership firmly located within the second wave of 'decentralisation and empowerment'. Given that this the case, it seems that the first and second wave of leadership theory has not moved beyond the functionalist paradigm, but merely to different position within it. Not only are these theories concerned with understanding the world as it is, but they are also rooted in the unitary frame of reference. Even the transformational approaches that discuss the possibility of leaders being positioned throughout the organisation, assume that leaders will take control of the vision and direct the results.

The position of the different leadership theories illustrates that there is some movement within this paradigm. For instance, even though transformational leadership is based upon the same set of assumptions regarding human nature as transactional leadership, it is far less objective and less rational. The leadership theories that have been examined to date have been placed within the functionalist portion of the conceptual framework in Figure 4.4, with transformational theories on the least objective side of the paradigm, and transactional leadership, and its predecessors on the most objective side. Situational and contingency theories have been located centrally, because like transformational approaches they include

the follower in the equation. The positioning of the theories as they ascend within the functional paradigm also reflects the fact that as theory and practice has evolved, the followers have been given more freedom, albeit as a concession granted to them by the leaders.

**Figure 4.4 Leadership and Social Theory**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Sadler, 1997; Anderson, 1999)]

While McKinney and Garrison admit that they do not know what the third wave of leadership will look like, they have proposed that it will not be modernist, but post-modernist. The evidence is supportive of their assertion. The ‘...business world is changing at breakneck, maybe exponential speed...technology is radically altering the shape of organisations’ (White et al, 1996:30). The outcomes from this shift are significant, since it is argued that ‘...the uncertainties engendered by a rapidly changing environment (have)...called for a reappraisal of the suitability of hitherto dominant bureaucratic structures, in favour of more flexible, adaptive and innovative organisational forms’ (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:40). Lumby has posited ‘...that any attempt to respond to (these challenges) using established principles...is likely to be dysfunctional’ (quoted in Bush and Middlewood, 1997:32).

These rational or 'mechanistic' approaches to organisation, as Morgan has referred to them, '...work well under conditions where machines work well...when the environment is stable...when one wishes to produce exactly the same product time and again (and)...when the human 'machine' parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do' (Morgan, 1997:27). Thus in leadership terms, '...when life is orderly, tasks are predictable, and most things are going well, people neither want or need leadership' (Hesselbein et al, 1996:131). Bardwick suggests that 'In these circumstances (people)...want peacetime leadership, or more accurately peacetime management...in which events are reasonably predictable (and there)...is a sense of comfort and control' (quoted in Hesselbein et al, 1996:131). Bardwick extends this analysis, and suggests that 'In this era of globalization...peacetime conditions are over' (quoted in Hesselbein et al, 1996:132). It is argued that new approaches to leadership are required, and there are no shortages of conceptions on offer, but the fact that it is said that rational approaches are no longer viable, does at least point towards a paradigmatic shift.

### **Modernism, postmodernism and leadership**

In exploring leadership, modernism and postmodernism, it seems significant that none of the above leadership theories are positioned on the postmodernist side of the conceptual framework. This appears to be corroborated by McKinney and Garrison three-wave metaphor, because they have asserted that they do not know what the third wave might look like, but it will be postmodernist. Nevertheless, it may yet still prove possible to examine notions of postmodernism and leadership, by looking at postmodernism and organisation.

Hancock and Tyler say that it '...was the vision of a rational organisational order that, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century can be translated into the now classical theories associated with the likes of Taylor and Fayol' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:39). Taylor's stated aim was to harness the principles and methods of the natural sciences to uncover the single most objective mode of organisation, the one-best way...so as to lead to the maximisation of productive efficiency' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:39).

Taylor, who was an engineer, saw workers as machine animals, and although his notions came under increasing scrutiny, changes '...were not directed at the logic and the structures of the modern organisational form...but rather represented attempts to fine tune the technologies and mechanisms of management' (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:41). Myers who developed the idea

of the worker as a ‘...social animal’, from his work with the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, focused on the work context. This ‘...inevitably evolved into...needs theory (or)...neo-Maslovian approaches (which were)...essentially behaviourist attempts to operationalize Maslow’s insights in the management context (for example McGregor and Herzberg)’ (Hassard and Parker, 1993:90). Hence, leadership theories that ‘...were considered at the time to be more humanistic developments...have since come to be understood as attempts to further rationalize labour’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:41).

Heydebrand defined an ideal type postmodern organisation as being ‘...small or be located in small sub-units of larger organisations...its division of labour is informal and flexible and its managerial structure is functionally decentralised, eclectic and participative’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:56). Carter and Jackson posit that these forms of postmodernism organisation ‘...are seen to rely on... emotional cultures in the sense that they facilitate the personal development of individuals’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:56). Yet while broadly postmodern forms of organisation are recognised, Heydebrand remains ‘...wary of any suggestion that they are in any way transcendent of the basic modernist drive toward formal rationality’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:56). Dent makes a similar point; and cites some of the aspects that constitute a postmodern approach; ‘...a participative organisation culture that (encourages)...teamwork and participation...to develop an anti-hierarchical approach’ (quoted in Hancock and Tyler, 2001:56). However, like Heydebrand he maintains that this ‘...does not *ipso facto* indicate a break with the performative rationality of modernity’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:59). Alvesson asserts that a truly postmodern form has not emerged, but rather become a ‘...conceptual catch all which...merely (signifies)... a surface change, leaving the underlying rationality of the organisation intact’ (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:60). As Carter and Jackson contend postmodern approaches are almost inevitably doomed to failure because their ‘...arena of operationalization; management is quintessentially modernist’ (quoted in Hassard and Parker, 1993:83). This might explain why McKinney and Garrison have not been able to identify what the third wave of leadership will look like, and why leadership theory has remained within the functional paradigm. Nevertheless, the champions of postmodernism claim that ‘...by adopting their particular world-view we can create a less hierarchical, pluralistic and potentially free society’; and if postmodernism is anything, it is a reaction against the one-best way of modernism, and its managerially controlled view of the world (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:60).

## **Leadership and constructivism**

From the constructivist viewpoint, the followers' role in constructing the concept of leadership is pivotal. Lilley and Platt not only posit that '...individuals...are engaged in constructing their conceptions of the social world and their place in it' but as a result, they also '...devise myriad constructions of leadership by using unexpected bases for creating meaning' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:331).

Grint says that probably '...the most popular assumption (regarding a relativist or constructivist approach is that)...it provides no basis for leadership' (Grint, 1997a:139). The '...relativist's or constructivist's dilemma seems to imply that in the absence of any objective or true criteria for evaluating anything...everyone's account is equal and therefore anything goes' (Grint, 1997a:139). Yet, he goes on to argue that this view is flawed, and suggests that an '...Orwellian approach to animal quality is a better representation; for all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others' (Grint, 1997a:139). This seems significant, because this is redolent of Triandis's 'vertical' notion of self, where there is a sense of 'rank has its privileges'. In exploring this constructivist notion of leadership, Lilley and Platt declare that from this subjective perspective (individuals have many different ways)...of conceptualising... leadership (based upon)...cultural, political and ideological doctrines' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:332). However, they maintain that there cannot be a '...guarantee (of)...subjective homogeneity (suggesting that)...rituals and symbols can be ambiguous' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:331). Although in terms of some degree of a shared 'social' construction of reality, they do say that '...what often underlies people's political allegiances is their social identification with a group' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:332).

It is necessary at this point to define the constructivist leadership approach, because fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world lie beneath each definition. Most traditional leadership definitions take a functional 'entitative' view of leadership, where the top is treated as separate from the bottom (i.e. the person). The constructivist viewpoint treats '...leadership characteristics...as though they were properties of an individual' (Grint, 1997b:300). Hosking argues that a constructivist view of leadership sees the leader as '...a

participant (who)...must be perceived as salient, relative to others... recognised as of higher status in terms of his or her influence', and as such views leadership not as a personal property '...but a process having particular and social and cognitive relationship dimensions' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:300).

Hosking asserts that the functionalist conceptualisation of leadership '...results in a sharp divide between persons and organisation'; whereas the constructivist view ~ or the bottom-up standpoint ~ sees leadership from the followers' perspective (quoted in Grint, 1997b:296). Leaders are accordingly defined as those who '...consistently make effective contributions to social order (the person – situation split does not exist because an emphasis)...on social realities directs attention to the sense making activities of participants' (Grint, 1997b:301). Thus, '...identifying (those)...acts which influence social constructions; (and)...those who are perceived to make the most consistent and significant contributions' recognises that there are '...inequalities in the influence achieved by different participants', and hence supports the 'Orwellian view' of constructivist leadership (Grint, 1997b:301).

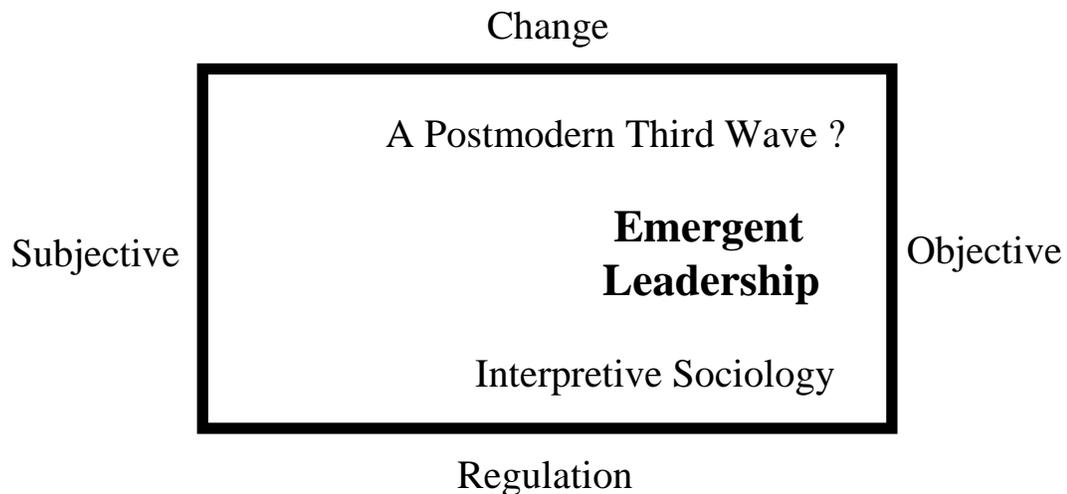
Hosking also notes that the entitative view of leadership is '...unitary in that it minimises differences in values and interests' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:302). The constructivist view acknowledges that the '...values and interests are central to participants' construction of their social order' and as such are pluralist, in that they recognise leadership as a political process (Grint, 1997b:302). Hosking points out that leadership is a political matter because '...different participants may seek to further different sometimes conflicting values and interests' (quoted in Grint, 1997b:302).

In contrast to the top-down view of leadership, where the issue of choice is deemed to be the prerogative of the leader, the bottom-up view '...makes no assumptions about who necessarily exercises choice...leaders are identified by the effects of their acts' (Grint, 1997b:302). As such, leadership is considered '...as a process in which social order is negotiated (and)...those who achieve most influence...most consistently, and who come to be expected and perceived to do so, are...identified as leaders' (Grint, 1997b:302). Thus consistent with the interpretive

paradigm, leaders are thought to emerge in the course of the pluralist interactions that make up organisational life.

In Figure 4.5 this 'Emergent Leadership' approach has been positioned within the conceptual framework together with individualism, pluralism and Theory Y, on the least subjective portion of the interpretive paradigm. This has been highlighted as a postmodern portion of the conceptual framework. So perhaps this provides McKinney and Garrison with a Third Wave approach to leadership?

**Figure 4.5 Emergent Leadership**



[Couch 2002, after (Grint, 1997b; Stott and Trafford, 2000)]

### **Section 4.3 Leadership Development - Traditionalism to postmodernism**

#### **Traditional leadership development**

Some universal themes permeate the leadership development literature. A shortage of leaders, the need to develop 'home-grown' talent, and the requirement for 'good' leadership in changing and turbulent times, are subjects that dominate. The material also seems to be based upon a common set of implicit assumptions, which are based upon the notion that it is possible to develop 'good' leaders, by developing those traits or latterly competencies that are thought to provide excellent leadership.

Byam expands upon one of these common themes. He maintains that we are facing a ‘...critical shortage of middle and top leaders in the next five years (he declares that)...the size of the problem is more akin to a millennium ‘elephant’ than to a ‘bug’ (Byam, 1999:46). Byam in a later work with Wellins attempts to quantify this point, and posits that because of the baby boom in the 1960’s, ‘...one in five top management positions and one in four middle management positions could be vacant by 2005’ (Wellins and Byam, 2001:98). They assert that ‘...there are too few managers coming through the pipeline (so)...recruiting leadership talent from outside the company is no longer viable’ (Wellins and Byam, 2001:98). Handfield-Jones has made a similar point, and says that ‘...as talent becomes scarcer – and demography suggest that it will – the ‘buy-only’ strategy becomes risky and expensive’ (Handfield-Jones, 2000:117). Delahoussaye illustrates why this may be the case, he explains that ‘...‘bring ‘em on’ rather than ‘buy ‘em in’ became the favored strategy (for the US Postal Service, because as)...a technical organisation... it can take years to understand the complexity of its operations. Consequently, it’s better to develop a person who understands the inner workings than lure an experienced executive from the outside’ (Delahoussaye, 2002:24).

In addition to leadership shortages, it is argued that ‘In times of great transition, leadership becomes critically important (and not only will)...our older models of leadership...no longer (be)... appropriate (but)...our approaches to developing leaders will (also)...have to change’ (Conger, 1993:46). Van Der Velde et al support this view, and say that ‘In this era of rapid changes both within and outside business organisations, the search is on for effective managers to deal with uncertainty, unusual events and growing diversity in people, products, structures and processes’ (Van Der Velde et al, 1999:161). This message is repeated many times, but it is worth noting the contribution of Martin, who has said that this situation is confounded in the public sector ‘...by difficulties in balancing the competitive environment of new market forces with traditions based in the past and with expectations of consumer choice’ (Martin, 1998:279).

In terms of the assumptions that underpin leadership development; ‘Some believe that leaders are born, not made, while others think that leadership is a quantifiable set of skills and ways of thinking that can be taught’ (Messmer, 1999:10). Messmer asserts that the ‘Reality lies somewhere in between’, a point that Guthrie has also made, since he suggested that

‘...everyone can become a leader in a setting appropriate to his or her talents’ (Guthrie, 1991:158; Messmer, 1999:10).

Gunn explores the question of leadership education; and argues that ‘...if leadership can be taught, several assumptions would have to be true. For example, there would have to be leadership teachers (i.e.)...people who have a knowledge of leading and who can instruct others in the art’ (Gunn, 2000:14). It would also have to be based upon the notion that ‘...leadership can be taught (which by implication implies someone)... wants to learn... (and believes)...that leadership education can help them become leaders (but it also suggests)...a curriculum (and)... techniques (for transmitting leadership)...via frameworks, reading materials, and other instructional aids’ (Gunn, 2000:14). Gunn notes that these assumptions have one thing in common, in that they all claim to produce leaders. Whether or not you believe that leaders are born or made, Brandt provides an interesting analogy; he says that ‘The best hire in the world will fail if you throw him or her into the deep end without instructions as to the care and feeding habits of the alligators’ (Brandt, 2002:20).

In exploring the concept of leadership development it appears useful to return to McKinney and Garrison’s third wave metaphor. They posit that ‘...most traditional approaches to leadership development’ have been firmly located in the first wave of formal hierarchies (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27). They state that those responsible for leadership development ‘...have attempted to adjust (the traditional)...approaches to leader development to accommodate the (decentralisation and empowerment)...demands of the second wave’ (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27). As a consequence they say that ‘...revised approaches have (for example) ...incorporated recognising principles of the learning organisation, and of equality and social justice’ (quoted in Stott and Trafford, 2000:27).

Conger explores first wave approaches; suggesting that they focus on four principal areas: Simple skill-building exercises (e.g., decision-making, communication skills or ‘visioning’... Concepts (e.g., distinguishing leaders from managers)...Outdoor adventures (e.g., to build teamwork and experiment with risk taking)...Feedback (to learn how you rank on a set of leadership dimensions) (Conger, 1993:46). This conception of the traditional leadership

development model does not illustrate however that within traditional approaches ‘Most organizations use...competency models to select, evaluate and develop (leaders)...based on the behavioural characteristics and traits desired in top-performing organizational leaders’ (Dalton, 1997:46). It is worth noting that ‘Supporters of trait approaches place more emphasis on the selection rather than the development of leaders’ (PIU Report, 1999:78). The PIU Report notes that the Myers Briggs Type Indicator is a significant leader in the field, though various competency models have also become standard, for instance the Management Charter Initiative’ (PIU Report, 1999:78).

Martin observes that in Britain this competency approach was introduced as a result of ‘...two influential reports [(Constable and McCormack, 1987; and Handy et al, 1988) which compared British development practices]...with that of world competitors’ (Martin, 1998:279). Martin links this competency approach with McKinney and Garrison’s third wave metaphor, when she says that these ‘...competency standards (are)...now in their second form’ (Martin, 1998:279). Conger explores familiar territory, when he explains why. He states that the pressures for change in the leadership development model were ‘...building like a cyclone...global competitive battles...fierce competition (and a)...more diverse workforce’ required a new set of competencies (Conger, 1993:46). O’Neil asserts that what these new competencies were intended to develop visionary leaders who ‘...push down decision making as far as possible within the organization or – in other words – empower people’ (O’Neil, 2000:3).

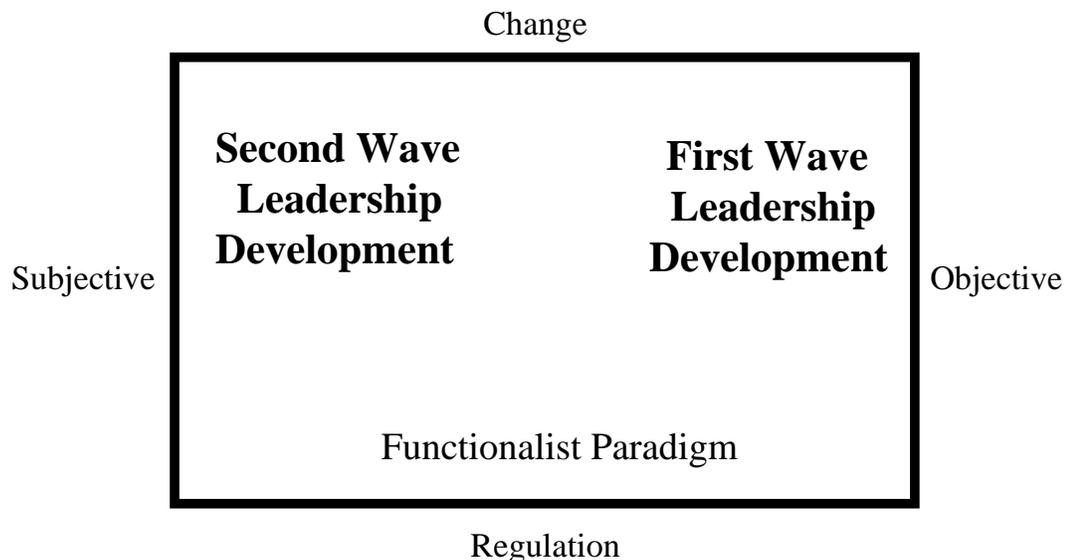
The ‘second wave’ approaches are disparate, but have at their heart familiar transformational notions of vision and empowerment. Although Zenger et al contend that leadership development should be set within the ‘organizational context’; this argument still revolves around the concept of ensuring that the leader’s ‘...vision of where the organization is going’ is translated into reality through the organisation’s strategic plan (Zenger et al, 2000:22). Likewise, Newell’s value based leadership development process, recognises that ‘...much of leadership development has focused on teaching specific behavioural skills’ (Newell,

1999:13). He argues that ‘When a leader’s core values call forth the best in the leader and others, leadership can be truly transformational’ (Newell, 1999:13).

Cohen and Tichy explore a current popular phase in the leadership development literature. They say that ‘Successful leaders should be responsible for developing the leadership skills of their subordinates’ (Cohen and Tichy, 1997:58). They assert that ‘...in slower, more predictable times, command and control hierarchies weren’t such a bad idea...But in the current wired together global marketplace...Winning companies have leaders at every level’ (Cohen and Tichy, 1997:58). This phase in the leadership development material can be seen to mirror the ‘newer’ concepts of transformational leadership that focus on the follower.

Given that the ‘story’ of leadership development has followed a similar pattern to that of leadership theory, it appears possible to suggest that leadership development can be considered in terms of first and second wave approaches. The conceptual framework in Figure 4.6 has been up-dated to include concepts of first and second wave leadership development within the functionalist paradigm. The first wave approaches being positioned in the most objective portion of the functional paradigm, and second wave approaches the least objective.

**Figure 4.6 Leadership Development and Social Theory**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Stott and Trafford, 2000)]

### **Leadership development and constructivism**

From the Constructivist perspective Grint points out that ‘One need not assume that leaders are merely the prisoners of the webs spun by their followers. On the contrary, it may well be that intentional ambiguity on the part of leaders is precisely what facilitates the incorporation of a large body of followers, who are freely able to interpret the meaning of leadership courtesy of its ambiguity’ (Grint, 1995:157). Thus leadership is not something people have, ‘...but rather something which is created through the social process we call leadership’ (Grint, 1995:159).

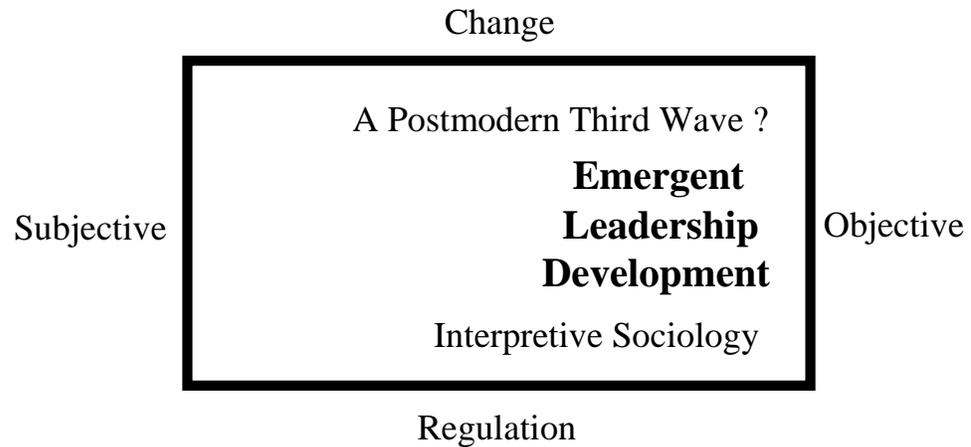
Grint seems to pose an obvious question. He says if leadership is a social process ‘...is it something we can easily teach through leadership courses?’ (Grint, 1995:159). He develops this argument and states that if leadership is socially constructed, and someone is interpreting an action as leadership, then does this mean that leadership can be taught? Grint notes that if someone ‘...distinguishes between a leader and a non-leader on the basis of the interpretive process (then clearly)...the relationship is not determined by the objective actions involved’ (Grint, 1995:159).

Grint argues that ‘...whether leadership can be taught depends...upon how it is construed (if it is an inherent talent)...the best that can be achieved is to make some marginal improvements through best practice’ (Grint, 1995:161). Yet ‘...if it is regarded as an interpretive process that is dependent upon ‘appropriate’ subordinate action...then the skills of persuasive rhetoric are essential’ (Grint, 1995:161). He suggests that if one assumes that ‘...persuasive rhetoric is something that can be acquired, or at least improved, then...leadership can be taught’ (Grint, 1995:161). But Grint does note that ‘...what is taught focuses less on the completion of leadership tasks’ and more on the social construction of leadership (Grint, 1995:161).

In the construction of social order, participants in the process will interpret changes in terms of ‘...threats or opportunities (or)... potential losses or gains for their social order’ (Grint,

1997b:306). Leadership can consequently be seen as a political process in which ‘...order is negotiated, both within and between groups’ (Grint, 1997b:309). Thus this constructivist leadership development model appears consistent with that of an Emergent Leadership Development approach, and as such has been placed within the possibility of a third wave approach in Figure 4.7.

**Figure 4.7 Leadership Development and Constructivism**



[Couch 2002, after (Grint, 1997b; Stott and Trafford, 2000)]

Given this construction of events, why has leadership theory remained predominantly functionalist? Although since that there is both a dearth of material examining bottom-up approaches to leadership, and since we maybe ‘...victims of socialisation into the modernist paradigm and traditional ways’, this may explain why (Stott and Trafford, 2000:40).

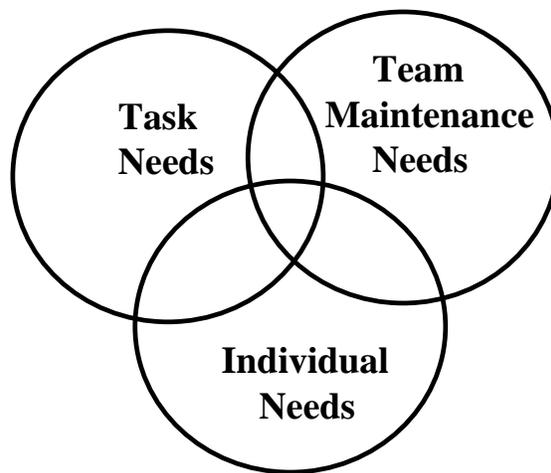
**John Adair**

Maurik says that ‘Adair has been named as one of the forty people worldwide who have contributed to the development of management thinking (but he goes on to clarify that in the UK)...his reputation has largely been carved out through his works on leadership’ (Maurik, 2001:28). In terms of Adair’s ideas, Maurik argues that ‘Effective Leadership (which)...was published in 1983 (is)...regarded as a landmark British book on the subject’ and contained ‘...the key tenets of Adair’s thinking’ (Maurik, 2001:28).

In examining the principal components of Adair’s thinking, Maurik states that it is for his ‘...concept of the essential tasks of the leader, illustrated in his well known three circles diagram, that he is best known’ (Maurik, 2001:29). Adair explores this concept, and suggests

that ‘When a leader sets out to get something done there are three principal considerations, and they take the form of needs...the needs of the task...will impose demands and a response from the group... the needs of the group...will have a need to promote and maintain a level of group adhesiveness (and)...the needs of the individual (who)...bring their own needs to any group task or situation’ (Maurik, 2001:29). He says that these needs do not exist in ‘...watertight compartments (since)...each exerts an influence...upon the other (and so it seems best)...to visualise the needs as three overlapping circles’ (Adair, 1984:11). Figure 4.8 below illustrates how the three-circles influence and interact with one another.

**Figure 4.8 Overlapping Needs**



(Adair, 1997:16)

Adair asserts that ‘In order to achieve the common task and maintain teamwork... certain functions have to be performed’ (Adair, 1997:19). He says that this ‘...line of thinking about leadership ...leads us to see leadership in terms of functions that meet group needs and what has to be done’ (Adair, 1997:15). He further posits that the concept of functions, means that ‘...we are on firm ground...for you can learn to provide the functions of leadership which are called for by task, team and individual needs (Adair, 1997:19). Adair proposes that ‘...this is the entrance door to effective leadership’ (Adair, 1997:19). Table 4.9 illustrates how Adair has adapted the leadership functions since the original 1968 publication.

**Table 4.9 Main Functions of a Leader**

<b>Leadership Functions (1968, 1973)</b>	<b>Leadership Functions (1983, 1984)</b>	<b>Leadership Functions (1997, 1998, 1999)</b>
Planning	Defining the task	Defining the task
Initiating (Briefing)	Planning	Planning
Controlling	Briefing	Briefing
Supporting	Controlling	Controlling
Informing	Evaluating	Evaluating
Evaluating	Motivating	Motivating
	Organising	Organising
	Setting an example	Providing an example

[Couch, 2002 after (Adair, 1968, 1983, 1984, 1997, 1998 and 1999)]

In terms of these leadership functions, Adair remarks that ‘The obvious question here for the leader to ask is...how far the group members possess the necessary knowledge, experience and skill relevant to the problem in hand to participate satisfactorily in the leadership functions’ (Adair, 1984:15). At this point Adair implies that dependent upon the followers’ knowledge, experience and skills the leader adopts a more autocratic or democratic approach.

Although he says that ‘...without leadership any form of democracy can be inert and feeble’, which suggests that Adair sees this leader / follower relationship as top-down one (Adair, 1983:87). Yet since Adair notes that his functional approach to leadership stands ‘...in the historical tradition of thought about management symbolised by such names such as Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard’, this may clarify why his approach, whether autocratic or democratic, is seen in this top-down way (Adair, 1983:51).

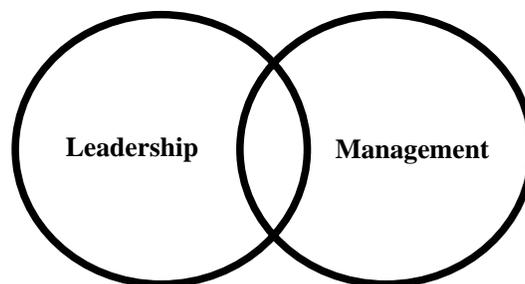
Maurik places Adair’s Functional approach in the contingency phase of leadership theory. I find it intriguing however, that Adair should place his theories in the tradition of Fayol and Barnard, albeit that he recognises they were only interested in the task, since this positions the

functional approach more in the transactional phase. Maurik's contingency view of Adair's theories seems correct. Particularly since the three circles model, whilst appearing simplistic, provides the complexity of interaction between the leader, the follower and the situation of many of the contingency models.

The model is in many ways a product of its times. Adair explains in his 1983 book 'Effective Leadership' that from the '...wealth (of studies at the time ~ circa 1968)...the author selected one general theory (of leadership)...which might be called the theory of group needs' (Adair, 1984:9). In describing the development of his theory, Adair specifically mentions the works of Maslow, Fiedler, Hershey and Blanchard, Blake and Mouton, and Tannenbaum and Schmidt, as principal influences on his own work.

Adair describes leadership and management as different concepts. He says that '...leadership is about giving direction, building teams and inspiring others; whereas management entails the proper and efficient use of resources – good administration' (Adair, 1987:71). He argues that while these notions are different they '...overlap very considerably' (Adair, 1987:54). In Figure 4.10 he once again utilises the overlapping circles model to depict the two concepts...

**Figure 4.10 Leadership and Management**



(Adair 1987:71)

He appears to account for the overlap by suggesting that to a great extent they are similar functions, which vary according to the field. He asserts that 'Leadership is the raw material: the basic functional response to the three areas of need – the three circles – in any working group...In the military...the form it assumes is called command; in industry and commerce it's known as management...but the essence...is the three circles' (Adair, 1987:63). Adair maintains that the degree of difference in overlap between the two concepts depends to a large extent upon how good the leader or manager is. He says that '...you can be appointed a manager, but you are not a leader until (your skills)...in doing the functions of a leader are recognized'; 'pure' management is therefore 'uninspired leadership' (Adair, 1987:71). In terms of 'pure' leadership, Adair suggests that good management is good administration, and 'Good leaders care about administration; the less good ones don't' (Adair, 1987:71).

In exploring the development of the functional leadership development process Adair explains that '...from 1961 until 1969 (whilst at Sandhurst Military Academy)...I had the opportunity of evolving...a functional leadership course based upon the three circles model' (Adair, 1983:64). He observes that during this period '...the basic principles in (Effective Leadership, 1983 were)... successfully applied to developing leaders' (Adair, 1983:67). Adair says that, 'By 1968, when Training for Leadership was published, the Sandhurst course had been adopted by the Royal Air Force, the Women's Royal Army Corps and the Fire Service' (Adair, 1983:67). Although he notes, that '...visiting (the Fire Service College)...some twenty years later, in order to talk to the staff about leadership training, I found that the three circles was still taught but distortion had crept into the content, the method had become watered down and there was a lack of staff training' (Adair, 1988:91).

The functional leadership courses at Sandhurst in the 1960's, started with the question; 'what is leadership?' before moving onto an examination of '...the situational...group (and)... functional approaches to leadership (before moving on to)...the three circles and key leadership functions' (Adair, 1988:32). Officer cadets also completed a number of practical leadership exercises, a theoretical session on decision-making, and a viewing of the 1949 feature film 'Twelve O' Clock High' (Adair, 1984).

Adair says that ‘Based upon these ‘functional leadership’ courses he later ‘...developed with the Industrial Society a programme known as Action Centred Leadership (ACL)’ (Adair, 1984:55). Adair notes that the ‘...course concentrated on the actions and awareness necessary to improve performance’ and was very much mirrored on the earlier functional leadership courses at Sandhurst (Adair, 1984:56). The ACL course follows a similar pattern to Adair’s description of the Sandhurst course; with a mixture of theoretical sessions and practical activities, based upon the three circles and the functions of a leader (Adair, 1984).

So where does Adair’s functional approach fit into the conceptual framework? Adair’s functional approach to leadership can be located in the first wave of leadership and leadership development. Not only is it a top-down contingency model, but Adair’s ACL leadership course is also consistent with the first wave leadership development model proposed by Conger (1993:46).

To draw this chapter to a close, all of the theoretical variables that have been considered so far have been positioned within the conceptual framework. Figure 4.11, which is based upon Burrell and Morgan’s four mutually exclusive paradigms, has each concept matched to a position within the paradigm that reflects its underlying assumptions. This is important because it had been anticipated in the research design that conceptual framework should be constructed in order allow comparison between the EFRS and this body of knowledge. This conceptual framework will allow this assessment to take place.

**Figure 4.11 The Conceptual Framework**

The Sociology of Radical Change

	Radical Humanism	Radical Structuralism Radicalism Individualism    Collectivism Theory Y        Theory X		
Subjective	<b>Third Wave Leadership ?</b>	<b>Second Wave Leadership</b>	<b>First Wave Leadership</b>	Objective

[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; McGregor, 1985; Morgan, 1997; Hofstede, 1997; Stott and Trafford, 2000)]

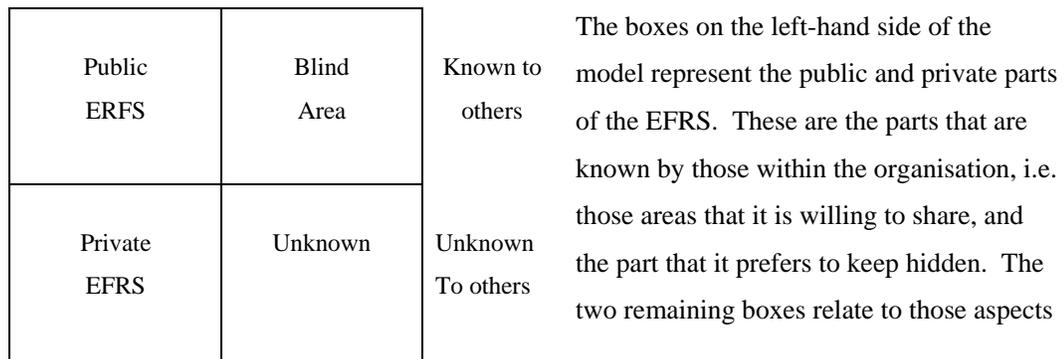
## **PART III THE RESEARCH**

This Part of the thesis sets out both the approach undertaken to conduct this research, and the subsequent findings. Chapter 5 – The Research Approach describes in two sections, how the research was both planned and undertaken, and how the data was collected. In Section 5.1 - Considerations the implications for the researcher in carrying out diagnostic practice-orientated research from the interpretive perspective will be examined. Section 5.2 – Research

Designs, considers the strategy for both conducting the research, and the methods that have been utilised in gathering the data.

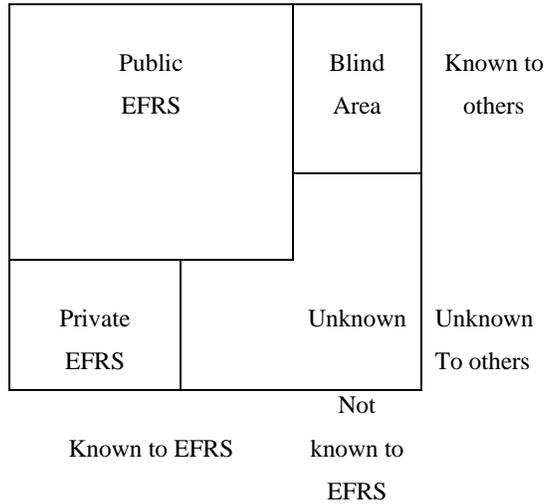
Chapter 6 – The Findings, are constructed from data provided by people from within the EFRS and nationally, and the many documents that exist in the fire service arena. Section 6.1 – The People Locally sets out the data that was gathered by using interviews and blockage instruments in order to look at leadership, leadership development, organisation, culture and followership. Section 6.2 – The People Nationally, provides a series of comments that were made on the 2002 Divisional Command Course at the Fire Service College. Section 6.3 – The Documents examines the same areas as in Section 6.1, but from the perspective of the many different pieces of documentary evidence that are available from within the fire service community. Part III of the thesis will provide the evidence upon which a new conceptual framework can be constructed. In order to illustrate both graphically and ‘constructively’, how this will be achieved, the Johari Window has been adjusted in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 The Purpose of Part III – The Research**



Known to EFRS      Not known to EFRS

of the EFRS that are not known. This is the area that it cannot see, and the area that is unknown to all



The model illustrates that when those parts of the organisation which are private or not seen are revealed, then the public domain of the EFRS expands. The new conceptual framework will be based upon this expanded public domain. This will be achieved through the development of a new construction of events. This will be based upon that information that resides within the EFRS, and is therefore known, and that information that is outside of the organisation, but not seen.

[Couch, 2002 after Luft (1970)]

## **Chapter 5 The Research Approach**

### ***A researcher's reflections***

*In many ways this chapter is the culmination of my experiences as a researcher over the past ten years. The reflective practitioner model of education, which has been foremost throughout my studies, has led me to reflect upon a variety of research issues during this time. Whilst these reflections have revealed an overarching philosophical approach, this has also shown that a tension has existed between my 'view of the world' ~ philosophically speaking ~ and the*

*various research methodologies that have been used. This conflict between my approach and 'accepted' traditional research methods was still very much evident in the final paper, in Stage One of this Doctoral Programme (see Appendix 3).*

*Yet it appears implicit that contained within the notion that this chapter may be a culmination of my studies is the idea that this ongoing tension may have been resolved. This factor is highlighted because it seems presumptuous to contend that these conflicts are over, and subsequently 'trouble-free'. Although I do believe that a concept dubbed by Powney and Watts as '...methodological congruence', has helped me to identify a research design that ensures which these tensions are overcome or lessened, through the application of a consistent approach (Powney and Watts, 1987:158). Moreover, given that the notion of methodological congruence represents a consistency between methods and '...the general underlying philosophy of the research'; then this must reflect certain underlying assumptions about the nature of the 'world' (Powney and Watts, 1987:158). It can be argued that these underlying assumptions have provided a good starting point for me in designing the research.*

## **Section 5.1 Considerations**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 5 will describe how this research was designed and carried out, and linked to the conceptual framework. The type of data that was sought, its size, scope and whereabouts, and its relevance to the research will also be examined. The starting point for an examination of the research design will be the underlying assumptions that underpin the researcher's viewpoint. Denzin and Lincoln note that each '...researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology), that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:23). While Creswell suggests that this may be carried out '...either explicitly or implicitly'; it is argued that the framework provides '...overarching philosophical systems (which shape)...how the... researcher sees the world and acts in it' (see Creswell, 1998:74; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:25).

The outline of the researcher's worldview and its implications, will start with some wide-ranging concepts, and then be narrowed down. This should take the reader from the approach used to carry out the research, through to the author's philosophical position, and then on to the research methods and instruments.

### **The underlying assumptions and implications**

The overall approach taken to this investigation was inductive, which is not only congruent with the researcher's 'worldview', but it also satisfied other important criteria. Creswell illustrates some of the characteristics of inductive research; he says that it '...is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative naturalistic approach to its subject matter (this means that inductive approaches to research)...study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them' (Creswell, 1998:15).

In adopting an inductive approach, deductive methodology was also examined. However, since deductive approaches are '...typically... theory driven (i.e., driven by needs to refine the theory so that it predicts more accurately), rather than practice driven (i.e., driven by needs to resolve real-world problems)', I decided that deductive methods would not be consistent with the investigation's interpretive approach, or the practice – theory – practice ethos of the EdD programme (Lee, 1999:29; Gomory, 2001:67).

The research design was linked to the conceptual framework. In building the theoretical perspective upon a structure provided by Burrell and Morgan's four mutually exclusive paradigms it was possible to locate my particular worldview to both the research design and a specific point within the conceptual framework. In Burrell and Morgan's terms, I have already identified myself as being from an interpretive standpoint. However, before this stance can be examined it is necessary to recognise as previously that the interpretive paradigm has many and variant forms; such as '...constructivist, interpretive, naturalistic, and hermeneutical' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:242).

The subjective nature of the interpretive paradigm can cause difficulties for researchers investigating organisational phenomena. For this reason Guba and Lincoln's notion of the interpretive viewpoint was selected, namely constructivism with a hermeneutic methodology. This not only allows for an examination of the leadership paradigm in the EFRS from the emic point of view, but its positioning on the least subjective portion of the interpretive paradigm, means that it is concerned with the life world and not pure philosophical debate. Moreover, given my position as an insider researcher, it means that 'Constructions come about through the interaction of a constructor with information, contexts, settings, situations and other constructors' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:143).

In narrowing this investigation of the research design, examining the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that relate to constructivism seems helpful. Ontologically speaking, Guba and Lincoln say it is relativist; and its '...realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature, and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons and groups holding the constructions' (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:206). Its epistemology is transactional and subjectivist, which means that the '...investigator and the object are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:206). The methodology is hermeneutical and dialectic, and consequently varies with the '...personal nature of social constructions (suggesting)...that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:206).

While Kidder asserts that hermeneutics is a '...rather abstruse philosophical' idea, he goes on to say that it is '...dedicated to grasping cultural meaning from within' (Kidder, 1997:1191). As Mercier notes '...one of the most important elements of the hermeneutic tradition is the understanding of culture through its context, both past and present' (Mercier, 1994:28). He contends that by '...linking organizational context with organizational culture, we make an attempt, albeit a modest one, at bridging the gap between 'outside' structural elements (the environment)...with the 'inside' mental constructions of individuals' (Mercier, 1994:28).

Thus it is argued, that it is a useful means for ‘...investigating the management of meaning in and around organizations’ (Philips and Brown, 1993:1547).

Guba and Lincoln posit that ‘New constructions are quite literally, created realities. They do not exist outside of the persons who create them and hold them; they are not part of some objective world that exists apart from the constructors’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:143). This appears to present the constructivist researcher with a problem. If ‘...constructions are resident in the minds of individuals...that is, (if)...they cannot be said to exist outside the self-reflective capacity of an individual’s mind ~ then how is it that they can be extensively shared, and that a range (and) scope of information (knowledge) is available to a constructor?’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:249).

Schwandt suggests that ‘One way in which this problem has been addressed...is to emphasize the social construction of knowledge’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:249). Although Schwandt does admit that there is clearly a tension between claiming that knowledge is ‘...the property of individual minds and the view that knowledge can be publicly shared’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:249). Guba and Lincoln remind us that ‘The final aim is to distil a consensus construction that is more or less informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions...Constructions are not more or less ‘true’ in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:207).

Having identified the approach to this research, and my overarching philosophical position, what has this meant for the research design? As a constructivist what were the implications for this investigation for me as a result of the notion of methodological congruence? Denzin and Lincoln point out that while inductive ‘...research is inherently multi-method in focus (it is not an attempt to use)...multiple methods or triangulation (in order to)...secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question (because they argue that)...objective reality can never be captured’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:4). This may explain why I have experienced a tension in the research that has been undertaken. This is because traditional techniques associated with capturing objective reality, such as triangulation, avoidance of bias, and

analysis of data, have all been topics that have led to personal conflict, and periods of self-reflection (see Appendix 3).

Given that constructions are said to be more or less true, how is knowledge and truth viewed by constructivists? In the first instance, they are ‘...deeply committed to the contrary view (of) objective knowledge and truth (of the conventional paradigm ~believing that)... knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:235). Secondly, the conventional functional paradigm seeks to separate the inquirer from the inquiry, by maintaining an objective ‘...exteriorised posture’; in constructivism it is the interaction between the inquirer and the inquired ‘...that creates the data that will emerge from the inquiry’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:88). Thus, truth ‘...is any assertion...that stands in a one-to-one relationship to objective reality (whereas in constructivism, truth)...is defined as that most informed and sophisticated construction on which there is consensus among individuals’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:86). Hence Guba and Lincoln say that ‘It is dubious that the constructivist paradigm requires a term like truth, which has a final or ultimate ring to it’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:86).

In conventional ‘traditional’ research approaches, methods for evaluating the work, or verifying knowledge are ‘...commonly discussed in terms of reliability, validity and generalizability’ (Kvale, 1996:229). However, Kvale observes that ‘Some...researchers (such as from the interpretive paradigm)...have a different attitude towards questions of validity, reliability and generalizability. These are simply ignored or dismissed as some oppressive positivist concepts (whilst others such as constructivists)...have gone beyond...a rampant anti-positivism and reclaimed ordinary language terms...using concepts such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability’ (Kvale, 1996:231).

Guba and Lincoln offer ‘Two sets of criteria (that)...have been proposed (for judging the quality of constructivist research)...the trustworthiness criteria of credibility (paralleling internal validity), transferability (paralleling external validity), dependability (paralleling reliability), and confirmability (paralleling objectivity); and authenticity criteria of fairness’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:213). Schwandt expands upon these descriptions, and

says that trustworthiness is ‘...defined as the quality of an investigation (and its findings)...that made it noteworthy to audiences. Credibility...addressed the issue of the inquirer providing assurances of the fit between respondents’ views of life ways and the inquirers’ reconstructions. Transferability...dealt with the issue of generalization. Dependability...focused on the process of the inquiry, and the inquirer’s responsibility for ensuring the process was logical, traceable and documented. Confirmability...was concerned with establishing the fact that the data and interpretation of an inquiry were not merely figments of the inquirer’s imagination’ (Schwandt, 1997:10).

Guba and Lincoln recognise that trustworthiness criteria represent an early ‘...effort to resolve the quality issue for constructivism (and)...although well received, their parallelism to positivist criteria makes them suspect’ to many (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:213). As a consequence Guba and Lincoln ‘...advanced a second set...called Authenticity Criteria; arguing (that they were)...better aligned to constructivist epistemology’ (Schwandt, 1997:165). Schwandt describes these criteria as fairness criteria, because they refer ‘...to the extent to which the respondents’ different constructions and underlying values are solicited and represented in a balanced, even-handed way by the inquirer’ (Schwandt, 1997:7). It is recognised that there is a tension in using constructivist criteria for determining the quality of research material. Nevertheless, since the goal of constructivism is to arrive at a better-informed construction of events, and not an objective reality, it can be argued that trustworthiness and authenticity criteria have enabled this to happen.

A concept closely linked to that of validity is that of bias. This is defined as ‘...something that interferes with, prevents or inhibits having true and genuine knowledge’ (Schwandt, 1997:10). The notion seems to be, if we cannot avoid bias then we cannot reveal objective reality. Those who advocate a hermeneutic approach disagree, suggesting that ‘...prejudice can neither be eliminated nor set aside, for it is an inescapable condition of being and knowing...our understanding of ourselves and our world depends on having judgement. What we must do to achieve understanding is reflect on prejudice and distinguish enabling from disabling prejudice’ (Schwandt, 1997:10). This appears to correlate to trustworthiness and authenticity criteria. As Kvale says; what ‘...matters is to formulate explicitly the evidence and arguments that enter into an interpretation, so that (it)...can be tested by others’ (Kvale, 1996:211).

A notion closely related to validity and bias, is that of triangulation. Johnson explains that triangulation is a ‘...way in which social research can be strengthened...by homing in on research evidence from several points of view...you can have more confidence in your conclusions’ (Johnson, 1994:8). As Trafford notes, triangulation not only ‘...strengthens research design by cross-checking (by overcoming)...the limitations of ‘methodological boundedness’ (it also avoids)... reliance on a limited perspective’ and is thus a process which Trafford suggests increases reliability and validity (Trafford, EdD workshop: 2000d). However, Miller maintains that a ‘...major assumption of the triangulation strategy is that...research is a discovery process designed to get to an objective truth’ (quoted in Silverman, 1997:25).

The underlying ‘single-truth’ assumption that underpins triangulation is consequently a target for those from an interpretive viewpoint. Although as a constructivist researcher, it is not the process of triangulation itself that is important, but the assumptions that underpin it; I am opposed to the notion that multiple perspectives will reveal an objective reality, but not opposed to a process that overcomes the limitations of methodological boundedness. Triangulation has therefore been adopted in the research design, but it must be made clear that this has not been done in order to arrive at a single truth, but in order to provide a more refined construction of events.

A final but important set of criteria for judging the quality of research are the ethical considerations that underpin the investigation. Cohen and Manion define ethics as ‘...a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others (but they posit that)... Being ethical limits the choices we can make in pursuit of truth’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998:347). Punch illustrates what a problematic task this can be. He says that ‘...this area is a swamp (and)...each individual will have to trace his or her own path...because there is no consensus or unanimity’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:179). Cohen and Manion go on to identify a selection of possible problem areas; for instance ‘...the age of those being researched; whether the subject area...is sensitive (or)...subversive; how the data are to be processed, interpreted and used; (and)...the dissemination of results and guarantees of confidentiality’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998:360).

In terms of underlying assumptions Cohen and Manion offer a way of looking at ethics and research. They state that researchers are guided by competing ‘...absolute and relativist positions’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998:361). The absolute standpoint ‘...holds that clear, set principles should guide the researchers in their work and that these should determine what ought and what ought not to be done (whereas those from the relativist stance)...argue that there can be no absolute guidelines and that the ethical considerations will arise from the research being pursued at the time’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998:361). As Punch points out, most concerns revolve ‘...around issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality of data (and as such most)...professional organisations have their own codes of conduct which are largely about the ethical standards that are expected of members’ (Greenfield, 1996:30; quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:168).

Guba and Lincoln argue that ‘Ethics is intrinsic (to constructivism)...because of the inclusion of participant values in the inquiry (which start)... with respondents’ existing constructions and (work)...toward increased information and sophistication in their constructions as well as in the inquirer’s constructions’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:225). Guba and Lincoln suggest that there is an incentive to be ethical, since ‘...hiding the inquirer’s intent is destructive of the aim of uncovering and improving constructions’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:215). They posit that the ‘...hermeneutical/dialectical methodology itself provides a strong, but not infallible safeguard against deception’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:215). While Guba and Lincoln do not describe why the hermeneutical/dialectical methodology provides a strong safeguard against deception, they do assert that ‘Values... have pride of place...excluding values would not be countenanced. To do so would be inimical to the interests of the original (emic)...constructions’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:213).

Due to the nature and context of the research, the procedures and methods adopted, the participants’ relationship to the researcher; and the way that the data has been used, the rights of others have not been harmed in any way. The following actions were taken to ensure that this was the case. The investigation’s sponsor, the Deputy Chief Officer was not only

provided with a provisional framework of the research to be undertaken, but agreement to carry out the research was also sought, and granted. This framework included the aims, the practical applications, the procedures to be adopted, guarantees of confidentiality, and the dissemination of findings. Individually, anyone that assisted was also informed of their right to confidentiality, and of their right to withdraw at any time, through being invited to do so by a signed consent form. A plain language statement was also prepared, and given to each participating respondent, in accordance with Anglia Polytechnic University research ethics guidelines (see Appendix 6 – Blockage Instrument; and Appendix 7 Interview Schedule).

It is also worth noting that my position as a senior manager in the EFRS, could have impacted upon the respondents, and thereby distorted their responses. This situation could easily have presented a ‘positional’ power dimension to the equation, and caused respondents to say what they thought I wanted them to say. However, given that I am in a fairly unique position as an officer, of having spent more than 14 years as a Fire Fighter ~ and 8 of those years as a union official ~ I did not believe that this would happen. In fact, the data not only remained consistent across all status groups, but it was corroborated by the documentary evidence. The comments made by colleagues on the Divisional Command Course ~ who were not being interviewed by me, but spoke freely (see Section 6.2 – The People Nationally), also supported this position. Thus it is possible to conclude that this ‘positional’ power dimension did not distort, nor invalidate my data in any way.

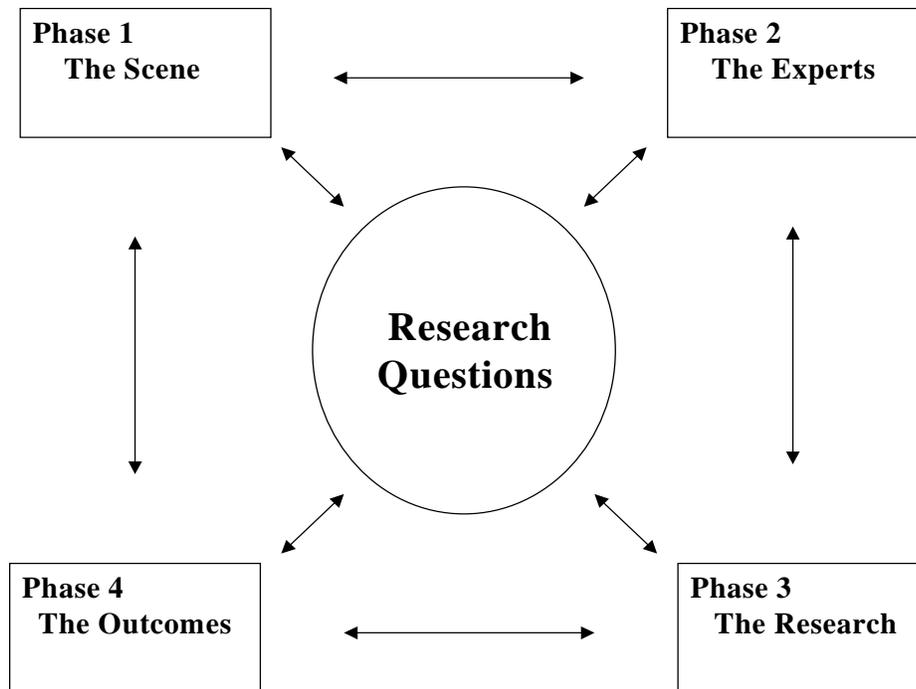
## **Section 5.2 Research Designs**

### **Introduction**

The research design is presented in two parts. The first, The Investigation’s Research Design, describes how the research was both planned and executed. The second, The Evidence Research Design, explains how the evidence was gathered. Figure 5.2 shows the investigation’s research design. This design consists of four phases, and although these phases will be explored in turn they should not be considered as separate but rather as interconnected. The arrows within the design not only indicate how all parts interrelate horizontally, vertically, and diagonally, but also illustrate the key role of the research questions and how they have guided the investigation. In the second part of the research design, phase three of the design, the way that the evidence was gathered will be presented. This too will be offered in four

stages (see Figure 5.3 below), and will describe what considerations were given to the manner in which the evidence was collated. It should also be noted that this four-phase/four-stage design has been selected in order to allow for triangulation and cross-checking, and accordingly build up confidence in the data.

**Figure 5.2 The Investigation's Research Design**



### **The investigation's research design**

Denzin and Lincoln state that 'A research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting ...material' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:28). They expand upon this issue, and advocate that the design should involve '...a clear focus on the research question (because this will clarify important issues such as)...the purpose of the study (and)...what information most appropriately will answer specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:28).

### **Phase 1 The Scene**

The first component of the research design sets the scene for the investigation. This is presented in order to clarify what the investigation is about, and as a means of providing background information for the reader. Guba and Lincoln say that 'In order to carry out such an inquiry, a process must be instituted that first iterates the variety of constructions (sense makings) that already exist' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:89). This phase of the research design links directly to the research questions, and to all other phases of the design. It not only links to the research questions by addressing the temporal and contextual elements of the investigation, but it also provides useful information for determining the current and possible future orientations of the organisation.

### **Phase 2 The Experts**

Phase two of the investigation's design fulfils two main criteria. In the first instance, it allows for an evaluation of the conceptual landscape, and as such affords a theoretical basis in which the research can be undertaken. In the second instance, it provides an important link between theory and practice. In terms of the role of theory, not only does phase two of the overall design reflect '...the purpose of the Thesis' (Woolliams, 2000), but it also '...explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main areas of study - the key, concepts or variables and the presumed relationship between them' (Miles and Huberman, 1994:18). Maxwell argues that this '...relationship is the theoretical framework for the research design' (Maxwell, 1996:25). Trafford points out that Maxwell developed this into a '...heuristic model for research which recognises that design is not a linear process but rather an iterative' one (Trafford, 1999:6).

In further exploring the role of theory within the research process, 'King, Keohane and Verba (1994) suggest that social science depends upon an ability to express intended relationships for investigation through abstractions. For them, the reduction of the real world into statements which are abstract, provides researchers with a common language. This language is that of theory, of concepts that draw together more than one theory, and of frameworks that provide constructs in which to undertake the practice of research' (Trafford, 1999:4). Hart reminds us that '...conceptual frameworks are tools not totems. We use them to clarify or integrate complex ideas. They hone thinking and promote insight' (Hart, 1988:11-12). This proposes that theory has a practical role to play, and Blaxter et al illustrate this point. They say that concepts '...define the territory of your research, indicate the literature that you need to

consult and suggest methods and theories you might apply' (Blaxter et al, 1996:36). They make an important point, because this stage of the research enabled the investigation to be delimited, by first determining the theoretical boundaries of the investigation.

Bush takes this issue a stage further; and asserts that '...the ultimate test of theory is whether it improves practice' (Bush, 1995:153). Rose explores this issue. Trafford says that 'From Rose's perspective, the clarity and explicitness of your conceptual framework...ensures that you have understood how your research relates to other extant research (and also)...provides a benchmark against which your findings can be compared' (Trafford, 1999:4). In many ways this factor that not only makes this study doctoral, but also fulfils the ethos of the EdD programme. This has not only used existing theories in new ways, but has also attempted to make an original contribution to practitioner knowledge, by enhancing understanding of the leadership process within the EFRS through the application and testing of conceptual models to this practical setting.

Phase two of this design also expands upon the background chapter in Part I of the thesis. As Trafford has noted, the literature review supports and expands '...upon the story set out in the background chapter' (Trafford, 2000b:2). Whetton also explains how the conceptual framework relates to phase one of the overall design, and links forward to phases three and four. He argues that '...data, whether qualitative or quantitative, characterizes; theory supplies the explanation of the characteristics' (Whetton, 1989:491). However, in considering how the phases of the investigation's design interrelate, the role of the research questions should also be acknowledged, because these questions have guided all phases of the investigation's research design.

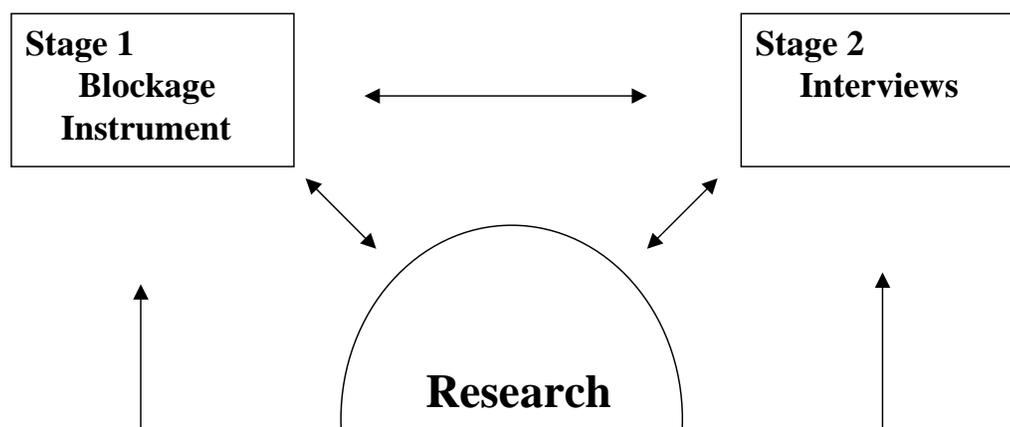
### **Phase 3 The Research**

Whilst this study has been portrayed as inductive, it could also be described as ethnographic. This is not intended to confuse this issue, but rather to identify that ethnography in its widest sense includes research approaches such as constructivism. As such, considering this study as ethnographic should provide another means of assessing the investigation's strengths and weaknesses.

The ‘...ethnographic approach...attempts to study the totality of a phenomenon in greater depth and in its natural setting (and)...deals more in reasons, motives and perspectives than in statistical associations (and as such is often depicted)...as laborious and time consuming’ (Bell et al, 1984:258). Although the time and effort invested by the ethnographer is criticised, ‘...the ethnographer is more likely...to become aware of important factors which did not form part of his (sic) preconceived notion of the situation’ (Bell et al, 1984:263). Yet because the approach is ‘...concerned with how people make sense of their everyday world...the assumptions they make, the conventions they utilize and the practices they adopt’ it is argued that ethnographers ‘...gain access to the collective wholes that govern behaviour’ (Bell et al, 1984:258; Silverman, 1997:20).

Having provided an overview of the approach used in phase three of the investigation’s research design, it now seems possible to examine the various stages in the evidence gathering process. In Figure 5.3 below, the approach taken to gathering this evidence is presented in four stages, and once again illustrates how the process was driven by the research questions. Similar to the overall design, these stages should not be considered as separate, but as interrelated and adding depth and richness to one another. Stage one of this design, the Blockage Instrument was administered first, followed by Stage two the Interviews. The Documentary Evidence was gathered throughout the research, but was not analysed until Stage two was completed. Stage four of the design has guided the whole process, with Stages one, two and three being used to inform and influence one another, both in the design phase and whilst each Stage was being completed.

**Figure 5.3 The Evidence Research Design**



### **The evidence research design**

The purpose of the investigation, and the research questions governed the type of information and data that was sought. To assess the relevance of a leadership paradigm that was developed for the EFRS in the 1950's and 1960's it was necessary to examine issues of leadership, leadership development, followership and culture, and organisation. Moreover, given that the questions were related specifically to the members of the organisation, then clearly it was also necessary to consider the views of those members, as well as examining any organisational documentation that could shed light on the situation.

Regarding the research design Denzin and Lincoln make an important point when they say that 'Subjects or individuals are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:24). As a consequence, they argue that inductive '...researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied' (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:23). Yet Guba and Lincoln note that '...given that the human instrument is to be employed, the question of which methods to use is easily answered; those that come most readily to hand for

a human. Such methods are clearly inductive methods. Humans collect information best and most easily, through the direct employment of their senses: talking to people, observing their activities, reading their documents, assessing the unobtrusive signs they leave behind, responding to their non-verbal clues, and the like' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:176). As such, the research instruments employed in this design have focused on talking to people, and reading their documents.

### **Stage 1 Blockage Instrument**

The design of Stage one was guided by the research questions and issues of verification, and influenced initially by the considerations given to Stages two and three. The blockage instrument was developed some time ago by Woodcock and Francis (1982) to quickly reveal any blockages within an organisation. It was later adapted by Evans (1990). Evans developed the instrument by using sets of mirrored statements ~ one positive, one negative ~ to identify effective and ineffective operations and activities within an organisation. I modified this instrument to use fifty 'matched' non-consecutive, apparently random statements (see Appendix 7), which did not assume that one state was more desirable than another, but instead attempted to identify where respondents saw the organisation in terms of choices. The areas that were chosen were not only determined by the design considerations, the purpose of the thesis and the research questions, but also by a desire to establish some notion of organisational norms. Table 5.4 below sets out the categories that were contained within the instrument.

**Table 5.4 Blockage Instrument Topics**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Choices</b>
Leadership	Command or Management or Leadership Decision-Making Style – Tell, Sell, Participate, Delegate Task Centred or People Centred Transactional or Transformational
Leadership Development	Leaders are born not made On-the-Job or Deep-End Training Training Before Appointment or After Practical or Theory Driven Training

	Competencies or Training for Enjoyment
Organisation	Unitary or Plural ~ Change and Conflict
Followership	Autocratic and Democratic leadership as represented by notions of Theory X and Theory Y
Culture	Individualism or Collectivism

The blockage instrument is a crude tool, and not congruent with the inductive research approach adopted in this research. The instrument was not employed however, as a means of revealing some objective reality, but in order to explore certain aspects of the organisation. The instrument not only provided a starting point for this investigation, and a quick and easy method of auditing the topics in Table 5.4, but it also identified new areas to be researched in the documentary evidence and the interview schedule. These ‘new’ areas will be explored within Stages two and three of this design.

I selected a sample of 150 respondents (approximately 16% of the whole-time establishment) to represent all sectors within the population of the Service. Given the number of ranks within the Service, and my previous experience of administering this instrument on my MSc, I decided that such a sample would not lead to a disproportionate stratification in other areas; such as sex, age, years of service, and years at work. I also felt that this sample would fulfil the constructivist sampling criteria of ‘maximum variation’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:178). The respondents were selected by random location (8 of the 18 whole time fire stations were picked at random from a hat), and administered on the basis of status ~ to reflect the percentages within the organisation. The instruments were delivered and received by hand, and thereby ensured that sufficient instruments were completed as per the status stratification in Table 5.5 below. This should not imply that respondents had little choice in completing the instruments, because eight of the respondents chose not to take part. One hundred and fifty eight instruments were administered, and the return take was 94.9%.

**Table 5.5 Distribution of Blockage Instrument Respondents**

<b>Respondent Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>As a Percentage of Sample</b>	<b>As a Percentage of Service</b>
Senior Manager	5	3.33%	2.1%

Middle Manager	15	10%	6.9%
Junior Officer	40	26.67%	27%
Fire Fighter	90	60%	63%

The instrument allowed for stratification of respondents via the individual personal profile. It was therefore possible to make a distinction between respondents on the basis of such factors, as age and length of service (see Appendix 8 – Blockage Instrument Results). This factor seemed important, given the temporal element in the investigation and the need to explore the EFRS’s leadership paradigm across time.

The blockage instrument was piloted with 30 respondents. This represented a fifth of the total number to be used in the study; with the respondents being selected on the basis of status; 1 Senior Manager, 3 Middle Managers, 8 Junior Officers and 18 Fire Fighters. The blockage instrument pilot resulted in the following changes being made. In Statement 3, some respondents felt that the meaning was slightly unclear, the wording was consequently re-ordered, to put ‘in work’ at the beginning of the sentence, to indicate that the statement referred to work. In Statement 6, respondents considered the phrase ‘many interests groups’ difficult to interpret. This was replaced with ‘people have different objectives’. In Statement 32, the statement was amended in order to make it clear that being more interested in the task, also meant being ‘less interested in people’. Finally, in Statement 36, respondents did not feel that this statement referred to the EFRS, so this statement was reworded to make this factor explicit (see Appendix 6).

The evidence from the blockage instrument provided insights upon organisational norms, and corroborated the interview findings. It was also able to influence the design of the interview schedule. Whilst the interviews addressed the same topics the questions were designed in order to explore these areas in greater depth.

## **Stage 2 Interviews**

The interview was not only selected as ‘...a primary means of gathering information having bearing on the research objectives (but also because it)...allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998:272). It is argued that for inductive researchers ‘...the interview is the predominant means of data gathering’ (Sanger, 1996:11). Sanger suggests that ‘...if you want to know how people understand the world and their life, why not talk to them’ (Sanger, 1996:11).

The qualitative research interview appeared to be entirely congruent with this study’s inductive approach. Philips and Brown illustrate why, when they maintain that organisations are ‘...speech communities sharing socially constructed systems of meaning that allow members to make sense of their immediate, and perhaps not so immediate environment’ (Philips and Brown, 1993:1547). Thus the qualitative interview has been used in this study, in order to understand ‘...how individuals construct the meaning and significance of their situations from...their complex personal framework of beliefs and values’ (Stewart, 1982:45).

Critics of the qualitative research interview point out that it has its weaknesses. They say that not only can the data ‘...be open to misinterpretation due to cultural differences (and)...observer effects (but it can also depend upon)...the honesty of those providing the data’ (Greenfield, 1996:169). Positivists ‘...have as their goal the creation of the pure interview...a mirror reflection of the reality that exists in the social world’ (Silverman, 1997:99). As such, positivists criticise the qualitative research interview because of its lack of scientific rigour, in failing to provide this mirror reflection of objective reality. Although the primary concern for researchers from the inductive paradigm ‘...is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people’s experiences’ (Silverman, 1997:100).

It had initially been anticipated that the topics used in the blockage instrument would simply need to be extended in order to provide more detailed information. These initial thoughts underplayed the importance of the interview because having administered the blockage instruments I recognised that a simple extension of the topic areas may not provide sufficiently detailed information to be useful for the investigation. The topic areas were modified and

extended in order to allow respondents to explore how they ‘saw the world’ and interpreted their place in it. Thus the areas that were examined in the interviews were selected in order to allow respondents to both describe how they saw these topics and explore the underlying assumptions that underpinned them. Table 5.6 contains the information areas that were used in the semi-structured interviews.

**Table 5.6 Interview Topics**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Areas to be Explored</b>
Leadership	Predominant Leadership Approach, Successful Leadership, Changing Approaches, Changes Over Time
Leadership Development	Good Leadership, The Development Process, Successful Approaches, Leadership Competencies
Organisation	Unitarism and Pluralism ~ Types of Leadership, Goal Sharing, Conflict, Change
Followership	Expectations of Leaders, Changes Over Time, Meeting Expectations, Expectations in Different Circumstances
Culture	Individualism and Collectivism and Involvement in Decision-Making, Equal or Unequal, Movement Between Groups, Attitudes to Other Groups

Twenty interviews were conducted which represented 2.1% of the whole-time establishment of the EFRS. I selected a sample of twenty based upon my experiences in Stage One of the EdD programme. In Stage One I had used a sample of ten, which seemed more than adequate for the purposes of my paper, so I anticipated that twenty interviews would generate sufficient data for this investigation. The interviewees were randomly selected and once again stratified on the basis of status (all names in each status group being placed into a hat, and selected at random). I decided not to do this proportionally, which was not an easy decision. In the first instance, selecting respondents proportionally was not possible, and secondly it would not have explored the important area of how the leaders themselves viewed leadership, and leadership development. Table 5.7 below illustrates the distribution of respondents used in the interviews.

**Table 5.7 Distribution of Interview Respondents**

<b>Respondent Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>As a Percentage of Sample</b>	<b>As a Percentage of Service</b>
Senior Manager	4	20%	2.1%
Middle Manager	4	20%	6.9%
Junior Officer	4	20%	27%
Fire Fighter	8	40%	63%

This choice not only ensured that interviewees contained individuals that had experienced the full range of leadership development activities within the EFRS, but due to the high number of ranks within the Service ~ thirteen ~ it also meant that the more senior the officer, it was more likely they would be long in terms of service. Equal samples for the senior, middle and junior officers also seemed to be justified on the basis that each level within the organisation represents a perspective on leadership.

All interviews were tape-recorded. This was a relatively easy decision to make because in paper two of the EdD programme I had conducted taped interviews and had found the process both rewarding and enjoyable (see Appendix 2). Whilst some of the pitfalls were experienced first-hand, and subsequently explored in the paper, I was convinced that these lessons could be educational (Walker, 1985; Sanger, 1996). Owing to my experiences in Stage One, the interviews were taped and then listened to twice ~ from start to finish ~ to get a ‘feel for it’, before transcribing the more significant passages in a gridded form against each question. Transcripts were then compared, and themes were identified as they emerged (see Appendix 9 – Interview Results).

Having considered some of the weaknesses of tape recording it appears apposite to also consider its strengths. Perakyla argues, that ‘...working with tapes and transcripts eliminates at one stroke many of the problems that ethnographers have’ (quoted in Silverman, 1997:203). Sanger is more specific; he says that tape recording ‘...frees the interviewer to develop a more penetrative discourse and a triangulative rigour with observation...he/she hears and sees...all that is said, observes all the non-verbal communication, and develops a person to person dynamic’ (Sanger, 1996:66,67). Given the researcher’s position as an insider within the

organisation it can also be suggested that this person-to-person dynamic was responsible for overcoming one of the principal downfalls of tape-recording, namely the impact that it can have on respondents.

Similar to the blockage instruments, the interviews were also piloted. However, because of the small numbers involved it was decided that a representative from each status group would be sufficient, so four interviews were piloted. The semi-structured nature of the interviews meant that it was not necessary to make any substantive changes, since it was thought possible to provide sufficient clarification to the questions if the meaning seemed unclear. I also felt that small misunderstandings in meaning were important, because these 'differences' related to the respondents' interpretation of the issue. Nevertheless, two small changes were made to the interview schedule: Question 3.1 - The notion of 'expectations' was difficult to interpret, and did not elicit the type of information that had been anticipated. The question was reworded to; 'what sort of things do you expect leaders do'. In the original form, respondents did not appear to have any expectations of leaders, but they did expect them to do certain things. Question 3.2 the question started with the words; 'how have followers' expectations changed', which assumed that expectations had changed, and as such the question was reworded to start 'have followers' expectations changed...'

(see Appendix 7).

The evidence from the interviews and the blockage instruments both influenced Stage three of the research design. Although it was recognised that Stage three might be useful in terms of cross-checking it was also acknowledged that the respondents' comments and the documentary evidence provided stand alone data of their own.

### **Stage 3 Documentary Evidence**

The third stage in the research design was an analysis of documentary evidence. It seems significant that Trafford says documentary research provides '...insights upon an issue from which other investigator instruments were designed (in this mode he points out that the approach offers)...confirmation or expansion of conclusions arrived at from interpreting

others sets of data' (Trafford, 2000c). Although Trafford suggests that this does not always have to be the case he maintains that there is a strong argument for a '...documentary investigation prior to undertaking in-house research (because it could be)...just as important an activity (as)...searching the literature for concepts' (Trafford, 2000c).

The documentary stage of this research design has not only been used as a means of confirming and expanding upon the previous two stages of the design, but it is also important to note that organisation, as a '...quintessentially modern kind of social formation is thoroughly dependent on paperwork' (Silverman, 1997:47). Atkinson and Coffey consequently argue, that '...if we wish to understand how such organisations work and how people work in them, then we cannot afford to ignore their various activities as readers and writers' (quoted in Silverman, 1997:47). Although Atkinson and Coffey do warn, that '...one must be quite clear what they can and cannot be used for. They are 'social facts', in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organised ways' (Silverman, 1997:47). It is significant that 'Constructivists hold that knowledge of the world is not a simple reflection of what there is, but a set of social artefacts; a reflection of what we make of what is there', because it is possible to contend that this search of documentary evidence has unearthed some of these social artefacts (Schwandt, 1997:20).

It is also argued that the '...analysis of documents may permit researchers to sense the assumption(s) which guide the production of these documents, as well as an appreciation of the images which are being projected' (Trafford, 2000c). Atkinson and Coffey assert that 'Documentary reconstructions of social reality often depend on particular uses of language... with distinctive styles and conventions...marked by quite distinctive uses of linguistic registers (specialised use of language associated with some particular domain of everyday life)' (quoted in Silverman, 1997:48,49). This seems congruent with the research design, because not only does constructivism focus '...on the activities through which collective representations are locally applied', but documentary analysis '...can be quite central to the presentation of organisational specific case studies' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998c:148; Trafford, 2000c).

In many respects the purpose of the thesis and the research questions once again identified the documents that were examined. Yet it must be noted that the blockage instrument and the interviews also revealed the need to focus on sources of evidence that had not been initially identified. As a result of Stage one and two of the research design I added to the list of documents that were required. The Audit Commission Report of 1995, and the Towards Diversity Action Plans are examples of documents that were not initially identified. This point needs to be considered against the background of a researcher not only working in this field, but also scanning the horizon continually for related subject matter. In Table 5.8 below, the main documents used in this study are set out.

**Table 5.8 Documentary Sources of Evidence**

Topic	Documentary Sources
Leadership & Culture	HMI Thematic Reviews; Equality and Fairness, and Managing a Modernised Fire Service, Towards Diversity I & II, and CACFOA Board Papers
Leadership Development	John Adair's Literature, Fire Service College Notes, EFRS Leadership Course Notes, The Sudbury Report, Fire Service Examination Board Material, Competence Standards, Role Maps, National Occupational Standards
Organisation & Followership	Service Orders, Strategic Plans, Inspection Reports Performance Indicators, Restructuring Plans, Articles, Memorandums, and Letters from the 1996 – 98 Industrial Disputes, The Audit Commission Report

**Note\*** *Whilst the documents have been positioned within the table to reflect the areas in which they were initially thought to be of the most use, in practice each document was used across all topics.*

Two of the main difficulties that can be experienced with documentary research, are those associated with incomplete documentation, and access. Yet given that all documents were in the public domain, access was not a problem, although it was difficult to obtain some of the older documents from the Fire Service College. *As such I am extremely grateful to those fire*

*officers, who have not only held on to their old course notes, but also did not mind lending them to me.*

Due to my attendance on a senior management development course at the Fire Service College, I have also included in the evidence chapter a selection of comments that were made on this course by its students, and tutors. These comments are not analysed in any way, but are presented verbatim. They provide a rich and useful corroboration to the remainder of the findings in Chapter 6.

#### **Stage 4 Verification**

Various measures have been used to verify the quality of the investigation. Methodological congruence, an ethical approach, removal of bias, sampling, pilots, triangulation, and a confirmable approach to data analysis, have all been considered and accounted for in the overall design. In order to examine these approaches in terms of verification it seems useful to consider these factors under the constructivist criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity.

Trustworthiness is a product of the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria. And since trustworthiness is defined as the quality of an investigation and its findings, then achieving high standards against these four criteria must go a long way towards ensuring trustworthiness (Schwandt, 1997). Authenticity criteria stand alone, since they provide an overarching standard of fairness. The credibility criteria have been achieved through the method of analysis that has been applied. Powney and Watts argue that 'The basis for analysis is seldom made explicit' (Powney and Watts, 1987:174). This factor is highlighted, because they say if the basis for analysis was made clear, it '...not only reflect(s) the theoretical dispositions of the researcher (but it may also)...convince the reader whether the research is true or false' (Powney and Watts, 1987:174).

The investigation's inductive approach has allowed '...categories, themes and patterns (to emerge)...from the data', by using multiple-methods for data collection and data analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998c:47). The blockage instrument has used both statistical and graphical analysis, and the interviews and documentary evidence have utilised narrative forms of analysis.

Whilst it was anticipated at the outset that the interviews would provide the main source of data for the study, it should be recognised that some posit that ‘...by the best of current standards, analysis of qualitative data is a mysterious, half formulated art’ (APU, 1998). Delamont extends this point and notes that ‘When a research project is primarily an ethnographic one...the analysis of the data is a very important stage in the procedure’, and as such argues, that ‘...proper analytical procedures...are an important part of ensuring reliability and validity’ (Delamont, 1992:149).

Delamont’s statement is not congruent with the investigation’s constructivist approach since it implies that ‘proper’ procedures will ensure validity and reliability. However, the fact that issues of data analysis in qualitative research were explored within paper three in Stage One of the EdD programme is important (see Appendix 3). Because paper three was concerned with unfair or false treatment ~ where ‘false’ is the opposite of authentic. The paper examined the ‘Ego-Tripper’, or the researcher who ‘...knows in his (sic) heart that he is right, but needs a few pieces of interview fodder to justify it. Carefully selected quotes will do just that, and no one knows how much lies on the cutting room floor’ (Wragg, 1978:20). As a consequence of the Stage One paper I developed an approach to interview analysis that was adopted for this study, and is set out in Stage two of the research design.

Transferability (deals)...with the issue of generalization. Dependability (focuses) on the process of the inquiry, and the inquirer’s responsibility for ensuring the process was logical, traceable and documented (and)...Confirmability (is)...concerned with establishing the fact that the data and interpretation of an inquiry were not merely figments of the inquirer’s imagination’ (Schwandt, 1997:10). It can be suggested that although these criteria are addressed to some extent by issues of data analysis, they are also addressed by building up confidence through techniques such as triangulation, sampling, and pilots.

Stake argues that you can generally ‘...reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (in)... qualitative case work...(by adopting)...triangulation’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln,

1998c:97). The underlying ‘functional’ assumptions that underpin triangulation have been explored in Section 5.1, but this does not mean that this approach is entirely redundant, because it can be used as a means of building up confidence in the data, or in other words ensuring transferability, dependability and confirmability.

The same transferability, dependability and confirmability conditions appear to apply to the concept of sampling. While Oppenheim contends that ‘...the size of the sample is, of itself, not very important (since)...accuracy is more important than its size’ the same underlying assumptions are possibly still at the root of this issue (Oppenheim, 1992:59). If you get the sample right, then you can reveal the truth. It seems important therefore that for the constructivist the ‘...maximum variation sampling that provides the broadest scope of information (the broadest base for achieving local understanding) is the sampling mode of choice’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:178). And since Stage 1 and 2 of this design have both provided the broadest sample of respondents available in the EFRS, this must build up confidence in the data.

The final consideration in terms of verification, was the investigation’s piloting strategy. Janesick suggests that ‘Before devoting oneself to the arduous and significant time commitment of a qualitative study, it is a good idea to do a pilot study (because this not only)...allows the researcher to focus on particular areas that may have been unclear previously (but it also means that you can)...test certain questions’ (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998c:42). Nonetheless, I decided not to pilot a complete study, but instead pilot just the blockage instrument and the interview schedule. This decision was taken because it was felt the majority of the research issues that were thought to be of likely concern had already been adequately explored in Paper 3 in Stage One of the EdD programme (see Appendix 3 – Chapter 5 Lessons Learnt and Future Practice).

In terms of the authenticity criterion of fairness, it can be argued that this has been achieved through the application of methodological congruence, and a non-biased and ethical approach, both of which were explored in Section 5.1 Considerations. The notion that respondents’ constructions could be gathered and represented fairly was central to my constructivist approach.

#### **Phase 4 The Outcomes**

The evidence from the previous phases of the investigation's overall research design has been used in phase 4 to provide Part IV – The Outcomes. In keeping with the constructivist and hermeneutic methodology, this uses a grounded theory approach based upon inductive analysis. Guba and Lincoln suggest that '...a hermeneutic methodology involves a continuing dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis and so on...leading to the emergence of a joint construction of a case' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:84). This means that theory is grounded in the data, as it '...evolves during the actual research...through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1997c:159). Theory may therefore '...be generated... or if existing theories seem appropriate...elaborated or modified as incoming data are meticulously played against them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1997c:159).

A grounded theory approach is also said to be based upon inductive arguments. Hughes explains that '...inductive arguments are distinguished from deductive arguments by the fact that they lack the ability to guarantee their conclusions' (Hughes, 1997:194). This may appear like a weakness, but Hughes points out that deductive reasoning '...merely draws out, or makes explicit information that is already contained in the premises' (Hughes, 1997:194). Hughes maintains that its usefulness is limited; since if one wants to develop '...genuinely new knowledge (this)...can only arise through inductive forms of reasoning' (Hughes, 1997:195). Whilst he notes that this comes at a price, because '...conclusions can never be more than probably true', it seems worth reiterating that the constructivist approach does not seek to establish single truths (Hughes, 1997:195).

Chapter 5 has consequently set out the approach that was used to carry out this research. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, the findings that were gathered as a result of this research design and its considerations are presented.

### **Chapter 6 The Findings**

#### **Section 6.1 The People**

## **Introduction**

In presenting these findings each interview topic area is considered in turn. The blockage instrument results have then been used to build up confidence in the data, and ensure the constructivist verification criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity (see Appendices 8 and 9 – Blockage Instrument and Interview Results). In providing this information the interview results offer the primary source of data, with the blockage instrument being used to add depth to the findings. In the following pages reference will be made to items drawn from the blockage instruments. These will be referred to as statements, and will appear in parenthesis. Although the topics of leadership, leadership development, followership, culture, and organisation have been interpreted as separate areas, there is considerable cross-over in all topics.

Before these areas are examined an account of an insider's reflections on being a practitioner researcher is presented. This offers a short narrative on the pressures that are placed on me, in carrying out research in the vocational setting.

In addition to an insider's reflections, three further personal 'reflections' are also provided in the forthcoming text. The first will be my reflections as a fire officer. This follows the section on leadership and presents information on being a leader and the led in the EFRS. The second 'reflection' follows the leadership development section and offers my account of being a tutor on the EFRS internal leadership development courses. An incident commander's reflections follow the final sections on culture and organisation. This provides information on the significant area of leadership on the fire ground, and its impact upon the culture and the organisation.

### ***An insider's reflections***

*Being an insider researcher accords many advantages but it can also present certain difficulties. I raise this issue because it not only illustrates the pressures that the researcher is under but it is also representative of the organisation's approach to leadership. As a senior manager within the EFRS the expectations on me from the principal managers and others are quite high. As such, it appeared important to illustrate these expectations with two small examples.*

*I was appointed as the Southend and Rochford Community Commander on the 15th May 2001. This was a newly created post, responsible for all fire service functions within the area. It is significant to this role that Southend is not only the largest conurbation in the East of England but along with its affluent districts it also has many social problems that are consistent with larger city centre areas. This new post was different in that it encompassed all fire service activities within the command area. This meant that I was responsible for operational fire fighting at six fire stations, a fire prevention department, a community safety officer, and the administrative functions of the command (see Appendix 4).*

*The first example relates to training. On appointment in May 2001 I was promised specific training for the new role. That training has not yet materialised. I have attended the 2002 Divisional Command Course but this training is a 'generic' senior management development course and not specific to my community commander's role. In addition, at the time of attendance on the course I had been carrying out the role of Community Commander for approximately one year. And finally, in discussing this course with my line manager he said that he could not really afford to lose me for ten weeks (the duration of the course) and he did not believe that I would get anything 'out of it'.*

*The second example relates to my day-to-day role. I am very busy, but then so are most people within the EFRS, and particularly the officers. Most of the time is taken up with people issues,*

*or trying to progress the Command's community safety work. The point I wanted to make is that, as busy as the Community Commanders are, the organisation will not give a second thought to officers' workloads. This is illustrated by the fact that within the first month of being appointed I was given a management investigation to carry out. This investigation came with a very tight time schedule of three weeks in which it should be completed, and whilst this time may have been sufficient in normal circumstances the problem had been ongoing since the disputes of 1996 –98. It involved striking and non-striking fire fighters and followed numerous other investigations. For instance, the EFRS had just paid for the C3 Consultants report, which is noted in the background chapter, and is mentioned because the report was intended to draw all these issues to a close.*

*I recognise that I may also be culpable in this matter, in that I could have negotiated more time to complete the investigation and produce the report, but I was nevertheless expected to solve these long standing problems and draw them to a close quickly. Moreover, and somewhat significantly, I was also expected to carry on with my other work as normal.*

*What is the impact on me as an insider researcher? Well...in the first instance, I am part of this organisation, but I am also trying to carry out practice-based research in the vocational setting. The impact on me as I progress through the organisation's hierarchy is an expectation that my workload will increase, I will work longer hours and I will make a bigger commitment to the Service. So what has been the outcome? Well...I have worked longer hours, I came close to making myself unwell in completing the report in three weeks ~ in spite of this it took six weeks to get a reply to my recommendations! ~ and more importantly it appears I have a lot less time available to be an insider researcher.*

## **Leadership**

All of the interviewees' described a top-down, autocratic; '*...this is what we're going to do approach*' to leadership (Senior Manager). This perception was held across all the status groups, and was not only thought to be due to the '*...way that we're trained*' (Middle Manager), but it was also felt to be linked to the '*...fire ground*' (Fire Fighter), '*...where everything has to be done in an emergency*' (Junior Officer). The fact that approximately half of the blockage instrument respondents perceived that EFRS leaders were task centred also supports this view, since only 5% of the respondents thought that leaders were more interested in people than the task (statements 32 and 37). Yet 30% of the interviewees did feel that this leadership approach was becoming more democratic. It was suggested that the leadership approach '*...changes when challenged*' (Fire Fighter, Senior Manager) but it was not immediately clear whether this factor was responsible for the perceived development of a '*...more democratic*' style of leadership (Senior Manager).

A comment made by one senior manager also provides another explanation for this perceived change when he said that the '*...younger elements (of the workforce are)...better educated (so)...laterally thinking officers will question why they do things*' (Senior Manager). It was said that '*...the type of person that joins now tends to ask questions*' and wants to be involved; and since the autocratic approach does not allow for workforce involvement, democratic styles were thought to be more effective (Senior Manager).

The notion that '*...people like to be involved*' in the organisation's activities (Senior Manager) was shared by all except one of the interviewees, who said that he preferred '*...to be led*' (Fire Fighter). There was however, also a widely held view that there was no one successful style '*...for all situations*' (Senior Manager). A third of the interviewees' made a distinction between the fire ground and non-fire ground situations. They said that operationally (i.e. on the fire ground), an autocratic, directive approach was more effective; whereas in managerial situations an inclusive style was more successful. This perception of the managerial situation was thought to be because '*...people are involved in the process (and)...feel valued*' (Junior Officer). The blockage instrument respondents appeared to support this mixed viewpoint, since 53%, 54% and 52% of respondents respectively thought that EFRS leaders used telling, selling and participative approaches in decision-making (statements 7, 17 and 27). There was some variation in the way that different groups viewed this process. This is illustrated by the

fact that 89% of those within the 26-30 year's EFRS service range, and 66% and 60% of those in the age range of 41-45 and 46-50 respectively, perceived that leaders used a participative approach (see Appendix 8).

In expressing the view that the leadership approach was in the process of changing, 70% of the interviewees stated that they believed that it had previously been much more autocratic. One interviewee was able to illustrate how things had changed during his twenty-five year career. He said that '*...when I first joined I didn't even know my Station Officer's name for the first year. Now Divisional Officers (see Appendix 4) are called by their first names*' (Fire Fighter). Another long-serving fire fighter who made a similar point also corroborated this. He said that '*When I first joined ~ 1974 ~ you never spoke to them (senior management)...unless they spoke to you*' (Fire Fighter).

Whilst it was perceived by 85% of the interviewees that '*...management are softening their line*' (Junior Officer), this new leadership approach was not necessarily seen as a wholesale change, as one fire fighter said, '*...it's probably changing a bit, but not a great deal*' (Fire Fighter). This comment was supported by another junior officer who thought that the leadership style was '*...softening...but it's just not working at the moment*' (Junior Officer). The fact that only 5% of the blockage instrument respondents should feel that EFRS leaders were more interested in the people than the task, illustrates why leaders should be seen as autocratic (statement 37). This seems particularly so, when this total is compared to the 47% of respondents who felt that EFRS leaders were task centred.

In considering the changing leadership approach, it was thought by 30% of the interviewees, including both senior managers and fire fighters, that the more senior the manager the more autocratic the approach. The industrial disputes of 1996-98 were also considered by all of the interviewees at least once during the interviews ~ particularly the fire fighters. They suggested that the leadership approach had changed '*...during the disputes (because a)...distance grew between us and them*' (Fire Fighter). Although the interviewees said that this distance had narrowed, and was consequently responsible for the recent perceived changes in the leadership style, there also a view that societal pressures were driving change. As one interviewee

surmised, the '*...education and awareness (of new people, is)... influencing management as they move through the organisation*' (Middle Manager). It was thought that in the past, fire fighters '*...wouldn't have expected to be involved in the decision-making process. Managers were there to manage and look after us. Now people are prepared to question management, and management is changing in response*' (Senior Manager).

Eighty per cent of the interviewees felt that this softening approach to leadership was much more effective than previous approaches. More than one interviewee commented that '*...the whole world has changed*' (Fire Fighter), and this new approach is '*...more effective for the time*' (Senior Manager). Building upon this point the interviewee also said that, '*...leaders are only good for the time they are in*' (Senior Manager). Chief Fire Officer Paramour (1979-94 – see Appendix 4) was referred to by the interviewees as a successful but extremely aggressive leader, whose '*...style (it was thought)... wouldn't be accepted now with the people we've got in the organisation*' (Fire Fighter). The blockage instrument respondents' perceptions echoed those of the interviewees; with only 13% believing that aggressive leadership was effective, whereas 69% said that effective leaders sought consensus (statements 45 and 50).

The respondents' views on 'good' leadership also revealed much about the followers' preferred approach. Of the three descriptions of good leadership provided in the blockage instrument, leadership was placed above both management and command. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents perceived that the good leaders reflected the qualities of leadership (statement 2); 68% of respondents thought that good leaders used a managerial approach (statement 12); and only 29% felt that good leaders used the authority, power and control of the commander (statement 22).

### ***A fire officer's reflections***

*As a senior officer I am both a leader and the led. From the perspective of a leader, I believe that my style is more collaborative than directive, even on the fire ground. I like to show an interest in what colleagues do and what concerns them. My preferred style is to approach most requests positively and then look for ways that things can be achieved. I do not enjoy conflict but will not steer clear of situations that may lead to confrontation. I prefer to approach difficult interpersonal situations openly and honestly and in an adult manner. This usually leads to a successful resolution of events, and so conflict is often avoided.*

*As for the other leaders who work in the same command as me, the most successful are those that demonstrate good interpersonal skills and show that they care about the workforce; either by including them in their activities or working hard on their behalf. In my experience, those leaders that have the most difficulties are non-FBU officers and those that treat followers autocratically. These two factors are also often linked, because past industrial relations problems mean that non-FBU officers tend to have the most interpersonal problems with colleagues. So they tend to rely on rank to get things done and as such act autocratically.*

*As a Senior Manager I am also led by Principal Managers. I am expected to subordinate myself to their authority without question and if I did question that authority it would be viewed very unfavourably. I have not been given so many direct orders and treated so autocratically in my entire career as I have as a senior manager. As a fire fighter, even 24 years ago when the EFRS was more autocratic than it is now, I would have been asked to carry out non-fire ground tasks, rather than expected to subordinate myself without question.*

### **Leadership development**

When asked to consider the question; what makes a good leader? The interviewees' replies revealed much about the way they saw leadership. Eighty-five per cent of respondents believed that democratic approaches were more successful; but the skills that they identified as making a good leader suggested that they valued more traditional notions. All of the fire fighter interviewees concentrated on concepts that were consistent with the leader in 'command' mode. They perceived that good leaders were '*knowledgeable, competent, led by example, and were good under pressure*' (Fire Fighters). In contrast 75% of junior officers, 100% of middle managers, and 50% of senior managers recognised softer skills, such as '*respect for others*' (Middle Manager); being '*dedicated and caring*' (Middle Manager); and '*compassionate*' (Senior Manager).

Ninety per cent of the interviewees agreed with the notion that good leaders were born and not made; while 70% of the interviewees' tempered this view with the notion that '*...poor leaders could be improved*' (Fire Fighter). The blockage instrument respondents did not perceive this to be the case, since 36% thought that leaders were born not made, whilst 77% perceived that leadership could be learnt (statements 4 and 9). However, maybe the answer lies in considering the way that the questions were posed, since the interview question asked whether good leaders could be made. It enabled the interviewees to explore the concept and identify that good leaders could be improved. The blockage instrument on the other hand did not permit such interpretations to be offered.

In terms of leadership development itself, all of the interviewees described the process as '*ad hoc*' (Fire Fighter); '*haphazard*' (Fire Fighter); '*non-existent*' (Junior Officer); '*too slow*' (Middle Manager); '*poor*' (Senior Manager); and '*very poor*' (Senior Manager). Even though leadership development training was identified as available at the Fire Service College, and Maes Y Lade (EFRS leadership course based in mid Wales), they thought that the organisation relied on the '*...rank structure and promotion systems to develop leaders*' (Junior Officer).

It was also thought by 55% of the interviewees that leaders were '*...promoted (and)... thrown into that job*' (Middle Manager), before being sent '*...on a course sometime in the future*' (Junior Officer). This perception was also born out in the blockage instruments; with 79% of the replies believing that training was provided some time in the future, as opposed to 9% who thought that it was provided beforehand (statements 24 and 29). As a result, leaders were thought to be '*...left on their own to develop themselves on the job*' (Junior Officer). It was consequently felt by many of the interviewees that the leadership development training process followed '*...the promotions*' (Senior Manager), and as such was not in any way integrated to a wider development model, because the '*...courses (were)...not linked to being promoted*' (Junior Officer), or any other process such as '*...mentoring*' (Senior Manager).

The blockage instrument respondents corroborated this viewpoint; with 35% perceiving that on-the-job training was provided, and 63% believing that leaders were thrown in at the deep-end (statements 14 and 19). Of the 63% of replies, this included only 41% of those fire fighters within their first five years of EFRS service, compared to 87% and 89% of those in their 16-20 and 26-30 years service range respectively. This difference was also reflected in the perception that on-the-job training was provided because 71% of the total number of replies came from fire fighters. Conversely, of those respondents that believed that leaders were thrown in at the deep-end (63% of replies), this total was made up of only 46% of fire fighters, compared to 100% of the senior managers.

It was thought by 50% of the interviewees that the process managed to produce 'good' leaders. As one fire fighter said, '*...it's not as successful as it could be...but we do end up with good officers despite the system, not because of it*' (Fire Fighter). Nevertheless, half of the interviewees believed that the process was not a success, because '*...it's not followed up (but treated)...in isolation*' (Senior Manager). People were thought to '*...make the most of the process*' (Senior Manager), but the fact that it was seen as being based on the Fire Service College, and its '*...old militaristic ideas*' was seen as a weakness (Middle Manager).

The EFRS's internal course at Maes Y Lade was seen by 45% of the interviewees to provide a positive contribution to leadership development. Yet it was thought that '*...the course was treated as separate to other activities, such as the Fire Service College*' (Middle Manager) and this meant that the activity was seen as isolated and deficient. In exploring the significant aspects of the leadership development process the respondents did not separate theory as being more important than practice. It seems significant that all of the senior managers considered that it was necessary to have a good theoretical knowledge of the subject, whereas only 41% of the fire fighters thought this should be the case (statements 44 and 49). The Service was therefore not perceived to make the most of the leadership development process.

When questioned as to whether the approach to developing leaders was based upon leadership competencies, 60 % of interviewees believed that standards existed, but the interviewees did not know whether or not these were used to develop leaders. A senior manager commented that '*...we've played with them (National Occupational Standards) for selecting people, but not to promote or develop them*' (Senior Manager). This perception was also echoed in the blockage instrument, with only 21% believing that the leadership development process was based upon competencies (statements 34 and 39).

In examining leadership development in the EFRS and the issue of competence, the interviewees returned to the topic of promotion as a method of development. This appears to be explained by the comment made by one junior officer who thought that the Service was '*...bogged down by rank*' (Junior Officer). Nonetheless, those interviewees that thought that a competence system did not exist implied that a competence framework might improve the situation. It was noted that '*...if you join as a fire fighter...you could become a Chief Officer (and that)...doesn't mean that you will be a good businessman (sic)*' (Junior Officer). The implication appeared to be that a lack of competencies could produce poor Chief Officers. It also suggested that this junior officer felt that Chief Fire Officers needed to be a good business person to be good at the job.

### ***A tutor's reflections***

*I have been a tutor on the EFRS leadership development course for approximately seven years. This not only provides useful background information on the course but it was also one reason why I became so interested in this subject. The first EFRS course started in 1989 and its style and theories were a direct copy of the leadership phase of the then Junior Officer Course at the Fire Service College. My first contribution to the course was as a lecturer in 1995. The content of the course programme has not changed appreciably since then.*

*The content and style of the course follows the 'normal' design of the Action Centred Leadership Course developed from Adair's theories. It has practical activities, interspersed with theoretical sessions and individual and group feedback. Central to the theoretical sessions are Adair's Functions of a Leader, the Three-Circles model, autocratic and democratic approaches to leadership, Maslow, Herzberg and McGregor's concepts of motivation, and Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Decision-Making Continuum. Yet more significant than this detail is the students' contribution to the course.*

*In the first instance, students are extremely satisfied with the course ~ it is over subscribed. In the second instance, and more noteworthy, is the students' impact on the course, because fire fighters are usually pragmatists or activists, and particularly task centred. A recent Local Government Association (LGA) publication noted that 'The fire service nationally has consistently demonstrated its task orientation' (LGA Report, 2002). Whilst the course is set outside of the fire service, and away from the EFRS at an Outdoor Pursuit Centre in Wales, it not only reflects the fire ground where 'task' is everything but many norms of fire ground behaviour are frequently brought to the course activities. Although the EFRS regularly demonstrates its political nature, students readily subordinate themselves to the leaders that are appointed for the practical activities. So even though students 'normally' behave independently in 'brigade', and 'people' theories are explored as much as any other factor on the course, tasks and fire ground values are still pre-eminent.*

### **Followership**

The interviewees' expectations of leaders, also revealed something about their expectations of 'good' leaders, i.e. skills they must or should possess. The fire fighter interviewees described three phenomena. There were those who thought fire fighters did not have any conception of what the ranks above did. There were those who discussed a general lack of trust and disrespect of senior managers, and there were those that wanted direction. Half of the junior officers and three quarters of the middle managers made similar comments; perceiving that fire fighters wanted '*clear leadership*' and '*direction*' from senior and middle managers. Fifty per cent of the senior managers' views also matched those of the other interviewees, since they expected to set strategy and direction. In addition to this, it also seems significant that half of the senior managers were aware of the perceived level of '*...distrust between the workforce and the leaders*' (Senior Manager).

The disputes of 1996-98 have been prominent throughout the data, and were again identified as being responsible for the difference in the way that leaders were expected to operate on the fire ground. The expectation that officers should be '*...operationally competent*' (Middle Manager) was almost taken as a 'given', as was the notion that followers are influenced by '*...the person's name*' (Fire Fighter), or whether or not they had worked during the disputes. The fact that one middle manager should say that '*...people were disappointed with senior management when they didn't support the workforce (during the strike)*' may explain the comments regarding senior managers in the EFRS.

In looking at senior management, one interviewee said that he did '*...not believe that senior management have the workforce's best interests at heart, so are distrusted*' (Fire Fighter). This point was also made by another fire fighter, who said that '*...they (fire fighters) want more support and they're not getting it (so there)...is total distrust*' (Fire Fighter). A senior manager was able to look at this issue from a different perspective, since he thought that fire fighters '*...expect that senior managers will know everything, which is unrealistic*' (Middle Manager).

Three-quarters of the interviewees also believed that expectations of leaders had changed over time. This seemed to stem from the followers' place in the organisation, and their expectations of their own role; '*...social attitudes have changed and people want more input*' (Senior Manager). So they '*...question (and)...expect to be involved*' (Middle Manager). The blockage instrument respondents also reflected the view that followers exercised choice and self-control in the statements exploring Theory X and Theory Y assumptions, because they strongly indicated a belief that people within the organisation exhibit a predisposition to Theory Y. This is illustrated by the fact that 69% believed that people exhibited self-control (statement 13), and 49% perceived that they sought responsibility (statement 23). Whilst only 14% thought that they needed to be coerced (statement 18), and 24% who felt that people needed to be controlled and directed (statement 28).

The disputes of 1996-98 were also mentioned as a factor. It made '*...people much more aware of political and financial issues*' (Senior Manager), and as such led to the followers holding the expectation that senior managers should be '*...good at the jobs*' and '*lead*' (Junior Officers). The disputes factor may also explain why in one set of the matched statements (statements 33 and 38) it was thought that people exhibited Theory X tendencies; because 74% thought that the average person sought security above all things. It should be noted that in the 'pair' to this statement, 40% of respondents also perceived that '*creativity is widely, not narrowly distributed ability*'.

Half of the senior and middle manager interviewees felt that their followers' expectations were met. The comments ranged from '*...generally met, but could be improved*' (Senior Manager); to met '*...badly*' (Senior Manager). The fact that these expectations should be seen so negatively was thought by some to be because senior managers were seen as '*dictatorial*' (Senior Manager). One interviewee extended this perception and said that followers '*...get into personalities*'. This may be indicative of the impact upon people's feelings of the 1996-98 disputes, or why one middle manager should perceive that '*...middle and senior managers are a great disappointment...making too many mistakes, (and showing)...a lack of leadership*' (Middle Manager).

All of the fire fighter and junior officer interviewees that identified a difference in the way that the various status groups were perceived thought that junior officer and middle manager expectations were met; whereas those of senior managers were not. This perception seemed to be due to a lack of trust, or as one interviewee put it, '*...I don't think that senior managers are held in very high-esteem by the lower levels*' (Junior Officer). A factor that led this particular junior officer to say, '*I don't think that whatever they did people would be satisfied*' (Junior Officer). One fire fighter quantified how he felt his expectations were met, awarding '*...20% to senior managers, 50% to middle managers and 60-70% to junior officers*' (Fire Fighter).

### **Organisation**

All of the interviewees used similar terms to describe the organisation; hierarchical, militaristic, top-down, uniformed, disciplined, and based upon a rank structure, rules and regulations. One interviewee also portrayed the organisation as '*...very political*', explaining that this had a '*...big impact on the way that decisions are made*' (Junior Officer). This perception was possibly linked to the 1996-98 disputes, because people were now perceived to be more politically and financially aware since the disputes, so '*...the union considers that they run it to a certain extent*' (Junior Officer); '*...the tail may be wagging the dog*' said one fire fighter (Fire Fighter).

This perception of the EFRS as a 'politicised' organisation was supported by other interviewees, who said that within the EFRS there were '*...lots of groups with different interests*' (Junior Officer). A variety of comments illustrated this point; '*People aspire to different things*' (Fire Fighter); '*There are lots of people within the organisation with different agendas*' (Fire Fighter); '*we've all got our own little agendas*' (Junior Officer). This may be explained by the fact that it was also thought that '*...no-one has actually explained to people what the goals are*' (Middle Manager) or '*Principal management's vision is not communicated very well*' (Senior Manager). The blockage instrument also supports this perception, since the EFRS was seen to be pluralistic, with 76% of respondents seeing politics as an inevitable product of organisation (statements 1 and 6).

The interviewees were emphatic when they said that people within the EFRS did not share the same goals as the organisation. *'Absolutely not'* (Fire Fighter); *'people are out for their own individual beliefs'* (Fire Fighter). Even those interviewees that perceived that *'...we're here to serve the public'* (Fire Fighter) modified this stance by suggesting that *'...there are political animals in the organisation, managers with their own set of goals, fire fighters with a set of goals (and these are not)...the same'* (Middle Manager). The blockage instrument also endorsed these views, with 83% of respondents believing that people shared different interests to that of the organisation, compared to 9% who did not (statements 11 and 16).

In terms of describing the organisation, the approach taken by the leaders to resolve conflicts seems quite informative. The situation was said to be *'terrible'*; *'disastrous'*; and *'poor'*, with management and the union (FBU) *'...constantly banging their heads together (and this resulted in a perception that it was)...part of the day-to-day work'* here (Junior Officer). In a similar vein, a senior manager portrayed the situation as an *'...old fashioned 'us and them' attitude'* (Senior Manager), that can only be resolved by a *'...power struggle'* (Fire Fighter).

It seemed redolent of a unitary manager's attitude to conflict that one fire fighter commented: *'...senior management treat conflict as a nuisance that stops them running the brigade'* (Fire Fighter). This appeared to be supported by the senior manager who said that *'...if we can we will use an autocratic approach'* (Senior Manager). It was said that *'...senior managers tend to issue instructions from a distance, and expect managers to apply them locally'* (Middle Manager). Both of these comments implied a top-down unitary approach to organisation.

Although the blockage instrument corroborated this unitary perception of conflict, the respondents described two sides to this issue. There was the way that the organisation is seen to be and acts, and the way that it operates in practice. Half of the respondents saw conflict as a common phenomenon, and hence consistent with pluralism, while others thought the EFRS attempted to eliminate conflict where possible, and as such take a unitary approach (statements 26 and 31). The views of those respondents in their first five years of EFRS service were disproportionate to the rest, since this group thought conflicts were rare, whereas respondents with longer service saw conflicts as common and drawn out affairs.

In addition to conflict, the management of change was also considered. One interviewee judged the latest re-structure within the Service to be more effective than previous restructures (see Appendix 4), because *'...people had been better informed'* (Fire Fighter). Nonetheless, three quarters of the interviewees felt that the EFRS took a top-down approach to managing change, which was *'discussed at a high level first...decided what they want to do (they then)...go about implementing it without really telling people what the change is about'* (Middle Manager). The FBU's role in this matter was also considered, it was said that *'dependent upon the reaction (to the change)...it's either sold to the workforce...and if that doesn't work the FBU get involved, and there's usually some form of compromise'* (Senior Manager).

Seventy per cent of the interviewees also assessed how the management of change impacted upon the people within the organisation. The main area explored being the notion that *'...most people resist change'* (Fire Fighter). One middle manager said that *'...fire fighters oppose change because everything we've got we fought for'*, so change is seen *'...as bad'* (Fire Fighter). Those interviewees who perceived that people resisted the management of change thought that this was due to the top-down approach of the EFRS, or their lack of involvement in the process itself. It was consequently said that the process was *'...disorganised'* and *'...the information gets passed down like Chinese whispers'* (Fire Fighters). Whatever the reason, both views posited that the people reacted badly to the situation. Yet it was suggested by many that *'...it's a normal defence mechanism to dislike change'* (Senior Manager); *'...people like comfort'* (Senior Manager); and change *'...threatens that security'* (Middle Manager).

## **Culture**

Whilst all of the fire fighter interviewees said that they wanted to be included in processes such as decision-making, there was a view that in *'...reality people wouldn't want to come in on their day off to do it'* (Fire Fighter). It was thought that even though people expressed a desire to be involved they would not actually put themselves out in any way to do so. It was subsequently felt that *'...people wanted to know why they're doing what they're doing'* (Fire Fighter); but *'...most just wanted to go with the flow'* (Fire Fighter). The junior officers' perceptions did not mirror those of the fire fighters, since half thought that they wanted to be fully involved, with *'...no secrets and fully briefed'* (Junior Officers).

All the middle managers thought that people wanted to be involved in processes such as decision-making, whereas the senior managers' views paralleled those of the junior officers. The blockage instrument respondents' view of people's preferred level of involvement in the decision-making process reflected that of the interviews, with 78% of respondents expressing a preference to be involved. Of those respondents who said that they preferred the manager to make the decisions, 45% of the replies came from respondents in their first five years of EFRS service (statements 25 and 30).

This range of views was not reflected in the interviewees' standpoint on equality between ranks within the EFRS, because 90% believed that '*...superiors think of themselves as superior*' (Fire Fighter); and as such see '*... subordinates as subordinate*' (Middle Manager). This relationship was generally felt to be as a result of the organisation's structure and culture; we are '*...very unequal (because)...the hierarchy is instilled in us*' (Junior Officer); '*...I am strong you are weak*' (Middle Manager). It seemed that the interviewees felt that the hierarchical structure allowed some to feel inferior, whilst others perceived themselves as superior.

A quarter of the interviewees also felt that feelings of inequality went in both directions. This appeared redolent of the 'us and them' culture described earlier. One senior manager thought that '*...fire fighters consider...their role (as)...more important than that of officers*' (Senior Manager); or similarly, the '*...officers (are seen)...as unimportant*' (Senior Manager). This manager / workforce relationship was also explored in the blockage instruments from a slightly different perspective. In this case 80% of respondents said that if they disagreed with their manager they would say so, while only 18% said that they would not (statements 20 and 25).

Despite the 'us and them' perception of culture, 80% of interviewees felt that it was relatively easy to move between groups within the EFRS. This seems noteworthy, because this also included movement between the 'us and them' workforce / manager groups. Three other important themes emerged. The first view was held across all status groups, since it was felt that whatever group you were part of, it was the best in the brigade. It was suggested that this

was *'...bred into people'* from the outset (Senior Manager); so *'...your group is generally better than everyone else's'* (Middle Manager). One junior officer expanded upon this point. He said that *'...we're tribal, we're the gang, and our gang is best'* (Junior Officer).

The second theme emerged from the first, since it was felt that *'...people are always scared and wary of groups other than their own'* (Senior Manager). It was thought that dependent upon the group you might end up *'...labelled'* (Junior Officer) and that label may stay with you for some time. The fire ground situation was particularly prominent in this perception, because those officers who had demonstrated themselves to be less than competent on the fire ground would be labelled as such. As one fire fighter said: *'...it's appalling really, but you're remembered for your worst things'* (Fire Fighter).

The final theme to emerge is one that was prominent throughout the interviews, and that was the FBU and the disputes (1996-98). It was said by interviewees from across all the status groups that it was possible to move easily between groups but this was not thought to apply to the FBU. A senior manager who recognised that in ordinary circumstances movement between unions (see Page 14) was possible but difficult said that *'...if you worked in the dispute'* it would be impossible (Senior Manager). Forty per cent of the interviewees commented that the disputes (1996-98) had a big impact upon the way that groups were viewed across time. This was illustrated by a senior manager, who said that *'...there's a lot of distrust between senior managers, FBU officials, and people that didn't go on strike'* (Senior Manager).

As important as the disputes are to the present culture of the EFRS, a fifth of the interviewees did not perceive that group attitudes had changed much over time. The 'team' culture of the organisation was highlighted as an important factor in things remaining the same. It was said that *'...the way that the brigade recruits means that most people are of a similar character, so things remain the same'* (Fire Fighter); *'I think that we instil that into the recruits from the outset'* (Senior Manager). This thought was confirmed by a senior manager who said that *'...fundamentally we are still team people and...like to be part of a team'* (Senior Manager).

### ***An incident commander's reflections***

*These comments are now set in to a wider context from my perspective. In the first instance, incidents only take up about 3% of the total fire service time. As a Divisional Officer I am 'ordered' to incidents once they have been 'made-up' to eight pumps (eight fire appliances) or more, where there have been unusual circumstances or loss of life, or for specialist roles such as at chemical incidents. Whilst chemical incidents are quite common, larger fires are becoming less frequent, so incidents do not take up too much of my time as a senior manager.*

*Even though the EFRS has experienced considerable unrest in the last five years, the workforce's attitude is generally far different on the incident or fire ground. They are in most cases willing to take direction without question, willing to adhere to formalities of rank, and therefore call senior officers 'Sir' or 'Guv'. This is something that does not generally happen during day-to-day activities in the EFRS. It is important that fire fighters do feel free to make suggestions and be involved in activities at incidents. So even though they are more compliant on the fire ground, they still expect to exercise choice and be involved in the decision-making process if they should choose to do so.*

*As an FBU officer I am treated more favourably by the workforce than non-FBU officers. I have regularly witnessed non-FBU officers get ignored when in a group of FBU fire fighters. I have also arrived at incidents and been asked directly whether or not I am in the FBU. This is not only threatening, but for non-FBU officers the reception has been extremely hostile. Having said this, orders are still carried out at incidents whatever the officer's union affiliation but it is not unusual for non-FBU officers to ask an FBU officer to interact with fire fighters at incidents on their behalf. Nevertheless, as time passes these difficulties are lessening, and the hostility directed at non-FBU officers is diminishing.*

**Note.** In the EFRS the vast majority of fire fighters and junior officers are FBU members. Station officers and above are split about 50/50 FBU and the Fire Officers Association.

## **Section 6.2 The 'People' Nationally**

### **Introduction**

This section provides comments that were made by a group of eighteen Divisional and Assistant Divisional Officers, their tutors and their visiting lecturers, during the first module of the April 2002 Divisional Command Course at the Fire Service College. The course is provided as the principal means of developing senior managers in the fire service nationally. It is of ten weeks duration and this module lasts for 5 weeks, covering the Group Managers' Role Map (Fire Service Role Maps 2002). I had known that the Divisional Command Course would fall during the period that this investigation was being undertaken and so decided to include in my thesis a selection of the comments made on the course from both colleagues and visiting lecturers. These comments are presented as contextual evidence in order to illustrate how leadership and organisation are viewed across the national fire service by its senior managers and those that shape and influence the leadership paradigm in the Service. Thus, the collection of this evidence was opportunistic for me as a researcher of professional practice, rather than a considered feature of my original research design.

It is also worth noting that the vast majority of fire services nationally do not have similar leader / follower relationships as in the EFRS. This is explained by the fact that the EFRS has been one of only three brigades nationally to take strike action in more than twenty years. The other brigades were not represented on the course. This means that most brigades nationally have largely traditional approaches to leadership and compliant workforces, where senior managers expect to have the right to manage and expect their workforces to comply. This can be illustrated by a small example that has been explored in relation to the EFRS, because officers in other brigades are still routinely referred to as 'Sir', 'Boss' or 'Guv'.

### ***A student's reflections***

*As a student on the 2002 Divisional Command Course, I believe that I am in a unique position to comment upon how leadership is being shaped in the service from the perspective of senior managers. It is also a position from which to see how other officers at my rank view leadership in the fire service.*

*As a starting point it is significant that John Adair's Functional Leadership approach is still being taught on the Divisional Command Course in 2002. The three circles model and the functions of a leader are still prominent; in fact it appears as though nothing much has changed from my previous visits to the College. The theories of Maslow, Herzberg and McGregor were all referred to and used on more than one occasion. For this reason, I had extreme difficulty in differentiating between the 'leadership' delivery on this and the previous courses that I have attended at the College.*

*In terms of this particular Divisional Command Course, this was the first to be run from the new Role Maps (Fire Service Role Maps 2002). Of more interest to me however, was the fact that the Integrated Personal Development Working Group, have extended the inclusion of Adair's Task, Individual and Team Needs theories to all of the Core Progression Courses at the Fire Service College ~ from Crew to Brigade Manager (see Table 6.3).*

*The course and its content were not received well by the students. Almost all students had first degrees or equivalent, and eight had, or were doing, masters' degrees. So the fact that the majority of the theories used on the course were from the 1960's and 1970's greatly irritated many of my colleagues. As a result, during tea breaks and meal times there was much disquiet and dissatisfaction. Colleagues seemed happy with the suitability of presenters but the content was not thought to be relevant. This can be illustrated by the input we received during a day on leadership, where we had one hour on Adair, 15 minutes on Servant Leadership, and spent the rest of the day on problem solving and decision-making. Our dissatisfaction was fed back during course debriefs and this led to the remaining Divisional Command Courses for 2002 to be cancelled following the completion of our course.*

## Comments

Appendix 4 contains a list of the students, tutors and visiting lecturers that were connected with the 2002 Divisional Command Course. This group made all of the forthcoming comments during the lessons. The comments have been grouped under the headings of the subject that was being delivered / discussed at the time. I have focused specifically on comments that illustrate how people in the fire service view leadership and organisation.

The following comments were made during a half-day session that introduced students to the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). The presenters were members of the Integrated Personal Development Working Group. Since this was the first course at the Fire Service College to use the IPDS Role Maps, this session was used to 'sell' the concept of IPDS.

'The recommendations relating to leading and leadership in Managing a Modernised Fire Service are contained in the work of IPDS, and IPDS will take supremacy'

'Twenty years ago people were promoted into senior positions when they were in the twilight of their careers. This meant that they retired into their jobs...with very traditional views...security was important to them and nothing changed'

A conversation between a Deputy Chief Fire Officer and a Union Official being recounted to the students, regarding the introduction of IPDS into a fire service.

Deputy to Union Official: 'It's been discussed nationally, you've had one bite at the cherry, and you're not having another one'.

Student: 'What if they said no?'

Deputy: 'They wouldn't dare'

The comments that follow were made during a session on leadership. This session lasted for one day and was presented by a visiting lecturer. In his introduction to the course, the lecturer discussed his leadership experiences as a past member of the Army Education Corps. In addition to Adair, Maslow, Herzberg, and McGregor were referred to during the day.

'I want you to make a list of the leadership skills that relate to Adair's Task, Team and Individual needs'

'The way I look at leadership is in three ways. It's the people part of management. It's trying to get people to do what you want. And it deals with change, inspiration, motivation and influence'

Question to students from Tutor.

Tutor: 'Why are you wearing different coloured shirts?'

Student: 'It shows the autonomy of Chief Fire Officers to do what they want'

'The power of management comes from above, the power of leadership comes from below'

'Leadership in the service has relied on the uniform in the past, but it's now the person that's important'

'Chief Fire Officers spend an awful lot of time pandering to the politicians'

'There's a culture of resistance to change lower down ~ top management want to change'

'Some Chiefs want to change ~ usually the newer ones. The older Chiefs do not want to'

'It's more complicated for you in the public sector, because you've got the political environment'

'There are two different roles for you as a leader. The leader and manager, I would say that you're a leader in both roles ~ one is more directive than the other'

'In the fire service we're taught to be managers in the consultative environment and directive in the leader's role'

'As we move up the ranks we work more in the office environment and less on the fire ground, and we have to be more consultative'

'Watching the Twin Towers disaster I said to my wife that I would be thinking about pulling people back at this stage (after the first collapse), but she said they're really brave. I said people are going to die unnecessarily'

'My motto at Sandhurst was serve to lead'

A discussion between students regarding militaristic practices in the fire service.

'Some militaristic practices are good'

'A good way to start the day is to parade'

'Marching is a great example of teamwork'

'The debate is dead, CACFOA have killed it'

'As a leader our job is to make sure that task, team and individual needs are met'

'To be a leader you must be able to define the task, make a plan, communicate the plan, control the work and evaluate'

'The first problem when solving problems is to change the way that you think. We have to be analytical, then stop, be creative and stop, and then be analytical again'

'Our machines are the personnel underneath us'

'A leader must offer valued rewards to subordinates'

'As a leader I must reward those subordinates who perform at desired levels'

'Stress cracks you up because you are working too hard, or you're a tosser'

'Functional leadership forms a clear part of the Integrated Personal Development System'

'If I went on to a station (fire station) and someone wasn't wearing their tie, I'd jump all over them!'

'We know that the FBU in our area won't go on strike ~ so we do what we want'

The following comments were made during a half-day session that introduced the students to project management in the fire service. The presenters were a uniformed and a non-uniformed project manager from a County Fire Brigade. Both lecturers manage PFI projects, and shared their experiences of managing these projects in their brigade.

‘Not everyone wanted to play so it was my job to go in and sort it out’

‘As leaders they didn’t like us, but that is a good thing, because it gives everyone a common enemy. And that brings them all together against us’

‘It’s about sharing information not consultation with the FBU. We tell them what we’re doing ~ they don’t have any input’

‘Nationally PFI is a nasty word for the FBU, but locally it’s tolerated, so we didn’t discuss issues with them’

‘They said to me ~ I can’t talk to you because you haven’t got a uniform on. The FBU will not negotiate with non-uniform people’

These comments were made during a day’s session on Quality. A Fire Service College lecturer delivered this topic. This lecturer had completed his thirty-year career in the fire service some three years previously, and was employed by the College on a Civil Service contract. This was the first of two day’s input, and contained very little information on quality. The session predominantly covered Change and Culture.

‘If I had my way I’d scatter the whole watch’

‘A manager’s there to manage, they don’t have to have any expert knowledge’

‘A manager must inspire confidence’

Question to students from Tutor.

Tutor: ‘How do you go about negotiations?’

Student: ‘You take a position ~ and say this is what we want’

‘You need to be careful to make sure that people relatively low down in your organisation know what’s going on’

'I'm not convinced that the bottom level people know the correct salutation for greeting the public'

'Never jump at the first offer, no matter how attractive. You can always do better'

'Always use a higher authority when you negotiate. You're more powerful if you have to check with someone else'

'Because of the perverse incentive (in the SSA funding arrangement) one Chief said that his fire fighters would be better off employed going around starting fires'

'It's strange that the fire service was largely shielded from the effects of the 18 years of Conservative Government'

'The people are the biggest barrier to change'

'People are scared of change'

'Power doesn't always lie at the pinnacle of the organisation'

'The power doesn't always rest with the watch commander'

'We're collaborative and competitive as well'

'The Chief Fire Officer's style will reflect the approach in the organisation ~ if he's dictatorial the organisation will be autocratic'

'The public see us as heroes as a result of September 11th'

'The fire service is macho, uniformed and white male'

'We are slowly moving away from the traditional style of organisation'

'Perverse incentive ~ the Audit Commission report came out in 1995, and coined the phrase perverse incentive, but nothing has changed'

‘Do we have a no-blame culture ~ I don’t think so. A visiting Chief said that his brigade has an error tolerant culture, which is not much different’

‘Are your workforces empowered? Nothing has changed in 20 years’

‘I’ve got 30 years in the Service, and I don’t think that anything has changed on watches. The culture is exactly the same as 30 years ago’

Said by a longer serving senior manager.

‘If I put on a yellow fire helmet (as worn by Fire Fighters and Junior Officers) I could go straight back into a watch culture in minutes’

These comments were made during a follow up session on Project Management. A visiting lecturer delivered this session. The following notes were made during a discussion that explored the management of change in the fire service.

‘All of these techniques are used for manipulating time people or money’

A discussion between the Tutor and a student.

Student: ‘We don’t manage projects as officers, we’re told what to do and when they will end’

Tutor: ‘But how do you get it done?’

Student: ‘You stay late, come in early, or stay all weekend’

‘Sometimes you have to be Theory X. You have to let them know that they’re going to do it. Whatever they think’

The following comments were made during a day’s input on Human Resource Management in the fire service. A visiting lecturer delivered this session. The majority of the day was built around group activities. These comments relate specifically to the topic of Feedback.

‘It’s to make sure that they know that they’re being monitored’

‘A bit of Taylorism never hurt anyone’

‘Different people need different tools’

‘Feedback can be de-motivating’  
‘It’s got to be sold in the first place’  
‘Criticism is often difficult to take’

‘The autocratic approach is OK if they’re subordinate and compliant’

These comments relate to a session on Finance. A visiting lecturer delivered the session. We discussed measuring performance in the fire service and business planning.

‘An organisation is largely built on its systems’

‘If you have a lack of transparency then it’s normal not to have too much information. This is common in the public sector’

‘Devolving budgets has made everyone aware ~ right down to fire fighters on stations’

‘Everything should be directed towards the mission of the organisation’

‘The performance Indicators...there’s too many, not integrated, not strategic, not agreed with stakeholders and duplicated’

‘Performance Indicators...the public don’t really care anyway ~ all they want is a fire engine to turn up when their house is on fire’

‘It appears that change only occurs to test us in interviews’

‘20 years ago, we turned up at a house fire with two machines and put it out with a hose reel. Today we do the same’

‘The leaders and the managers in the workplace are not the same people’

‘Employees do not trust the managers’

A discussion on Surveys.

‘We carried out a survey, but the results were so unfavourable it wasn’t published’

‘we did the same, it was interesting to compare the sanitised version against the real one’

‘Our survey said that officers were untrustworthy’

‘Ours said the same’

‘All our results were sent to our deputy to be collated’

This session was on Performance Management at the organisational level. A fire service officer seconded to the HMIFS delivered this session. It contained a discussion on the difference between management and command.

‘If you spoke to a fire fighter that has traditionally had an adversarial situation, they would see it differently’

‘Fire Fighters have been bombarded with initiatives over the last 10 years, and nothing has changed. They don’t trust us anymore’

Question from Tutor to Students.

‘How many of you use the term incident commander or incident manager?’

‘There’s no difference’

‘A commander is a leader, a manager is a manager’

‘A commander makes immediate decisions’

‘Most incidents require a commander at the beginning when it’s time critical. But when things quieten down they need a manager’

‘There’s no difference at all ~ if you’re working with people to achieve an outcome ~ there’s no difference, time doesn’t come into it’

‘A more successful incident manager includes people’

‘A good inclusive manager in the office makes a good incident manager’

‘The incident commander is an autocrat’

‘There’s no direct correlation between a good manager and a good incident manager’

## **Section 6.3 The Documents**

### **Introduction**

The documentary evidence forms a vital part of the research design, and illuminates the interview data. The topics of leadership, leadership development, followership, organisation and culture are presented as separate subjects, but cross-over considerably into all areas. The documents are from the wider national fire service environment and so offer significant information on how the leadership paradigm within the EFRS is influenced and shaped. This data also illustrates aspects of the fire service, through the language that is used and the assumptions that underpin the material.

The first section will be an examination of leadership and culture. This will be achieved by looking at the impact upon the fire service of a Thematic Review carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services (HMIFS) into Equality and Fairness. This was published in 1999 and contained a significant number of recommendations that were intended to change the leadership and culture of the fire service. The progress that has made to date represents a case study on how the Service functions nationally, showing how significant stakeholders influence and shape the fire service 'world'.

### **Leadership and culture**

As seen in the background chapter, considerable interest has been shown in leadership within the public sector, and this has been reflected in the fire service. However, the reasons for this interest seem slightly different, because the HMIFS's Equality and Fairness Thematic Review, and the work that it has generated, has made a substantial impact upon the way that leadership has been viewed in the fire service nationally.

The Equality and Fairness Review said; 'All of the findings...have emphasized a very real need for a change in the style of leadership, and the processes of management within the fire

service' (HMIFS, 1999a:60). This argument was based upon the notion that any efforts to achieve '...an inherently fair, equality based service will founder unless this essential change is recognised' (HMIFS, 1999a:60). As a consequence, the report made two 'leadership' recommendations (1 and 6). The first related to the leadership of the Service taking '...positive steps to display a commitment to equality and fairness'; and the second, proposed a further thematic review into the '...leadership of the fire service' (HMIFS, 1999a:9).

Before looking at the leadership thematic review, it can be noted that the work of the Equal Opportunities Task Group (EOTG), a sub committee of the CFBAC, has been quite influential in progressing this matter. In June 2000, the EOTG published an action plan, which was intended to achieve the thematic review's recommendations. The plan, 'Towards Diversity: Promoting Cultural Change - had twenty-nine action points, the first five of which were related specifically to leadership. Recommendations two and thirteen are of most significance to this study. Recommendation two, which was to be completed after the review ~ now called 'Managing a Modernised Fire Service (MMFS)' ~ set Chief Fire Officers the task of developing a set of behaviours to support managers in their personal demonstration of commitment to diversity. Recommendation thirteen, whose completion date was May 2001 ~ the publication date of MMFS ~ set brigades the task of undertaking a justification exercise in relation to their own current militaristic practices and to identify any changes required to support and fundamentally change the culture (Towards Diversity, 1999:2,3). Both of these recommendations are still ongoing.

It appears that MMFS, and the action plan, were intended to be the vehicles to carry forward a fundamental change in the Fire Service's leadership and culture. Mike O'Brien ~ the then Fire Service Minister ~ speaking to the Local Government Association in March 2001, illustrated this point. He said that '*...the long awaited thematic report on the management of the fire service (will be released shortly)...I hope that it will be radical*' (O'Brien, 2001b). He went on to say that he hoped that the report would '*...consider greater support for senior officers to achieve educational qualifications and improve their managerial skills* (he supported this view by suggesting that)...*the quality of management in a modernised fire service is more important than ever*' (O'Brien, 2001b).

It may or may not be significant, but it is interesting that Mr. O'Brien did not mention leadership once but referred to management throughout. As is the fact that he said that; '*...we need to find ways of supporting and valuing the work of senior managers, of recruiting high flying graduates, of bringing on talent within the service*', because he also remarked that these ideas may be '*controversial*' (O'Brien, 2001b). He seemed to allude to the issue of single tier entry, which had been highlighted in the Equality and Fairness review (there is a single point of entry, because everyone in the fire service joins as a fire fighter). The review noted that the leadership approach and the closed nature of the watch regime not only appeared to exclude minority groups from the service but because all Chief Offices were also once fire fighters this meant that Chief Fire Officers had been brought through the same 'closed' system. Thus O'Brien seemed more concerned with the qualifications and skills of managers than he was with the leadership of the Service.

The Minister's remarks were possibly responsible for a flurry of activity in the 'fire press' just prior to the publication of the report, with arguments being advanced from both sides of the double tier single tier entry divide (Baigent, 2001a; Lynch, 2001). Perhaps the most intriguing comment was from the editor of *Fire*, who attempted to second-guess the outcome of the report. He said that the MMFS report team had consulted far and wide, '*...including Professor Tim Rolfe, Principal of the Australian Institute of Police Management (Lynch argued that since)...the fire service so often follows the police, it is interesting timing (because)...the police are looking to introduce double tier entry*' (Lynch; 2001:7).

As predicted by the minister the report was accompanied by controversy. Received wisdom, particularly that shared by senior managers, reports that the original review was rejected by CACFOA (the Chief Fire Officers Association), and this resulted in the HMIFS Chief Inspector rewriting the report. The outcome of which was a widely perceived belief in fire service circles that the report was badly flawed. It is often remarked that the script at the 'front' of the document bears little resemblance to the recommendations at the 'back'.

The report's main findings proposed the following:

- ✦ Many different styles of leadership exist within the fire service
- ✦ There is no agreed 'ethical' standard in terms of behaviour and values
- ✦ The Fire Service College teaches leadership through its core progression courses, but
  - some officers find it difficult to apply this teaching in brigade
  - There is no agreement with the College that training in leadership would be practically applied in brigade
  - the College teaches leadership principles borrowed from other sectors, particularly the military
  - a 'command and control' perception of leaders and managers within the fire service has been developed
- ✦ Leaders in the fire service feel under great pressure
  - issues such as Best Value, Business Plans, SSA's, and legislation are the main drivers of their work

In arriving at these findings, it can be recognised that the report drew on work from Anne Bennett, one of the contributors to the PIU leadership in the public sector document examined in Chapter 2, and Professor Tim Rolfe, the Principal of the Australian Institute of Police Management. Although a definition of leadership was not provided, the report did suggest that there were common principles:

- ✦ A clear vision and purpose 'to lead people towards' is critical to effective leadership;
- ✦ Leaders of the future face a major agenda for change – driven by the changing demands of society and technological change;
- ✦ Transformational leadership models will be the predominant form of leadership style for the future;
- ✦ Leaders of tomorrow need to manage in a much more inclusive way to reflect and take into account the more challenging nature and demands of people entering the service now, and in the future;
- ✦ Leaders of the future need to acknowledge and take account of the need for ethical behaviour and be visible in their commitment to fairness, equity and diversity.

(HMIFS, 2001b:37,38).

The above points indicate that the PIU report favoured a transformational leadership approach. The report argues its case clearly and states that ‘...by its very nature the fire service is a front line service (which)...has operated a command and control leadership culture’ (HMSFS, 2001:36). It then goes on to point out that as things become more complex, ‘...leaders are less able to manipulate the world through traditional command and control methods (and hence)...must...adopt an inclusive approach’ (HMIFS, 2001b:37).

On the theme of inclusion, MMFS suggests that ‘...today’s fire fighter is a very different individual from the pre-1974 fire fighter, who accepted orders without question or concern (whereas)...today’s fire fighter is prepared to ask an officer: by what right do you lead me?’ (HMIFS, 2001b:40). While the report does not explain the significance of 1974, the point about the changing nature of the workforce is made. 1974 was a time of major changes in the geographical boundaries of brigades, the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act, and the introduction of the Qualified Fire Fighters’ Scheme (a fire fighter who has completed four years’ service and passed the qualified fire fighters’ exam). The qualification was introduced in order to recognise and reward the fact that fire fighters carried out fire prevention duties as well as the more traditional fire-fighting roles and the Health and Safety at Work Act made people more responsible for their own actions. It is conceivable that the MMFS report was suggesting these post-1974 fire fighters had different aspirations and responsibilities ~ *but as a fire fighter who joined in 1978, I believe that the above change occurred some time later.*

The report answered the ‘right to lead’ question by ‘...pointing to the wealth of experience that officers possess, the core progression courses at the Fire Service College, and the Brigade Command Course (BCC). Whilst the main findings in the report appeared to criticise these very aspects, the fact that the BCC is recognised ‘...by a number of Universities (as)...being at Masters degree level’ may support the experiences and qualifications of senior officers argument in the ‘right to lead’ debate (Glossop, 2002:12). Moreover, the report’s defence of senior officers also suggests why the double tier entry debate ceased following its publication.

Having concluded that the fire service should adopt an inclusive approach, which will enable it cope with change and complexity and work with multiple stakeholders and partnerships, the report then makes a series of recommendations that apply to principal officers only. Apart from the recommendations intended to achieve cultural change, almost every proposed modification affects the development of Brigade Commanders (HMIFS, 2001b:57-60). So perhaps herein lies the received wisdom viewpoint; in that the back of the report ~ i.e. the recommendations ~ bear little resemblance to the main body of the report. Whilst the bulk of the report considers the complexity of the environment, and the pressures that this places on leaders, the recommendations seem to imply that all the answers to these problems reside in the development of future Chief Officers only. Although this may be the case, the main body of the report does not argue this point.

The progress of the recommendations also appear worthy of some exploration, because it has illustrated much about leadership in the fire service. This can be demonstrated by the outcome of the report's proposed 'Leadership Action Team', which was central to the progression of the recommendations ~ because this has not been set up as yet, and as will be shown it may never be (HMIFS, 2001b:57). CACFOA ~ representing the principal officers ~ said in July 2001 that '...the association argues that many of the issues raised are already catered for within the proposed IPDS' ~ a competence based training system based on National Occupational Standards (Bull, 2001a:3). This position was ratified in December 2001, and to all intents and purposes put an end to the report and its recommendations. A CACFOA board paper explained the new position; '...the responsibility for taking (MMFS) forward ... following its publication was discharged to HMI Currie after discussion at CFBAC...most recommendations could and should be subsumed within the work on IPDS or EOTG (Equal Opportunities Task Group)...HMI Currie undertook to progress this' (see Appendix 10 – Board Paper 4/12/01).

If one examines the next EOTG action plan; Towards Diversity II: Commitment to Cultural Change, which was published in the same month as the above explanation, it can be seen that the original action points relating to MMFS have all but disappeared. That is apart from the action point regarding 'militaristic practices', which has now changed to 'inappropriate practices' (Towards Diversity II, 2001:10).

The cultural aspects in the thematic reviews are evident throughout the above exploration of leadership and the fire service. The principal points in the report that are identified as ‘indicators of change’ are shown in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1 Equality and Fairness and the Fire Service**

<b>Paragraph</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
4.9	A culture of fear and mistrust
6.2	A powerful internal identity
6.2	A military style supported by a strong discipline code
6.2	A regimental pride and a spirit of team working
6.3	Command power across activities that require leadership and management
6.4	Closed watch group (resembling)...a family rather than a team
6.5	Single tier entry officers...part of the watch culture
6.7	Hierarchy divorces officers from their fire fighters
6.8	Culture encourages ‘us and them’ mentality
6.10	Hierarchical structure reinforced by use of uniform
6.11	Uniform reinforces militaristic culture...the message that this conveys

(HMIFS, 1999a:20-22)

A similar pattern to the HMIFS Equality and Fairness ‘leadership’ recommendations emerges, since the ‘culture’ recommendations were translated into action points in the first edition of *Towards Diversity*, and once again it referred to MMFS as a key driver of this process. In driving this forward the MMFS report identified a number of main findings in terms of culture. It found a positive service highly regarded by the public, but a service whose fire fighters perceived that ‘...any improvements ...had been fought for, and were only achieved through conflict’ (HMIFS, 2001b:21). For fire fighters, this not only meant that industrial relations had to be ‘adversarial’, but also that they were associated with ‘...resistance and suspicion of change’ (HMIFS, 2001b:21). Coupled to the fact that the review considered that ‘...access to information and the increased individual awareness that this brings...contributes to an environment where people have high expectations and value their own ability to make decisions about their lives’ then this also appears to influence the culture (HMIFS, 2001b:28). Since fire fighters perceived that they were not able to make these decisions, the report

considered that the outcome would be frustration, ‘...with constant efforts to test or bend the rules by those who feel repressed’ (HMIFS, 2001b:28).

As a result of these findings, MMFS considered the arguments for a new culture in the fire service. The report considered changing culture as though it was an object, which possibly suggests that MMFS viewed culture in organisations from a functionalist perspective. Nevertheless, MMFS suggested that the service should develop a culture on the basis of ‘...mutual understanding, partnership and respect from people who do not have the simple objective of defending the status quo’ (HMIFS, 2001b:28). The report subsequently concluded that the culture should value everyone and also place value on their respective contributions. It recommended that ‘local teams’ should be set up to allow for partnership working and arrangements be made to allow for ‘...contributions from all parts of the organisation’ (HMIFS, 2001b:57). It seems noteworthy that the report went on to argue that these local arrangements should allow managers to manage and the trade unions to improve the conditions for their membership. Because if this sentence had not been written in order to placate the management or unions, then this appears to be a somewhat unitary notion of organisation and one that might not be consistent with the notion of inclusiveness.

A significant aspect in the thematic reviews was a consideration of overt militaristic practices. This was particularly the case for the Equality and Fairness review, which focused considerable attention on the topic of uniform. The militaristic practices argument did not materialise in the recommendations of MMFS, nor did it appear in the second Towards Diversity action plan ~ at least not in its original form. This may be explained by the fact that nationally, there has been a vigorous defence of the uniform (Doig, 2001; Lloyd-Elliot, 2001). In addition to this, CACFOA have conceivably influenced the situation by stating that they wanted to move away from the term militaristic practices. This was reflected in the Towards Diversity II document, which replaced the term ‘militaristic practices’ with ‘inappropriate practices’ (Towards Diversity II, 2001:10). It should also be recognised that CACFOA have passed a recommendation to end the wearing of mess kit at the next CACFOA conference, as well as discouraging the continuation of ‘Officer’s Clubs’ (see Appendix 11 – Board Paper 15/10/01). Given the fate of the MMFS Report, and CACFOA’s role in this, it is somewhat

paradoxical that they did not consider it ‘...appropriate for CACFOA to attempt to direct brigades in this matter’ (CACFOA Information, 2001:6).

The Fire Brigades Union were quite prominent in the ‘militaristic practices’ debate. The General Secretary identified the FBU’s position as one of the key stakeholders within the fire service two months before the report was published. He argued for change, saying that ‘...too many leaders in the service are still locked into a quasi-militaristic regime (of)...bawling, bullying, shouting and diktat’ (Gilchrist, 2001:9). Yet it seems the issue has not moved on; lack of agreement nationally, particularly at CACFOA level, has to some extent curtailed this debate.

### **Organisation and followership**

The EFRS is a uniformed organisation, based upon a structure of thirteen ranks (see Appendix 4). The conditions of the service are set nationally and enforced through the 1985 Discipline Regulations. This organisation until the 1990’s was left largely to its own devices, apart from being financially accountable to the local authority and subject to an annual inspection from Her Majesty’s Inspector (HMI) of Fire Services. In 1992 this position changed and in addition to the above all fire services were required to collate information towards the publication of performance indicators. It can also be noted that until the 1990’s all HMI’s were fire officers. This system for ‘self-regulation’ had the effect of reinforcing the culture and values of the Service; a factor that the Government sought to change, when it restructured the HMI, and introduced lay inspectors into the Inspectorate in the latter half of the 1990’s.

The modernising agenda for the public services altered the situation with the introduction of Best Value. The performance indicators were subsumed into the Best Value Performance Indicators, and the HMI were made the best value inspectors for the Service. They were also required through the HMIFS Expectations document to disseminate best practice throughout the British fire service (HMIFS, 2002). I explored the impact of this document in my EdD Stage One Papers (see Appendix 1), and demonstrated its influence. A comparison of the EFRS Strategic Plans for 1996 and 2001 ~ pre and post ‘expectations’ (see Appendix 12 - Strategic Plans 1996 and 2001), shows how the Expectations document has changed the

Service's planning process (HMIFS, 2002:4). The EFRS's 1999 Principal Inspection Report, and the 2000 Inspection Report, also illustrates how the expectations are used to influence brigade practice (HMIFS, 1999b:2; HMIFS, 2000c:3).

This information depicts the EFRS as a certain type of organisation, because an examination of EFRS's Strategic Plan says much about the EFRS. The style and the tone of the document illustrate an organisation with a vision. The Equality and Fairness review however has noted that people do not share these visions and feel frustrated at their lack of involvement in their creation (HMIFS, 1999a). The report said that whilst there is a '...sense of belonging and pride' in providing the service, the objective of many '...seemed to be the continuation of the status quo' (HMIFS, 1999a:55). The MMFS report highlighted a similar dichotomy. It not only suggested that people had high expectations of their value and wanted to make their own decisions but that people also 'tested' the system as a means of demonstrating their frustration at their lack of involvement.

My research in the Stage One papers of the EdD programme presented a similar situation. The organisation shared the vision, in that it was written down, but it did not involve people in its creation (see Appendix 2 – Chapter 5 Organisational Implications). The papers concluded that not only did the EFRS act in the way that it sees itself, as a unitary organisation, but the workforce demonstrated that they also wanted to be involved in the creation of the vision. They were not as compliant as might be expected in a unitary organisation, and did not share the organisation's vision. The outcome was a vision that had little ownership from the people that were intended to deliver it, which in MMFS terms meant that it was tested whenever it impacted upon the workforce to any great extent.

This appears to lead us to the notion of conflict. The idea that people wanted to continue with the status quo, is not only indicative of a difference in objectives, but it also implies that the relationship between management and the workforce may sometimes be troubled. The Equality and Fairness review illustrated this point, saying that '...although members of the team who served in the Inspectorate were accustomed to the regime, the extent to which confrontation flavoured the management / union interface surprised our advisors' (HMIFS,

1999a:48). It was ‘...difficult for them to understand why so many matters became a basis for conflict and why the style was negotiation rather than co-operation’ (HMIFS, 1999a:49). The review team concluded that the ‘...overall intransigence of the FBU in conjunction with outdated, authoritative managerial style are contributors to the current situation’ (HMIFS, 1999a:49).

These comments were applied to the whole of the British fire service, and not just the EFRS. The evidence suggests that the situation in the EFRS has been, and probably continues to be, much worse than the national scene. Yet the 2000 HMI Inspection report for the EFRS did state that ‘The passage of time has led to considerable improvement in personal relationships’. It went on to say that ‘...this legacy is continuing to adversely affect the working of the service’ (HMI, 2000:3). *Having ‘lived’ through the disputes, which started with a decrease in the budget, a ballot for strike action, a threat by the fire authority to ‘sack’ anyone that went on strike, an increasingly acrimonious three month dispute which ended with more ‘finger pointing’, then this perception of the situation by the HMI seems to be an accurate one to me.*

The management of the change process nationally also illustrates much about the EFRS. Because whilst the MMFS report recognised a fire service environment that has become increasingly complex, it also identified that the workforce generally attempts to maintain the status quo, although this does not appear to be a phenomenon confined to the present day. The ‘In the Line of Fire’ report, published by the Audit Commission in 1995, looked back at various fire service reports and found that there had been little progress on recommendations stretching back to the 1970’s (Audit Commission, 1995:10). The impact that a powerful stakeholder such as CACFOA can have on the change process as already been examined, but it seems that the FBU can be just as forceful. Following a series of high profile consultative documents, which included ‘In the Line of Fire’, the FBU published its own discussion document ‘A fire service for the future’ (FBU, 1997). The FBU not only set out its position but it also used this to begin a successful campaign to oppose many of the proposed changes.

So how does the EFRS approach change? In 1996, when the service was restructured from four Divisions to two, it produced a document ~ The future structure of the organisation ~

setting out the pressures on the Service and the way forward (see Appendix 13- Restructure Plans). This was not a consultative document, but was produced for explanatory purposes only ~ the decision had already been taken; this was the justification for the decision. In contrast, the Service's latest restructure, from two divisions to seven community areas took place on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002. This restructure started with the production of a consultative document, 'Closer to the Community' and a scheme to pilot the new communities. It was thought by one of the interviewees in Section 6.1 that this approach was far more successful.

### ***A community commander's reflections***

*As one of the Community Commanders that piloted the new structure in the EFRS, I have talked to all of my colleagues in the Command (approximately 180). Only a small number have encountered the consultative document; and these were either officers studying for promotion interviews, or union officials. The consultative document was not even circulated to stations that were part of the pilot project for the commands. Since the change to seven areas involved an increase in staff and a movement of personnel, this suggests that the intended audience for the consultative document was the Fire Authority and the FBU, and not the workforce.*

In setting out how the EFRS both sees itself and acts in practice, much appears to be revealed about the followers within the organisation. A picture has been presented of people that are both politically and financially aware, who want to exercise choice and self-control, and have certain expectations of their role in the organisation's activities. It has also been demonstrated that followers have certain expectations of leaders themselves. Thus it seems helpful to build upon this picture.

The MMFS report provides a useful means of examining followers' expectations of leaders. The report argued that a gap existed between the '...view of senior managers and front line staff about what should prioritise quality of service to the public' (HMIFS, 2001b:22). MMFS proposed that this was caused by the different perceptions that were held by leaders and followers regarding the '...relative importance of the role of the fire service and the duties it performs (followers did not believe that leaders had)...positive aspirations for the service'

(HMIFS, 2001b:22). In defence of this view the report then posited that followers did not appear to appreciate the full scope of work being carried out by leaders. This seems important to note, because the basis of the report's argument regarding a perception gap between leaders and followers appeared to be based upon knowledge of what the leaders were responsible for.

In looking at this issue, the report provided three lists: a list of traditional leadership responsibilities, a list of today's responsibilities, and based upon current and anticipated future activity, a potential list of leadership responsibilities for the future. Some of the main points as listed in the reports are provided in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2 Fire Service Leadership Responsibilities**

<b>The 'Traditional List'</b>	<b>'Today's list'</b>	<b>'A possible future list'</b>
Budget planning	Private Finance Initiatives	Risk based approaches
Attending fires / incidents	Audits	Environmental accountability
Visits to fire stations	Capital expenditure	Ethics and integrity
Attending large exercises	Targets with specific deadlines	More thematic reviews
Meeting civic leaders	Developing good industrial relations	Civil protection role
Short term planning	Community fire safety	Self inspections and audit
Recruitment and promotion	A positive health and safety approach	A service supported by the private sector
Discipline	Consulting with the community	Flexible duty systems
Attending brigade functions	Serving on public bodies	Combined Police, Fire and Ambulance
Local authority meetings	Networking	Regionalisation

Having said that followers did not fully appreciate the complexity of leadership responsibilities within the fire service, the report then argues that there is a gap between leaders and followers. The Report comments that fire fighters ‘...felt they knew what the chief officer’s role was, and their view of that role was very much based upon the traditional list’, and not on the ‘today list’ of what fire service leaders actually do (HMIFS, 2001b:23).

The report suggested that this situation has led to an ‘understanding gap’ between leaders and followers, with leaders concentrating on economic factors, whereas the followers preferred them to be ‘people centred’. The MMFS report accordingly recommended that local joint teams should be set up to develop policies and strategy (Principal Officers, FBU Officials and Fire Authority Members). It also proposed that arrangements should be made to encourage involvement at all levels of the organisation, in order to develop a clear purpose and vision for the service. Notwithstanding the fact that the MMFS recommendations have possibly ‘faded away’, it can also be recognised that a local team has not yet been set up in the EFRS. In addition to this, a vision for the fire service is being developed, ‘...and will be published in the near future’ (Bull, 2001b:21). However, this vision will not only be the vision of the Minister for the Fire Service, but it will also be influenced by those more powerful stakeholders within the fire community (e.g., The LGA, CACFOA, and the FBU).

### **Leadership development**

This part of Section 6.3 not only examines how leaders are developed in the fire service, but also reveals much about how this process influences and shapes the leadership paradigm that is in use within the EFRS. The process by which EFRS leaders have been developed since it first adopted Adair’s theories in 1968 will be examined. This will be achieved by exploring the leadership development activities provided by the Fire Service College, and the EFRS; as well as looking at the most recent work that has been carried out in terms of leadership development within the fire service. The leadership content of the statutory examinations that fire officers have to pass in order to be promoted will also be examined. In order to aid this exploration of fire service leadership development, Table 6.3 provides an overview of the rank, course, and examination structures that apply to fire officers.

**Table 6.3 Leadership Development Structures**

<b>Ranks</b>	<b>Core Progression Courses</b>	<b>EFRS Courses (Maes Y Lade)</b>	<b>Fire Service Examinations</b>
<b>Fire Fighter</b>	<b>Crew Command (CCC)</b> - established 1998	<b>Leadership in the Outdoors</b> (Primarily intended for fire fighters, and newly promoted Leading Fire Fighters)	<b>Leading Fire Fighter</b>
<b>Leading Fire Fighter</b>			<b>Sub Officer</b>
<b>Sub Officer</b>	<b>Watch Command (WCC)</b> - established 1994, previously Junior Officer (JO Course)		<b>Station Officer</b>
<b>Station Officer (incl. Flexi- Duty)</b>	<b>Junior Officer Advancement (JOA)</b>	<b>Management in the Outdoors</b>	
<b>Assistant Divisional Officer</b>	<b>Divisional Command (DCC)</b>		
<b>Divisional Officer I, II, and III</b>			
<b>Senior Divisional Officer</b>	<b>Brigade Command (BCC)</b> (Entry to the BCC is via a selection process called the Extended Interviews)		
<b>Assistant Chief Fire Officer</b>			
<b>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</b>			
<b>Chief Fire Officer</b>			

*Note\* Leading Fire Fighters are eligible to attend the WCC, and Sub Officers can also attend the JOA. The core progression courses must be completed in sequence. Fire service examinations are a statutory requirement for promotion to the next rank ~ up until and including the rank of Station Officer*

If one examines an extract from the 1986 Junior Officer course notes for leadership at the Fire Service College (see Appendix 14 - Course Note 1986) it will be seen that they are based on Adair's leadership theories as presented in Chapter 4. It also seems significant that the works referenced in the notes are Adair's 1968 original publication, and Adamson's work of 1970 ~ The Effective Leader. In addition to this it can also be noted that the functions upon which Adair's theories are based are almost exactly the same as listed in his original 1968 book 'Training for Leadership' (Adair, 1968), although, as seen in Chapter 4, Adair has up-dated this list on a number of occasions (1968, 1983, and 1997).

In addition to the 1986 Junior Officer leadership course note, a similar extract from the JOA leadership course note of 2002 is also provided (see Appendix 15 - Course Note 2002). When comparing the two notes, they are word for word the same ~ with exactly the same books referenced. It also appears significant that the leadership content of the JOA course note is exactly the same as for the 2002 CCC and WCC course notes. This content forms part of a four-week management phase on the JOA, part of one-week modules on the CCC and WCC, and one day's input on the DCC.

The course notes follow the syllabus of the Action Centred Leadership Course, which was developed by Edwin Smith in 1969 for the Industrial Society, around the functional approach that Adair used with military personnel (see Appendix 16 - ACL Course Structure). The examination of qualities, situational and functional approaches to leadership, followed by practical exercises, interspersed with theoretical sessions on motivation and decision-making is similar to the approach that is adopted on fire service courses.

In addition to the above observations, it is interesting from a historical perspective that Adair managed to get permission from Hollywood in the 1960's to show the 1949 feature film 'Twelve O'clock High'. In 1986, Adair still believed that Twelve O'clock High was the best film for leadership. However, it does seem remarkable that if you attend a JOA course at the Fire Service College in 2002 you will still be shown Twelve O'clock High.

The story in the EFRS is very similar. The leadership course note for a Local Training Course for Leading Firemen (sic) from the early 1980's is almost word for word the same as the Fire Service College leadership course notes (see Appendix 17 - Firemen's Course Note). The pattern is similar if one contrasts the 2001 EFRS leadership course. The notes have been rewritten ~ something that happened shortly after I joined the Course Team, but the content and pattern of the course is the same. The 'qualities of a leader' lists, as used on the 2001 EFRS leadership course note, are the same as in Adair's 1968 original ~ even down to the abbreviations (see Appendix 18 – Leadership Functions).

Attempts have been made nationally to examine leadership training. The Sudbury Report, which was published in 1990, has already been mentioned. Its terms of reference were given as: ‘...you are to examine the provision of command, management and leadership training in Fire Service College courses to establish what changes are necessary to meet present and future fire service training needs, and to make recommendations’ (Sudbury Report, 1990:A1). The report made seven recommendations in terms of leadership training. These are detailed in Table 6.4 below. An explanation of the recommendation and the progress made in their implementation is also provided.

**Table 6.4 The Sudbury Report’s Leadership Training Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>The Current Picture at the Fire Service College</b>
Leadership training should: aim to make fire service officers more effective be relevant to the job start at the earliest point of need be progressive be controlled by those with appropriate experience be supported by a multi disciplinary team be convincing intellectually make controlled use of the outdoors avoid becoming theory or jargon ridden be included as a specific debriefing point in practical training and make correct use of studies	This appears to be an overview of the Report’s findings. There has been little change in the structure of the Core Progression Courses apart from the introduction of the CCC
Crew Commanders should be given a formal introduction to training	The CCC was introduced (1998)
Watch Commander level should concentrate on practical aspects...student notes should be updated	Course title changes in 1994 (Junior Officer to WCC) the content remains the same
Station Command level should consider attributes of leadership... student notes require revision	The JOA content remains the same (course title has not changed to SCC)
Leadership should be an identified theme on the DCC	Has changed to the IPDS Role Maps and includes Adair’s Functional Leadership (2002)
Leadership should be a specific theme on the BCC, at the strategic level	Now contains specific topic area of leadership in the fire service. The new Role Map also includes functional approaches (2002)
Command and Leadership training should be closely co-ordinated at the Fire Service College (The Sudbury Report, 1990:3-11 – 3-20)	

It can be seen that the Sudbury Report made little impact upon the Fire Service College's approach to leadership training. Received wisdom within the fire service points out that the structure at the College makes change a very slow process. The many stakeholders and links to statutory examinations appear to account for some of the difficulties, as does the fact that the College has been in severe financial difficulty since 1992 (Prior Options Review, 1999). The fact that the College has reduced costs by cutting back on teaching staff may also provide some explanation for this lack of change (Prior Options Review, 1999).

The most influential report in recent times, in terms of fire service training in general, was a jointly produced report from the Training Strategy Group (TSG - joint, in that it included all major stakeholders). In 1994 when it was produced seventy-eight recommendations were offered. Recommendation seven can be regarded as the most significant, since it proposed that all training, qualifications and development should be competence based (TSG, 1994). This is important, because the work from this recommendation is still on-going and its impact upon all training and development within the fire service will be quite profound.

The fact that this work is still continuing is both indicative of the 'story' of competence based training in the fire service and what a difficult task it has been to introduce a competence approach. Because this is such a complex story the main events are presented in chronological sequence in Table 6.5. It can be seen that this story pre-dates the TSG Report, and follows the development of competence-based training from 1991 through to the present day. In this way the fire service's current concept of leadership development is examined.

**Table 6.5 The Competence Story in the Fire Service**

<p><b>1991</b> – the Emergency Fire Services Lead Body (EFSLB) is set up to develop N/SVQ’s for the fire industry. Ten N/SVQ’s planned for Operations, Supervision and Command, Control, and Fire Safety</p>
<p><b>1994</b> – The TSG Report makes 78 recommendations. Recommendation 7 proposes that all training, development, and qualifications should be competence based – all to be completed in 5 years</p>
<p><b>1994</b> – TSG set up the Implementation Working Group (IWG) to introduce competence based training. IWG attempt to take the work of the EFSLB forward</p>
<p><b>1996</b> – The Home Office Publish Fire Service Circular 5/96. It encourages brigades to take on a competence approach, but no funding is made available ~ brigades are encouraged to go to local Training and Enterprise Council’s ~ most brigades do not</p>
<p>In the <b>mid 1990’s</b> London Fire Brigade receive two improvement notices from the HSE, as a result of fire fighter deaths. They develop their own competence standards, based upon outputs rather than N/SVQ inputs. These are called Role Maps</p>
<p><b>1997</b> – The Home Office Publish Fire Service Circular 15/97. It proposes a framework for competence training called Training for Competence. It encompasses both the inputs of the N/SVQ’s and the Outputs of the Role Maps; now called Role Maps</p>
<p><b>1998 – 2000</b> Severe delays are experienced in producing the Role Maps (only four are produced). The FBU membership opposes the new system. Most brigades prepare for training for competence, but wait to see what the outcome is before committing</p>
<p><b>2000</b> – IWG disbanded. Integrated Personal Development Working Group (IPDWG) set up to combine and standardise initiatives into a national policy. Before re-launching Role Maps as National Occupational Standards (NOS)</p>
<p><b>2001</b> – Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) launched. First three role maps accredited as NOS. Remaining Role Maps produced in draft form. IPDS seen to be part of a wider Performance Management System ~ work still on-going</p>

**Note\*** *Role Maps are designated for Fire Fighter, Crew, Watch, Station, Group, Area and Brigade Commanders. The NOS were for the same roles but renamed ‘Managers’. The new NOS ‘...have a target date for completion of April 2003’ (Duffield, 2001:4).*

The first competence standards were contained within the EFSLB NVQ's. Of the ten units proposed only three were accredited; Emergency Fire Service - Operations level 3, Emergency Fire Service - Fire Fighting level 2, and significantly for this study, Emergency Fire Service – Supervision and Command level 3. In terms of leadership, only Unit 2 – Direct emergency fire and rescue service to control and contain incident, and Unit 4 – Co-ordinate completion of the operational phase of an incident, appeared to be related to leadership in any way (Fire Service NVQ's, 1995). The language and the setting is that of the commander, although since the award was for supervision and command maybe leadership was not the goal.

The second version of the competence standards came out in 1997 as the role map. The role maps have been, and are being, developed from a functional and task analysis of the seven roles that are identified in Appendix 4. Of the seven intended Role Maps, only four were produced in draft for the roles of Fire Fighter, Crew Commander, Watch Commander and Station Commander (Fire Service Circular, 15/1997). In the Crew Commander's Role Map, two units refer to 'leading', Units CC3 and CC4. However, CC3 appears to be a rewording of units 2, 5 and 6 from the Supervision and Command NVQ, and Unit CC4 is a direct lift from the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) - Management level 3 Unit C12 (MCI, 1999a:4,5). The Watch Commanders' role map does not include any leadership units, primarily because it is the Crew Commanders' Role Map plus two additional units. The Station Commanders' Role Map has one leadership unit, which is operational in nature, linked to incidents, and consistent with the role of the commander.

Version three has been produced as a result of the work of the IPDWG. This has led to new National Occupational Standards at Fire Fighter, Crew, Watch, Station, Group, Area and Brigade Manager. As yet only the first three have been accredited, with the rest in draft form (Fire Service Role Maps, 2002). In terms of this study, the change of language is very interesting, particularly since many of the units within the awards are direct lifts from MCI units. Half of the Watch Managers' Role Map comes directly from MCI units; including Unit C12, which is once again reworded from manage to lead, and Unit WM7 is Unit CC3 from the Crew Commanders' Role Map (or NVQ Supervision and Command Units 2, 5 and 6). The development of the initial Supervision and Command NVQ has been tracked in Table 6.6 through to the Watch Managers' Role Map. The Watch Managers' standards are matched to

Level 3 MCI Units where appropriate. It is possible to match all except three of the Supervision and Command Units to the Crew and Watch Commanders' Role Maps; and all of the Crew and Watch Commanders' Role Map Units to the Watch Managers' Role Map. The second table, Table 6.7 illustrates the development of the Station Commanders' Role Map. It can be noted that it is possible to match all except two units from the Station Commanders' Role Map units directly to the Station Managers' Role Map. All, except two of the Station Managers' Role Map Units, map directly to MCI Units.

**Table 6.6 NVQ's and Role Maps Compared**

<b>Supervision and Command NVQ 3</b>	<b>Crew/ Watch Commanders' Role Map</b>	<b>Watch Managers' Role Map</b>
Plan and implement the delivery of emergency services for an incident (Unit1)	Deliver training to improve performance (Unit CC1)	Lead the work of teams and individuals to achieve their objectives (WM1) (MCI C12)
Direct emergency fire and rescue services to control and contain an incident (Unit 2)	Develop people to improve their performance (Unit CC2)	Maintain activities to meet requirements (WM2) (MCI A1)
Initiate and control measures to meet the health safety and welfare needs of personnel (Unit 3)	Lead and support people to resolve operational incidents (Unit CC3)	Manage information for action (WM3) (MCI D1)
Gather and disseminate information pertaining to an incident (Unit 4)	Lead and support people to meet specified objectives (Unit CC4)	Take responsibility for effective performance (WM4)
Co-ordinate the completion of the operational phase of an incident (Unit 5)	Provide information for internal and external contacts (Unit CC5)	Support the development of teams and individuals (WM5) (MCI C9)
Review the effectiveness of procedures following an incident (Unit 6)	Investigate and report on events to inform future practice (Unit CC6)	Investigate and report on events to inform future practice (WM6)
Contribute to the provision of personnel (Unit 7)	Resolve issue affecting the performance of people (Unit WC1)	Lead and support people to resolve operational incidents/events (WM7/8)
Contribute to the training and development of teams, individuals and self to enhance performance (Unit 8)	Plan and allocate resources to meet the objectives of the watch plan (Unit WC2)	Support the efficient use of resources (WM9) (MCI B1)
Contribute to planning organisation and evaluation of work (Unit 9)		Acquire, store and issue resources to provide service delivery (WM10)
Create, maintain and enhance productive working relationships (Unit 10)		Respond to poor performance in your team (WM11) (MCI C15)

**Table 6.7 Role Maps and NVQ's Compared**

<b>Station Commanders' Role Map</b>	<b>Station Managers' Role Map</b>	<b>MCI Management Level 4</b>
Lead monitor and support people to resolve operational incidents (SC1)	Manage activities to meet requirements (SM1)	Manage activities to meet requirements (A2)
Provide fire safety education to minimise risks to the community (SC2)	Contribute to improvements at work (SM2)	Contribute to improvements at work (A4)
Plan monitor and review station activity to ensure effective performance (SC3)	Develop your own resources (SM3)	Develop your own resources (C2)
Communicate information to inform and update organisational plans (SC4)	Develop Productive working relationships (SM4)	Develop Productive working relationships (C5)
Obtain and support the efficient use of resources (SC5)	Provide information to support decisions (SM5)	Provide information to support decisions (D4)
Investigate and report on events to inform future practice (SC6)	Manage the use of physical resources (SM6)	Manage the use of physical resources (B2)
Support the selection of personnel to meet organisational needs (SC7)	Manage the use of financial resources (SM7)	Manage the use of financial resources (B3)
Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance (SC8)	Determine solutions to hazards and risks identified by inspections and investigations to inform future practice (SM8)	
Resolve issues affecting the performance of people (SC9)	Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance (SM9)	Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance (C10)
Determine solutions to minimise fire hazards and risks identified by inspection (SC10)	Manage the performance of teams and individuals (SM10)	Manage the performance of teams and individuals (C13)
Secure compliance to minimise fire hazards and risks identified by inspection (SC11)	Respond to poor performance in your team (SM11)	Respond to poor performance in your team (C15)
	Facilitate meetings (SM12)	Facilitate meetings (D2)
	Lead, monitor and support people to resolve operational incidents (SM13)	
	Select personnel for activities (SM14)	Select personnel for activities (C8)
	Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process (SM15)	Equivalent to D34 Assessment criteria

Table 6.6 illustrates that the new draft Station Managers' Role Map has thirteen units marked as MCI Units. The only 'leading' unit is again a command unit, which refers to the station managers' role at operational incidents. The draft Group Managers' Role Map has only one unit that refers to leading in any real sense, and once again that is operationally driven. All of the remaining sixteen units are MCI Units at level 4 (MCI, 1999b). The draft Area and Brigade Managers' Role Maps follow the same pattern, with MCI Units forming the bulk of the awards, with just one 'leading' unit which focuses on strategic incident management.

In addition to standards based training and development, the TSG Report also recommended standards based qualifications. While this has not happened as yet, up until 2000 only the Station Officers' examination contained any leadership material (Fire Services Examination Board (FSEB), 1998:11). The Station Officers' Examination study guides, from 1986 and 1998, look remarkably similar to the leadership development material used at the Fire Service College. Adair's functional leadership theories, as well as other elements from the Action Centred Leadership Course, such as theories of motivation, appear in the study guides (FSEB, 1986; FSEB 1998). From a temporal point of view, the guide also includes principles of management based upon Henri Fayol's concepts, which exemplifies how these theories were influential in developing Adair's thinking. After 2000, 'leadership' was included in the Leading Fire Fighters' examination, but in doing so it was simply removed from the Station Officers' Examination and transplanted in to the Leading Fire Fighters' ~ the content did not change (FSEB, 2002:1305).

In examining the relevance of the traditional leadership paradigm to the EFRS in changing and turbulent times, it has been necessary to explore this issue from the perspective of those within the EFRS. As noted in the introduction to Part III of this investigation, this chapter has provided information that resides within the EFRS, in the people locally, and is consequently known, and that information that is outside of the organisation, in the documents and the people nationally, but is not seen. The evidence contained in this chapter will, together with the background information and the evidence from the 'experts', allow a new conceptual framework to be developed. Chapter 7 – The Current Orientation, will expand that part of the EFRS that is in the public domain.

## **PART IV THE OUTCOMES**

Part IV of the thesis draws together all aspects of the research design in order to provide both factual and conceptual findings. In Chapter 7 – The Current Orientation, a grounded theory approach will be used to analyse the evidence. The topics of organisation, culture, followership, leadership development and leadership are normally treated as independent subjects. Triangulation will be adopted to show how their respective features contribute to the context of the EFRS. In this way, a new conceptual framework will be developed.

In Chapter 8 – Conclusions, an overview of the purpose and boundaries of the investigation will be presented along with the findings that have been derived from the evidence. These findings will provide both factual and conceptual answers to the research questions that have been posed. This research, and its contribution to what is known about leadership in the EFRS will also be considered; before finally presenting a critique of this study and its emerging issues. Finally, Chapter 9 – My Doctoral Journey, provides a reflective account of my experiences over the last three years.

## **Chapter 7 The Current Orientation**

### **Introduction**

Phase IV of the research design – The Outcomes, was designed in order to provide a new construction of events. In keeping with the constructivist methodology, this process was founded upon a grounded theory approach based upon inductive analysis. This will bring together all phases of the research design in an iterative process, where new concepts will evolve, ‘...during the actual research (they may)...be generated...or if existing theories seem appropriate...elaborated or modified’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1997c:159).

This chapter will use theory in order to inform practice, and hence ground a new conceptual framework in the synthesis of existing concepts and the evidence provided by the research. The topics of organisation, followership and culture, leadership development and leadership will be considered as separate sections, but divided into three areas. The first area will look at aspects of the evidence that relate to the ‘traditional’ paradigm. The second area will examine current practice in the organisation, and the final area will provide a new construction of events. However, because treating these topics independently will not draw the evidence together in a way that will enable the research questions to be answered clearly, a final summative section will also be presented.

### **Section 7.1 Organisation**

#### **The traditional paradigm**

The background chapter portrayed the fire service as a quasi-militaristic organisation founded upon the traditions of the Royal Navy and based on hierarchical structures, rules and regulations. In keeping with this portrayal the respondents have described the EFRS in similar terms, since they said the organisation was hierarchical, top-down, militaristic, uniformed, disciplined, and based upon a rank structure. An examination of the organisation’s documentation reveals a similar conclusion, because the model and the language is that of top-down control.

These features are supported by the evidence. Of particular interest in the Stage One papers was the strategic planning process of vision creation, since the lack of involvement from Service personnel exemplified the top-down nature of organisational life in the EFRS. The rules and regulations reflect the hierarchical system and the power of managers to not only make decisions and set direction, but for followers to apply to senior management for permission to act. Moreover, if one examines the linguistic register, then once again the hierarchical relationship is illustrated; 'command and control', 'officer-in-charge', 'superiors', and 'subordinates' are terms that are in common usage.

The national fire service and public sector macro environments also appear to impact upon the EFRS. This environment is characterised by both change and complexity, and ensures that fire services are kept accountable to a wide variety of stakeholders (see Table 2.1). The most recent HMI Thematic Reviews have also revealed the hierarchical nature of the service nationally, and concluded that they are variously responsible for high levels of stress, low levels of diversity, and outdated work practices. The fate of the Managing a Modernised Fire Service (MMFS) Thematic Review clearly demonstrated the power of the stakeholders, since the review's attempts to create a more inclusive style of management were almost completely extinguished by the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA).

Thus, the history, the structures, the environment, the actions of those at the top of the organisation, the documentation, the language and the people within the EFRS, are describing the organisation from a modernist unitary perspective, where '...the interests of individual and society are (thought to be)...synonymous (and)...individuals (are expected to subordinate)... themselves in the service of society' (Morgan, 1997:200). However, in practice this may not be the case, because although the respondents depicted the EFRS as unitary, the reality they described in everyday practice appeared somewhat different.

### **Current practice**

When considering the EFRS, respondents and documents pictured the EFRS as a radical and political organisation where people do '*...not share the same goals*' because there are '*...lots of groups with different interests*'. Two significant points should be noted. Firstly, whilst respondents did not believe that people shared the same goals as that of the organisation, there was agreement that the purpose of the fire service was '*...to serve the public*'. People framed many of their comments from within an emergency 'fire ground' paradigm, where people accept a top-down command approach, but did not appear to equate this with shared interests or goals. Secondly, the EFRS has been a unitary organisation in the past, because the longer serving respondents portrayed a situation in the 1970's where people subordinated themselves to the organisation. The respondents described a militaristic situation, where middle managers were referred to as 'Sir' or 'Guv', and '*...you never spoke to them...unless they spoke to you*'. They also discussed the successful and well-received autocratic style of an ex-Chief Fire Officer (1979-1994). But the fact that they also remarked that his style '*...wouldn't be accepted now with the people we've got in the organisation*' not only points to a shift in the organisation's approach, but also to the 'people's' role in bringing about this change.

The same pattern emerged when the respondents talked about conflict. They depicted the organisation's approach as unitary, but the reality they discussed seemed more redolent of pluralist and radical frames of reference. The respondents suggested that the organisation manages conflict in a unitary fashion if given the choice; because they said that '*...senior management (not only)... treat conflict as a nuisance that stops them running the brigade*', but also attempts to eliminate it whenever it could. The respondents also pointed out that there was a long '*...history of conflict between management and labour*', which reflected an '*...old fashioned 'us and them' attitude*' that could only be resolved through a '*...power struggle*' (Morgan, 1997:200).

This relationship is more reminiscent of a political organisation, although this does not have to be the case since unitary organisations are still characterised by ‘pluralist and radical power plays’ (Morgan, 1997:204). The test for ‘mechanistic’ unitary organisations (Morgan, 1997) is whether or not the machine parts ~ the people ~ are compliant, because truly unitary organisations will use legitimate authority to overcome these power struggles. However, given that the respondents thought that the FBU ‘...run it to a certain extent’, and that people within the EFRS were ‘...politically aware’ and ‘... out for their own individual beliefs’, then the outcome for the organisation is not a unitary one, but pluralist and radical.

The organisation’s documentation revealed a similar state of affairs. The HMI’s 1999 EFRS Principal Inspection Report stated that the situation between management and union was ‘...striking at the heart of the manager’s right to manage’ (HMIFS, 1999:14). This comment was probably aimed more at the relationship that exists between management and the FBU in the EFRS than at the organisational approach. Nevertheless, the HMI appeared to be suggesting that the plural and radical frames of reference within the Service were undermining the organisation’s legitimate authority, and ‘...management’s right to manage’ (Morgan, 1997:200).

This position was further explored in the management of change process. The evidence portrayed an organisation that is seen to approach change from a unitary perspective. The evidence illustrated a situation, where the managers ‘...exercise formal authority...in... breaking resistance to change’, and so manage change as managing resistance (Isaac-Henry et al., 1993:46). The respondents said that the EFRS decided ‘...*what they want to do* (then went)... *about implementing it without really telling people what the change is about*’. Morgan’s autopoieses metaphor may be useful for understanding why the EFRS acts in this manner, since Morgan asserts that the ‘way we see and manage change is ultimately a product of how we see and think about ourselves’ (Morgan, 1997:256). So perhaps the history of the fire service, its uniformed and disciplined nature, and the fire ground paradigm result in the EFRS’s top-down approach.

The reality portrayed by respondents included both the radical relationship that was depicted above, and a pluralist outcome. The respondents said that '*dependent upon the reaction (to the change)...it's either sold to the workforce...and if that doesn't work the FBU get involved, and there's usually some form of compromise*'. Whilst this does not explicitly include the 'all out war' factor of radical structuralism, this may be explained by the fact that respondents were asked to consider the process of change. One must accept that the respondents acknowledged that the change was taking place, and from this perspective they perceived the process to be one of acceptance, compromise, or working through the change. Considering change from the perspective of conflict was entirely different, since the notion of change and conflict did include the possibility of '*...a winner-take-all or fight-to-the-death attitude*' (Morgan, 1997:208).

That respondents should consider the prospect of involvement in the change process also seems relevant to the investigation, since it was thought that '*...people wanted to know why they're doing what they're doing*' and were frustrated if they did not. The Equality and Fairness Thematic Review repeated these points by observing that there was an adversarial relationship within the fire service, where people believed that '*...everything we've got we fought for*'. The review contended that a frustrated workforce ~ due to lack of involvement ~ tested the system, and this led to conflict (HMIFS, 1999). The evidence suggested that newer better-educated members of the service expect to be included in the change process. Furthermore, the availability of information, the industrial disputes, and greater accountability had made people '*...much more aware of political and financial issues*', and as such perceived that people wanted to be involved in the organisation's activities.

### **A new construction**

While the functionalist paradigm appears dominant in the EFRS, the respondents structured many of their comments from within an emergency fire ground situation. The top-down nature of both settings is similar, and so leaders expect the same reaction from followers. Hence, the EFRS is described as a unitary organisation, and often acts as such, but in practice it is operating within the plural and radical frames of reference.

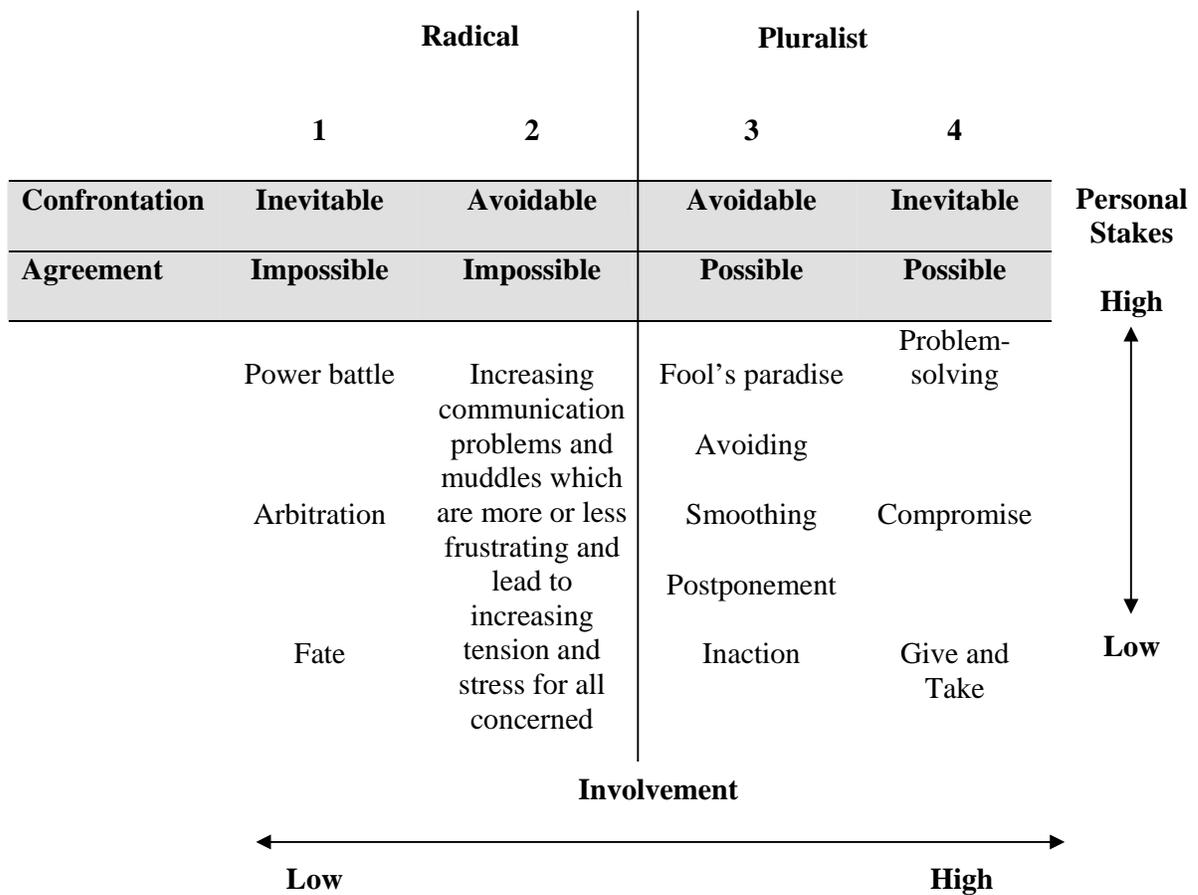
The evidence has illustrated that the organisation has been a unitary one since the fire service was first established, but it has become increasingly adversarial over time. It appears that not only does the unitary approach not allow for followers to be involved in the organisation's activities to the extent that they favour, but the EFRS has lost the position of legitimate authority to overcome the power struggles that the adversarial relationship fosters. However, due to this struggle of opposites, some leaders have adopted a pluralistic approach as they attempt to manage the paradox of this dialectical relationship. The evidence might suggest that managers have attempted to 'manage' the situation, rather than reconcile the dialectical opposites.

Figure 7.1 presents an adaptation of Everard and Morris's attitudes to conflict model to reflect the EFRS's attitude to change and conflict and its outcomes. The radical position has been placed on the left-hand side of the model and the pluralist frame on the right. This illustrates that when involvement in the organisation's activities is low, such as in the EFRS's unitary approach, the outcome will be the radical frame of reference. It does not take into account the adversarial relationship between the management and the FBU, or the fact that followers do not share the same interests as those of the organisation. As a consequence, if the stakes are high then this will bring to the fore the adversarial relationship between management and the FBU, and this will lead to 'all out war' (Everard and Morris, 1996). Conversely, when the stakes are low, the lack of conflict can make the unitary approach seem effective, whereas in reality the outcome is being left to fate through no deliberate management action.

When a pluralistic approach to organisation is adopted, the political nature of life in the EFRS is acknowledged, as is the fact that people want to be involved in the organisation's activities. Thus, when involvement is high, the pluralist approach will be dominant and agreement will not only be possible but it will also make a range of change and conflict resolution methods available. This political process does not enter the radical frame of reference, because it is not based upon an adversarial relationship. So when the stakes are high, instead of 'all out war' a problem-solving attitude to change and conflict is possible.

The postmodernist / modernist dimensions may also provide a means of looking at the situation in the EFRS, since the unitary and radical frames of reference are both modernist notions. The ‘...one championing the mechanization of social order, the other seeing the emancipation of the life-world’, the link between the unitary and radical stances seems much clearer (Hassard and Parker, 1993:5). Postmodernism however, rejects this modernist standpoint, instead preferring to emphasise ‘...paradox, irony, eclecticism...pluralism (and the)...social construction of reality’ (see Kilduff and Mehra, 1997; Klein, 1998; Samuels, 1998; Mantilla, 1999). Perhaps the approaches that are available on the pluralist side of the model, are a recognition of the paradox that exists between the organisation’s preferred approach, and the preferences of the followers.

**Figure 7.1 EFRS Attitudes to Change and Conflict**



[Couch 2002 after (Everard and Morris, 1996)]

## **Section 7.2 Followership and Culture**

### **The traditional paradigm**

The conceptual framework used the cultural concept of individualism and collectivism in order to examine followership. Culture and followership were however, treated as separate topics for the purpose of gathering evidence. This allowed me to widen the scope of the investigation in terms of followership and provide a means of linking together all the topic areas, and so add depth and confidence to the evidence. For example, although Theory X and Theory Y were also used in the exploration of leadership as a means of examining the underlying assumptions that underpin the process, Theory X and Y have also provided another method of examining followers' expectations. This section will look at followership and culture together, but once again draw upon evidence from across all of the study areas.

In terms of the difference between the way that the EFRS is described and is seen to act in practice, the layers view of culture may go some way towards understanding this situation. This is reflected through the work of Chen et al, who say that the '...assumptions, beliefs and values constitute the deep core elements of culture, whereas tangible artefacts and patterns of activities and behaviors are culture's outwardly visible manifestations' (Chen et al, 1998:285). Hofstede utilises similar descriptions, and uses the respective terms of '...values and practices' to differentiate between the deep core elements of culture and its outward manifestations (Hofstede, 1997:183).

The difference between the unitary way that the EFRS is depicted by respondents and its pluralist and radical practices may therefore be understood as a difference between values and practice. Pivotal to the respondents' descriptions of the organisation were assumptions and beliefs based upon unitary values from the organisation's quasi-militaristic past and its operational fire ground activities. Respondents continually located their description of the organisation in the fire ground setting, yet in 'practice' the patterns of activity they describe reveal a pluralistic and radical state of affairs.

The view of culture and followership uncovered in the investigation revealed similar circumstances to those encountered in the examination of organisation. The respondents' descriptions suggested a unitary organisation with a concomitant collectivist followership and culture. In the organisation they portrayed, and particularly in terms of the fire ground, people wanted '*clear leadership*' and '*direction*' and were perceived to subordinate themselves to the '*sovereignty of the state*'. The fact that the Equality and Fairness Thematic Review should also concentrate much of its efforts ~ unsuccessfully it seems ~ on changing the service's '*militaristic practices*' (HMIFS, 1999:20) suggests that the nature of the fire service nationally is also seen to be unitary. However, the respondents' accounts of the EFRS's culture and followership in practice revealed an individualistic pattern of activities, characterised by an '*...us and them*' attitude between management and workforce.

### **Current practice**

The difference between values and practice was also illustrated in the respondents' descriptions of the fire ground. While it was perceived appropriate for officers to take an authoritarian approach on the fire ground, the respondents did propose that the officer's history and '*...the person's name*' might influence how fire fighters react. So whilst they suggested that a collectivist approach was appropriate for that setting, it was also implied that should the officer be one who had worked during the disputes this might not be the case. It follows that even on the fire ground people still exercise choice as to whether or not to share the goals of the organisation.

This apparent difference between a collectivist and individualistic followership and culture may be described more adequately by Triandis's conception of self. He argues that 'There are four kinds of self: independent, interdependent, and same and different. The combinations of these four types can be characterised as '*horizontal individualism (independent/same), and horizontal collectivism (interdependent/same), vertical individualism (independent/different), and vertical collectivism (interdependent/ different)*' (Triandis, 1995:44). As such, it is possible that the respondents are not describing the EFRS's values in purely collectivist terms, but rather as vertically collectivist where there is interdependence but people accept that there is a sense of '*rank has its privileges*'. If practice in the EFRS is considered as vertically

individualistic then this is more readily understood because people in this situation are independent from one another but yet still accept a degree of inequality.

This situation is illustrated by the longer serving EFRS respondents, who recalled a time when '*...you never spoke to them (senior management)...unless they spoke to you*'; which suggested that in the past the EFRS had a tolerance for power distance. In Hofstede's terms this '*...represents the extent to which the unequal distribution of power is accepted*' (Yeh and Lawrence, 1995:655). For instance, in individualistic societies this factor should be low, and as such demonstrates the unitary nature of the EFRS in previous times. Nevertheless, it was perceived that today's workforce would not now accept such an unequal distribution of power. Increasing political and financial awareness, a better-educated workforce, and a desire to exercise self-control means that people were more individualistic, and hence '*prepared to question management*'.

In an individualistic society the workforce also '*...respond less favourably to authoritarian leadership...expect...participation*' and '*...would also tell their managers if they disagreed with them*' (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265). In noting these factors, the vertical element in Triandis's conception of self may help to explain why there is possibly an acceptance on the fire ground for an authoritarian style of leadership. Because the notion of 'different' not only suggests a tolerance for a power differential but taken together with a situation '*...where everything has to be done in an emergency*', may explain why a top-down approach is tolerated on the fire ground. Moreover, as a core fire service function, this also appears to form an important element of the respondents' value system.

The followers' expectations illustrated much about followership and culture in the EFRS. They not only revealed a preference to be involved in the organisation's activities, but they extended this and demonstrated a strong inclination towards assumptions that underpin McGregor's Theory Y view of human nature, in which there is '*...a more democratic philosophy (and)...leaders 'believe the best' about employees*' (Anderson, 1999:265).

In terms of the followers' expectations of leaders within the fire service, the MMFS report tracked the changing work role of fire service leaders and their responsibilities. It acknowledged that today's leaders are working within an 'economically' driven environment, and suggested that there is an understanding gap between the followers' expectations of leaders and what they actually did. They not only based this on the view that followers expected leaders to concentrate on 'traditional' management functions, but they also proposed that followers preferred leaders to be more people centred. The Report's conclusion seemed flawed however, because whilst they suggested a gap, they also said that fire fighters did not fully appreciate what leaders did. Rather than an understanding gap, it appears that MMFS was describing a gap between the style of leadership prevalent within the fire service and the style of leadership preferred by the followers.

The respondents also perceived that their expectations of leaders had changed over time. They not only cited changes in '*social attitudes*', whereby they believed that newer members of the organisation expected to be involved in the organisation's activities, but they also noted the impact of the 1996-1998 industrial disputes. These disputes were seen by respondents to exert a powerful influence on the organisation, which may explain issues of distrust, the current relationship between the FBU and management, and why the workforce now questions a top-down approach.

### **A new construction**

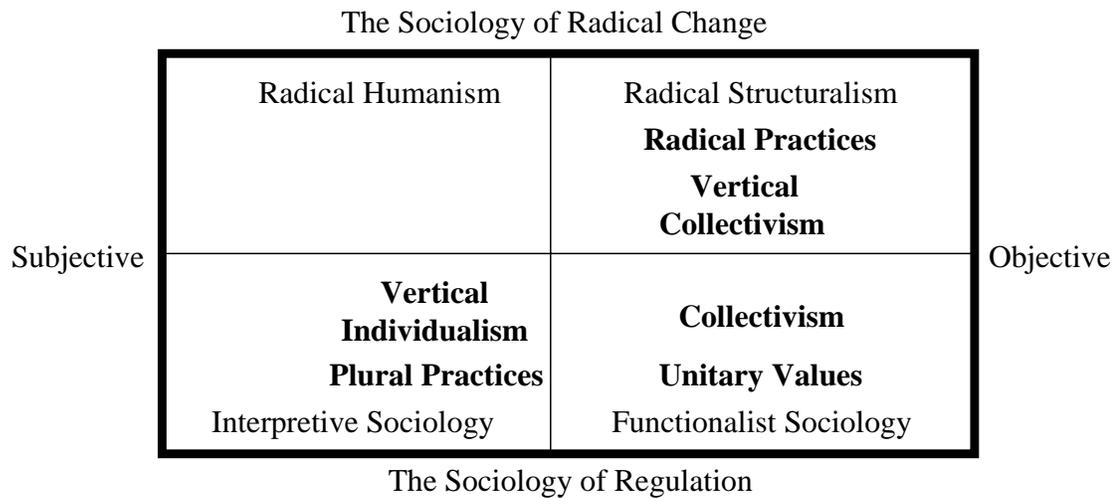
Postmodernist and modernist conceptions of culture may shed light on this situation. The modernist notion of corporate culture is one that is devised by management and transmitted, '...both formally and informally to the rest of the workforce', whereas the postmodernist concept is a culture which grows and '...emerges from the lived experiences' of organisational members (Hancock and Tyler, 2001:100). This may not only account for the functional and objective nature of people's values, but it may also clarify why practice develops a more political pattern of activities, as well as clarifying why both concepts are present.

Hofstede also makes an interesting suggestion. He says that ‘Culturally a manager is the follower of his or her followers...she or he has to meet the subordinates on the subordinates’ cultural ground...There is a free choice in managerial behaviour, but the cultural constraints are much tighter than most’ admit (Hofstede, 1997:239). This observation certainly describes the situation in the EFRS, since it suggests that the type of organisation that the EFRS has become, i.e. pluralist and radical, is being driven by the workforce.

In Figure 7.2 below, the original conceptual framework has been adapted from Chapters 3 and 4. This combines the aspects of organisation, culture and followership that have been considered up to now. It will be noted that the interpretive, radical structuralist, and functionalist paradigms are presented as previously, with the plural, radical and unitary frames of reference positioned in their respective areas. The earlier framework has been revised to illustrate that the EFRS’s values ~ or corporate culture ~ are expressed from the functionalist paradigm and consequently display unitary and collective principles. This not only shows the dominance of functionalism and the fact that ‘...perhaps we are...victims of socialisation into the modernist paradigm and traditional ways’, but it also demonstrates the power of the fire ground paradigm and the Service’s past in shaping EFRS values (Stott and Trafford, 2000:40).

While the radical structuralist paradigm displays modernist values and elements of corporate culture, the EFRS’s values have not been included in this section of the conceptual framework. Although radical structuralism takes an entitative view of organisation, and accepts the top-down ‘us and them’ relationship between the leader and the follower, it does so from a position that ‘...emphasizes the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:32). In contrast, the EFRS’s values are based upon the notion of follower subordination, and the leader’s right to lead. The radical perspective accepts this relationship, but wants to overthrow it. It is for this reason that the values have been placed solely in the functionalist arena.

**Figure 7.2 EFRS Organisation, Culture and Followership**



[Couch, 2002 after (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 1997; Morgan, 1997)]

The organisation's practices are positioned in the plural and radical frames of reference, and reflect a culture and followership of vertical individualism and vertical collectivism respectively. The EFRS, or parts of the EFRS, therefore operate in different paradigms. The values are drawn from functionalism but, dependent upon the approach taken by the EFRS and the impact that this will have on the people within the organisation, practice operates in other paradigms. As a consequence, a unitary approach leads to the radical frame of reference, but the extent to which this radical stance emerges is dependent upon the stakes that are waged on the outcome. If the stakes are low the outcome will be left to fate. However, if the stakes are high the adversarial relationship between management and the FBU to comes to the fore, and the workforce joins forces and becomes interdependent ~ or vertically collective.

A pluralistic approach will not enter the radical standpoint, but instead offer a range of approaches more suited to people within the EFRS, since it matches the vertically individualistic followership and culture. It will also reflect the fact that people within the EFRS accept that there is both a degree of inequality in the rank structure and a top-down fire ground mode in the organisation's emergency activities. Moreover, in recognising the political nature of life in the EFRS this approach also satisfies people's need to be involved in its activities, and their underlying Theory Y assumptions regarding human nature.

### **Section 7.3 Leadership Development**

#### **The traditional paradigm and John Adair**

In examining the leadership development process in the EFRS, Mckinney and Garrison's three-wave metaphor can again be used as a means of locating the interpretation within the conceptual framework. It has been noted that leadership development within the fire service is based upon the 1968 work of John Adair and the subsequent Functional /Action Centred Leadership programmes that developed from this work. It has also been recognised that Adair's work is positioned within the first wave of leadership development, which not only '...stressed accountability within formal hierarchical systems' but was also located within the most objective portion of functionalism (Stott and Trafford, 2000:28).

Given that respondents have separated values and practice in the previous sections in this chapter, with functionalist values, and interpretive and radical practices, what does this suggest about leadership development in the EFRS? Adair's first wave approach is clearly functionalist, but is it consistent with values and practice? In terms of values, the respondents' values appear to be concomitant with those of Adair's theories, because they have clearly articulated values that rest within functionalism. The fire ground paradigm, however, seems to dominate much of the respondents' beliefs and assumptions regarding the EFRS. It not only accepts the 'formal hierarchies' of the first wave but is also consistent with Adair's functional approach.

In exploring EFRS values and leadership development respondents thought that the 'in-house' courses constructed around Adair's theories, made a '*...good contribution*' to the process. Although, given that the task driven practical nature of these courses might also match the respondents fire ground values, then this factor may account for the followers' valuing these courses as much as any link to Adair's theories *per se*. Nevertheless, the fact that Adair's functional leadership theory is seen to fit both the respondents' values and the fire ground paradigm appears important in relation to the research questions.

Whilst Adair's theories are contained within the core progression courses at the Fire Service College, Adair said that on visiting the Fire Service College '...some twenty years later (after the 1968 work was published)...that the three circles was still taught but distortion had crept into the content, the method had become watered down and there was a lack of staff training' (Adair, 1988:91). Adair does not expand upon this point, and it does not seem possible to suggest why this should be the case. Yet it is interesting to note that while the course content has not changed appreciably since 1968, it has according to Adair been distorted.

In considering this 'distortion', the emergency nature of the fire service makes it extremely task centred. This point was raised by both the interview respondents and the MMFS report, and seems to influence the design of the leadership development courses so that they concentrate on the task element of Adair's three circles model. The nature of the outdoor activities appear to emphasise achieving the task, and as a result focus on the leadership functions to the detriment of the people centred elements of Adair's concepts. Theories of motivation are included in the courses, but the dominant 'fire ground' paradigm, the task centred nature of the Service, and the design of the courses may explain why the theories have become distorted.

### **Current practice**

The professional practice of the EFRS clearly operates within the plural and radical frames of reference, with values and practice oscillating between philosophical paradigms. Thus, the current leadership development process is based upon both a first wave modernist conception of leadership development theory and the core values of respondents. However, Adair's Functional leadership development model does not seem to equip EFRS leaders to operate within the radical and pluralist power plays that characterise the contemporary EFRS.

The respondents appeared to describe leadership development in the EFRS outside of its formal programmes, since they thought that most leaders were thrown in at the deep-end, and '*...left on their own to develop themselves on the job*'. Many respondents referred to the '*...rank*

*structure and promotion systems*' as the principal means of developing leaders in the EFRS. Even though this was considered to be a 'sink or swim' method of development, it was still thought to produce good leaders, but it should be recognised that this was perceived to be '*...despite the system, not because of it*'.

It may also be possible to extrapolate from the question; 'what makes a good leader', some notion of how 'good' leaders cope in the EFRS. Although respondents said that successful leaders adopted a democratic style of leadership, they stated that there was no one best approach '*...for all situations*'. Yet it appears that the fire ground situation, and the respondents' values may once again explain this viewpoint because the respondents, and particularly the fire fighters, thought that 'good' leaders should be '*knowledgeable, competent, (lead)... by example, and (be)... good under pressure*'.

The democratic style identified by respondents was thought to be more successful because it satisfied the workforces' desire to be '*...involved in the process (and)...feel valued*'. This seems to be consistent with a bottom-up view of leadership, rather than a top-down one, because the followers seemed to interpret some actions as leading and others as not. This suggests that in the EFRS good leadership, at least in terms of the approach that matches the needs and expectations of followers, is something that is socially negotiated and does not lead to the damaging radical frame of reference. Thus, it is '*...something which is created through the social process we call leadership*' and not something that is possessed by people and done to others (Grint, 1995:159).

The fact that followers should consider leadership in terms of democratic and autocratic approaches also appeared interesting because a common element to Adair's courses in the fire service is the notion that dependent upon the situation the leader will adopt either an autocratic or democratic approach. However, Adair has argued that '*...without leadership any form of democracy can be inert and feeble*'; which implies that he sees democracy in leadership terms as a functional process (Adair, 1983:87). In contrast the respondents' view of democracy seemed to be from the perspective of the individual, and not as a concession granted by the leader. For instance in the EFRS '*...people (are)...prepared to question management*'. The

evidence for this is that 80% of respondents said that if they disagreed with their manager they would say so. Conversely, Adair's concept of democracy is based upon a top-down notion, where '...leadership should expect and encourage employee and group loyalties'; a situation that does not seem to be present in the EFRS (Earley and Gibson, 1998:265).

This does not establish, however, in what wave of leadership development these 'good' leaders are operating. The level of follower involvement is certainly indicative of a wave two '...decentralisation and empowerment' phase, or a wave three '...poststructuralist and post-modern' phase (Stott and Trafford, 2000:28). Yet, given that a wave two leadership approach is from a top-down functionalist perspective, then could a leader / follower relationship based upon '*...distrust between the workforce and the leaders*', and a bottom-up relationship be considered as a wave two approach.

This democratic approach was thought to be present because the followers had challenged the style of leadership, and '*...management (was)...changing in response*'. This was not a concession granted by the leader, but a socially constructed bottom-up approach that is achieved through a political process of negotiation, and not top-down decisions. Since many of the activities are taking place in the pluralist arena it is possible to propose that the more successful leaders are operating, and informally developing, in the third wave of leadership development.

In exploring the role of the EFRS leader in the radical structuralist paradigm. The conceptual framework that is emerging from the evidence suggests that when the EFRS takes a unitary approach to organisation ~ that is apart from on the fire ground ~ the Service enters into the radical frame of reference. This suggests that when leaders adopt the functions from Adair's wave one leadership development programme, then the radical frame emerges. It should be noted that this has not always been the case, because wave one leadership development approaches have met the needs of followers in previous unitary times.

In terms of the future, the current proposals for the Service appear to be moving it towards the second wave of leadership development theory. The Thematic Reviews on Equality and Fairness, and Managing a Modernised Fire Service; and the Cabinet Office's Performance and Innovation Unit's (PIU) Report into Public Sector Leadership, clearly identified a transformational approach to leadership as the preferred option. Although on closer examination this may not be the case. It seems significant that the MMFS recommendations have been subsumed into the work of the Integrated Personal Development Working Group (IPDWG), because this group is attempting to introduce competence-based training into the fire service.

The IPDWG role maps for middle and senior managers are based primarily on Management Charter Initiative competence standards. These standards all use language consistent with top-down control. Planning, identifying, co-ordinating, selecting, auditing, and directing are examples of the linguistic register used. They do not seem consistent with second wave notions of decentralisation and empowerment. Moreover, given that the second wave of leadership development was intended to develop visionary leaders who '...push down decision making as far as possible within the organization or – in other words – empower people' then the top-down nature of the IPDWG 'management' standards would not appear to achieve this (O'Neil, 2000:3).

The PIU Report was not as direct with its recommendations as the HMIFS Thematic Reviews, since it stated that there was no one best leadership approach in the public sector. Nonetheless, the PIU Report did propose a linkages model for developing leaders. They suggested that this should be based upon the characteristics of what successful leaders do ~ expressed as competencies, possessing a range of leadership styles ~ from coercive to coaching, and an understanding of the organisational climate. The fact the report should propose a competence approach does not mean that a second wave approach to leadership development is impossible. But since this approach will be based on the IPDWG's Role Maps, then it is conceivable that leadership development in the EFRS will remain in wave one.

**A new construction**

In Figure 7.3 the formal leadership development training delivered to EFRS personnel both locally and nationally, is positioned within the functionalist paradigm. This formal training has been located in the first wave of leadership development theory, with informal development placed in a postmodernist ‘third wave’. This is not intended to suggest that these are the only two areas where development takes place. Leaders will develop in all paradigms. This model acknowledges that the informal development emerging from this socially constructed process matches the political situation in the EFRS, and the needs and expectations of the followers.

Regarding leadership development within the EFRS, it seems that when the organisation uses the wave one leadership development model, this leads to the radical frame of reference. It does not match the needs and expectations of the followers; development may take place, but unless it moves the organisation towards the plural stance it will perpetuate the radical relationship. The evidence suggests that this leadership development approach has been and can be been relevant. There are and there have been periods when practice has matched the values, such as in past times, or when the followers are on the fire ground, although it can be restated that the fire ground only takes up approximately 3% of a fire fighter’s time.

**Figure 7.3 Leadership Development in the EFRS**



[Couch, 2002 after (Adair, 1968; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Grint, 1995; Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 1997; Morgan, 1997)]

## **Section 7.4 Leadership**

### **The traditional paradigm and John Adair**

The respondents' descriptions of the EFRS's top-down and autocratic leadership approach were consistent with the values that they had expressed throughout the evidence. Whilst they explored this view from a number of perspectives, such as top-down approaches to organisation, and '*dictatorial*' senior managers, most of these values were once again framed from within the '*...fire ground*' paradigm. The respondents said '*...we're trained*' to lead in this way, where '*...everything has to be done in an emergency*'. So perhaps it is possible to extend this to include the notion that fire fighters are also trained to see leadership in this way. Nevertheless, both views suggest a process of socialisation into a fire ground paradigm, where top-down approaches and traditional ways become pre-eminent.

The respondents defended the need to be autocratic on the fire ground. Fire fighter respondents' notions of good leadership generally concentrated on the leader being '*...operationally competent*' and confident on the fire ground. Since the respondents also felt quite strongly that there was no one best style of leadership '*...for all situations*', this implies a degree of uncertainty between what they believe to be the case, and what happens in practice.

Many respondents also extolled the autocratic approach of a past EFRS leader, but clarified this position by saying that his autocratic '*...style wouldn't be accepted now with the people we've got in the organisation*'. It was thought that '*...leaders are only good for the time they are in*'. It seemed that in praising this leader's methods the respondents recognised that the organisation had moved on, and this leader's approach might not satisfy their preference to exercise self-control or be involved in the organisation's activities.

Stating that they believed the organisation had been more top-down than previously, it was said that '*...Managers were there to manage and look after us*'. This appears to indicate a more paternalistic style of leadership, which may go some way towards explaining the change in attitude towards senior management that was perceived to have taken place after the industrial disputes. The followers possibly accepted a top-down approach to leadership in

exchange for paternalistic leadership. Yet identifying the point at which this may have changed seems difficult, as is trying to reconcile the fact that the MMFS report suggested that an adversarial relationship had existed between leaders and followers across the fire service.

This ‘us and them’ radical frame was also acknowledged to exist by the respondents, the C3 Consultants, and the HMI Inspection reports. It is significant that this relationship was thought to extend back to the 1960’s, to a point in the past when the leadership approach in the fire service was said to be extremely autocratic (Baigent, 2001). Nevertheless, an ‘us and them’ relationship is still possible within a unitary framework and autocratic leadership, but in this situation the leader retains legitimate authority over the workforce.

Fundamental to many of these traditional notions were concepts taken directly from Adair’s work, and the fire service courses developed from it. The respondents routinely discussed leadership ~ without being prompted ~ in terms of tasks, needs, autocratic and democratic approaches. That followers should also discuss two styles of leadership in the EFRS illustrates the influence of Adair’s theories, because a key tenet of these is that the leader will adopt either an autocratic or democratic style according to the situation. This implies an internalisation of Adair’s notions by fire service personnel, and as such may explain why his theories form part of the deep core values of the EFRS.

### **Current practice**

The exploration of leadership development suggests much about the leadership paradigm in operation in the EFRS, since central to this examination has been a divergence between values and practice. However, in exploring the respondents’ views on leadership this difference appears to be amplified into many disparate and sometimes conflicting standpoints.

Examining the evidence from the constructivist viewpoint both acknowledges that ‘...values and interests are central to participants’ construction of their social order’, and recognises that individuals have many different ways ‘...of conceptualising...leadership (based upon)... cultural, political and ideological doctrines’ (Grint, 1997b:302, 332). It also allows us to view

leadership as a political enterprise, because ‘...different participants may seek to further different sometimes conflicting values and interests’ (Grint, 1997b:302). The constructivist approach consequently provides a means of both understanding where followers within the EFRS see the process of leadership, and for looking at the underlying assumptions that underpin their conceptions.

The respondents perceived that the organisation’s functionalist ‘entitative’ approach to leadership, where the top is regarded as separate from the bottom, was undergoing a process of change. This view was unanimous, as was the perception that it still had some way to go. As one respondent said ‘...it’s probably changing a bit, but not a great deal’. Yet there was some variance as to why the change was occurring. Respondents said that they thought that the autocratic approach had changed and become ‘...more democratic’ when it was ‘...challenged’. Although equally, respondents also suggested that this transformation was being driven by changes in social attitudes.

In presenting these two views it is not intended to suggest that they are mutually exclusive, because both were widely held and one could easily lead to the other. Nonetheless, it was thought that because the EFRS has experienced much conflict in recent times this had resulted in a view that the FBU were running the organisation. This may be understood by viewing leadership as a socially constructed process, because recognising a political element to EFRS life seems to explain why the FBU are seen to play such a prominent role in the organisation.

The respondents proposed that a range of factors were responsible for the change in social attitudes, from better-educated people entering the Service and ‘...influencing management as they move through the organisation’, to a better-informed workforce who ‘...expect to be involved’ in organisational activities. Even so the outcome was the same, because the respondents believed that people were not now prepared to accept direction without the ability to question why. Any difference in views between respondents was associated with whether or not they believed that leaders used a telling, selling or participative approach. Longer serving EFRS members thought it participative, whereas those in their first five years of service thought of it as a telling approach.

There appear to be some contradictions in this evidence. The respondents perceived a changing leadership approach, but saw the level of involvement differently. However, if leadership is considered ‘...as a process in which (the participants’ construction of their social order)...is negotiated (and)...those who achieve most influence...most consistently, and who come to be expected and perceived to do so, are...identified as leaders’, then different positions can conceivably be accommodated (Grint, 1997b:302). Thus considering leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon allows ‘...everyone’s account (to be)...equal’ (Grint, 1997a:139).

Differences were also seen in other areas, so maybe this divergence can be explained. Those respondents in the earlier parts of their EFRS careers saw the world differently in terms of on-the-job training being provided, newly promoted people being thrown in at the deep-end to a new job without any development, and conflicts being rare and uncommon affairs. As a consequence these respondents’ constructions lacked the sophistication of the longer serving EFRS members. This does not dismiss their accounts, but rather recognises that they may not have hitherto experienced these conditions. There is also a possibility that the respondents in the early parts of their careers had a different comprehension as to what constituted participation. The answer seems unclear, but what is important in terms of the investigation is the distinction the respondents made, because this describes an autocratic approach and values that fit the fire ground; and a progressive ~ albeit slow ~ change to a more democratic leadership style.

In terms of practice it appears difficult to match the developing democratic approach to a particular point in the conceptual framework. Like leadership development, a more democratic approach could reside within the second or third wave of leadership theory. Yet, once again like leadership development, the fact that respondents should point to the democratic approach as being more successful suggests a possible match between the leadership style and the needs and expectations of the followers, and the political environment of the EFRS.

Equally it could be argued that a democratic style fits the second wave leadership theories of ‘...decentralisation and empowerment’ (Stott and Trafford, 2000:28). This does not seem to be the case, because it does not match the needs or expectations of the followers. If one considers the assumptions that underpin the wave-two leadership approach, it is questionable whether a top-down system for vision creation and decision-making satisfies the followers preference for involvement in the organisations activities, for exercising choice and self-direction, or meeting the many disparate goals of the followers.

### **A new construction**

The relationship between the workforce and management has clearly changed over time but pinpointing when this happened seems difficult. The MMFS report proffered 1974 as a possible turning point, but apart from the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act, and the Qualified Fire Fighters’ Scheme, the exact reason is difficult to determine. Of more interest to this research was the changing nature of public sector accountability, which started to alter when the Conservative Government of 1979 began to introduce market mechanisms into the public sector. This process shifted accountability from professional to state control, or from paternalistic management to non-professionals outside of the organisation.

It is said that a unitary organisation will typically have a paternalistic leadership style (Morgan, 1997; Earley and Gibson, 1998). So it appears possible to suggest that the changing nature of public sector accountability may have been responsible for the shift in the style of leadership in the EFRS. The ‘removal’ of the paternalistic leadership style seems to have allowed the ‘deep-seated’ adversarial relationship that existed between the management and the workforce to come to the fore. Nevertheless, whatever the reasons for the change, the fact remains that the EFRS seems to have ‘lost’ its position of legitimate authority. It appears that when the organisation adopts an autocratic approach it results in the radical frame of reference which, dependent upon the stakes waged upon the conclusion, has resulted in a ‘winner takes all fight’ between management and the FBU, or an outcome ‘left to fate’.

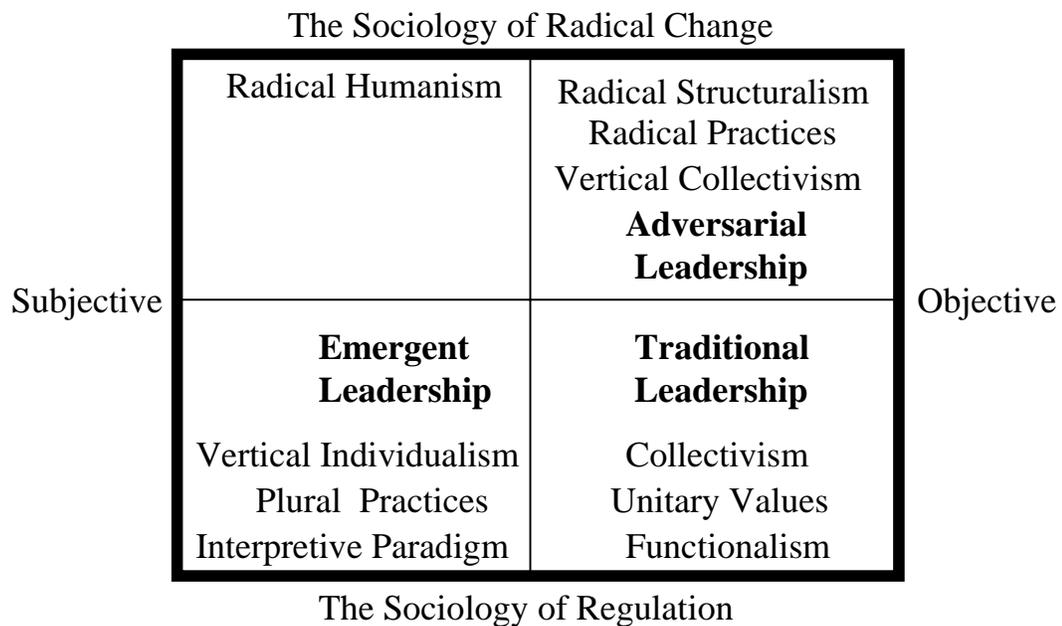
The constructivist view of leadership also allows us to see the leader as ‘...a participant (who)...must be perceived as salient, relative to others (and)...recognised as of higher status in terms of his or her influence’ (Grint, 1997b:300). This is significant, because it helps to explain why many respondents thought that the FBU were ‘running’ the organisation. It also assists us to appreciate the process whereby leaders emerge from the constructivist third wave of leadership. Those people perceived to be doing a ‘good’ job appear to be breaking away from the traditional wave-one unitary approach and avoiding the radical frame of reference. They are instead working from within the political domain of pluralism, and because they are satisfying the followers needs and expectations they are emerging from this socially constructed reality as ‘leaders’.

Hofstede has said that ‘Culturally a manager is the follower of his or her followers...she or he has to meet the subordinates on the subordinates cultural ground...There is a free choice in managerial behaviour, but the cultural constraints are much tighter than most’ admit (Hofstede, 1997:239). Although this seems to be from a functional perspective, at least in its use of language, it explains much. It helps us to understand why there has been a movement towards a different approach to organisation and leadership. It also suggests that constraints might lead to problems if they are not followed. And finally, it appears to be consistent with a bottom-up view of leadership, whereby the followers determine the ‘conventions’, and those who emerge as leaders are the people that are perceived to have made the most consistent and significant contributions to the system.

Figure 7.4 sets out the EFRS’s leadership approach. The four paradigms are presented as previously, with the corresponding organisational approaches placed in their respective locations. The three styles of leadership and the two methods of leadership development prevalent within the EFRS have been positioned within the conceptual framework. In the unitary frame of reference the traditional leadership and leadership development approaches have been sited in the first wave of leadership theory. This reflects a top-down approach to leadership, and a concomitant collectivist culture and followership. However, when this

traditional approach is used it does not satisfy the needs of the followers. The EFRS not only enters the radical perspective, but leaders also employ an adversarial style of leadership. This situation leads to a vertically collectivist culture and followership, the inequalities in the leader / follower relationship are accepted, but dependent upon the stakes waged on the outcome it is left to ‘fate’ or ‘all out war’ (Everard and Morris, 1996). The emergent style of leadership reflects the approach used by those persons within the EFRS who are perceived to emerge as leaders from the political power plays that characterise the organisation. This approach to leadership and organisation recognises both the highly political nature of life in the EFRS, and the needs and expectations of the followers.

**Figure 7.4 Leadership in the EFRS**



[Couch, 2002 after (Adair, 1968; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Grint, 1995; Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 1997; Morgan, 1997)]

### **Section 7.5 Summative Interpretations**

The evidence has consequently shown the EFRS to be an organisation of contrasts. It has values based upon the quasi-militaristic traditions of the Service, the influences of Adair's leadership theories, and the fire ground paradigm. However, it has also shown itself to have a long 'us and them' adversarial tradition between leaders and followers, which in the past has been 'controlled' by a unitary position of legitimate authority but in recent times has resulted in a radical frame of reference for the organisation. The EFRS has also demonstrated that it is a highly political organisation, with groups possessing different interests and people who are well informed and want to be involved in the organisation's activities. It appears that because of the adversarial relation between management and the FBU, and because people are not involved in the organisation's activities as much as they wish to be, the unitary approaches that the organisation often pursues lead to the radical frame of reference. Thus, in order to balance the many competing values and interests that exist within the EFRS, some leaders have adopted a political pluralist approach to organisation.

In keeping with the above split between values and practice, a comparable position regarding followership and leadership has been demonstrated. The evidence has shown that values reflect a set of assumptions based upon a collectivist culture and followership, but practice resides within vertically collectivist and vertically individualistic realms. The traditional leadership approaches lead to a radical stance and an adversarial situation. This means that in terms of followership a vertically collectivist culture is adopted whereby inequalities in the leader / follower relationship are accepted, but followers join together in order to 'fight' the leaders. In the pluralist situation, leaders emerge from the socially constructed process of leadership in a culture that is vertically individualistic. This will not only match the followers' cultural needs and expectations to exercise choice and self-direction, but it also accept inequalities in the leader / follower relationship.

The evidence suggests that those EFRS leaders who are achieving success are those who through informal leadership development match the needs and expectations of the followers in this environment. They are adept at satisfying a range of requirements, being authoritarian on the fire ground and yet still able to deal with the political machinations of every day life. Whilst this seems somewhat redolent of Adair's and other contingency theories, where the

leader adopts a style suited to the occasion, this is not the case. From a contingency perspective the leader is deemed to be in control and subsequently able to choose what style to adopt, whereas from the bottom-up position followers exercise choice and self-direction, and the leader emerges from the socially constructed process that is leadership. In the EFRS the ‘successful’ leader’s role is not a top-down one, but a bottom-up persuasive one, where ‘...leaders are identified by the effects of their acts’, and not the acts themselves (Grint, 1997b:302).

The respondents portray the organisation from the dominant functionalist perspective, but this position does not adequately describe what is happening within the EFRS. These top-down ‘wave-one’ theories only seem to be useful if followers within the EFRS subordinated themselves to the authority of the leaders. Although subordinates appear to have done so in the past, this is not the case because people are now more individualistic. Even the softened approach, where many respondents describe a wave-two empowering approach to leadership, does not match the needs or expectations of followers in these changing and turbulent times. It is conceivable that this situation can only really be understood from the ‘wave-three’ constructivist or bottom-up position, where there does not have to be the one-best way attitude of the modernist perspective. The constructivist viewpoint not only enables us to look at the leadership situation in the EFRS from the perspective of the follower, but it also allows us to oscillate between the dominant paradigm in operation in the EFRS and the followers’ constructions on events.

Notions from organisation theory have been used to explain and understand the EFRS. These include followership and culture, leadership development and leadership, and a grounded theory approach based upon inductive analysis has set them within the specific context of the EFRS. This has provided a new construction of events in the synthesis of existing practice and theory, and the evidence provided by this research. As a result, this has expanded the public domain of the EFRS and its leadership paradigm, by bringing together those areas of the Service that are kept hidden, those areas that are unseen, and those areas that are unknown. This evidence and the new a conceptual framework will now be used to answer the research questions in the next chapter ~ Chapter 8 - Conclusions.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

John Adair developed the approach that is used for training fire service leaders for the military in the 1950's and 1960's. This fascinated me. How could a traditional leadership paradigm still be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Given that the EFRS has experienced considerable industrial unrest in recent years, and since it is also said that we are experiencing times of great change, I asked myself whether this traditional leadership paradigm could still be relevant for the EFRS in such changing and turbulent times. This represented the purpose for me in selecting this topic for my doctoral research in Stage Two.

In order to delimit the investigation the key areas of leadership and leadership development were examined. However, given my preferred constructivist stance, it was necessary to explore how people constructed this reality themselves. The study has therefore explored issues of followership and culture, to see whether or not there was a match between the leadership paradigm and the followers' needs or expectations over this same period. It was also thought that these factors could not be considered in isolation, so they were explored in relation to the organisational setting, and the environment in which the EFRS operates.

The following research questions were posed:

- ✧ Does this traditional leadership paradigm meet the requirements of the environment, and the EFRS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
- ✧ Has this concept matched the requirements of the environment and the organisation since it was first published in 1968?
- ✧ Does this traditional leadership paradigm match, or has it ever matched, the followers' needs and expectations of the leadership process?
- ✧ Is a new leadership paradigm appropriate for the EFRS?

As a consequence of the above questions, the research has provided an historical and organisational contextualisation, a means of evaluating the theoretical landscape, and a method of exploring the micro and macro environments. This process has used inductive analysis and grounded theory in order to make available a new construction of events through synthesising existing theory and the evidence provided by the research. This chapter will present the investigation's factual and conceptual conclusions, issues that have emerged from this research; its contribution to knowledge and some propositions for future research, before finishing with a critique of this study.

### **Factual findings**

The factual evidence shows that the EFRS has in the past, and still does on occasions, meet the needs of the followers, the organisation, and the environment. This is explained by the fact that the EFRS, and the environment in which it operates, see the world from a modernist unitary perspective, which means that this uniformed disciplined organisation tends to act in the top-down manner in which it sees itself. As a result, this traditional leadership approach does work when people share the same goals and are prepared to accept a power differential in the leader / follower relationship. The evidence has shown that this situation has applied in past times, and when fire fighters are on the fire ground in present times. Thus, top-down traditional approaches to leadership ~ as taught from Adair's theories ~ have worked and can still work in specific circumstances in the EFRS.

The evidence also revealed that the EFRS has experienced both considerable unrest in recent times, and followers that are well informed and want to be involved in the organisation's activities. This has resulted in the EFRS being a highly political organisation, in which people are not prepared to subordinate themselves to the authority of the organisation ~ other than on the fire ground. This means that traditional approaches to leadership are seen by its members to be no longer appropriate for the EFRS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The research shows that for the majority of situations in the EFRS people are not prepared to accept a power differential in the leader / follower relationship. Thus, the factual findings indicate that a new paradigm, and a new way of conceptualising leadership in the EFRS seem appropriate.

### **Conceptual findings**

The conceptual conclusions emerged from an analysis of the new construction of events as presented in the final conceptual framework. The investigation has illustrated that at the root of the conceptual findings is a split between values and practice. It has been shown that the EFRS has traditional values based upon the dominant modernist position and the fire ground paradigm. In this situation followers are expected to subordinate themselves to the wider authority of the state. However, the evidence has also illustrated that the EFRS has a long 'us and them' adversarial tradition between leaders and followers, which in the past has been 'controlled' by a unitary position of legitimate authority but in recent times has resulted in the practice of organisation operating in the radical and plural frames of reference. The reasons for this change seem unclear, but it does appear that the changing face of public sector accountability may have led to the change in the organisation's leadership approach. Nevertheless, the outcome has been that traditional leadership approaches result in varying levels of conflict. To avoid this situation certain leaders in the EFRS have approached the practice of 'leading' from a pluralist position, in which it is recognised that there are many groups with different interests and people who exercise choice and want to be involved in the organisation's activities. Thus, the disparity in the way that the organisation acts and the subsequent reaction from followers is explained conceptually by the difference in values and practice. The traditional values are based upon modernism and the fire ground, but practice operates in the realms of pluralism and radicalism.

As a consequence of this split, values reflect a collectivist culture and followership in which the goals of the organisation are shared and placed above those of the individual. Practice, on the other hand, resides within vertically collectivist and vertically individualistic realms that are concomitant with the respective radical and plural standpoints. It can be noted that 'vertical' in this sense means that certain inequalities in the leader / follower relationship are accepted, with the former notion emphasising sameness and shared goals and the latter concept stressing individualism. Thus, it has been shown that Adair's traditional leadership paradigm leads to an adversarial situation and a vertically collectivist culture. The consequent inequalities in the leader / follower relationship are accepted, but followers join together in order to 'fight' the leaders.

In the pluralist arena, leaders emerge from the interactions that make up life in the EFRS, in a culture that is vertically individualistic. This approach not only allows people to be involved in the organisation's activities, but it also tends to avoid the damaging conflicts of the radical stance. It also means that followers accept the inequalities in the leader / follower relationship ~ a point that is important to the followers' fire ground values ~ but still have their individualistic needs and expectations met. Those EFRS leaders who are avoiding conflict and thereby achieving success are those people who are able, through informal development, to emerge from a socially negotiated process of leadership and match the needs and expectations of the followers in this changing and turbulent environment (see page 179, 186, 188, 190 and 191). Thus the conceptual conclusions show that traditional leadership approaches, which are consistent with values, will only avoid conflict in a small number of situations such as on the fire ground. The practice of organisation that avoids conflict meets the followers needs by allowing them to exercise choice and participate in the EFRS's activities.

### **Emerging issues**

The factual findings are very much as has been expected. The way that the final conceptual framework has been constructed however, and the way that it describes what occurs in the EFRS in a variety of situations was not. It not only explains what happens in this 'leadership' situation, but it also clarifies how other organisational and cultural factors fit into this equation. This was not expected, so perhaps this is an example of the 'unknown' element in the new construction of events (Luft, 1970).

It was the 'cultural' factor of 'values and practice', along with Burrell and Morgan's social theory framework (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), that enabled the situation in the EFRS to be deciphered. Yet I did not set out to explore these differences. As a constructivist I thought that the answer conceptually would be positioned in the functional arena and not within the 'life world' interpretative paradigm of constructivism. I explored the ontological oscillation argument contained in Chapter 3 for this very reason. I believed that the research would be carried out from the interpretive perspective, with the evidence and the answers being positioned in the functional arena.

The outcome has been almost entirely different. My respondents described the organisation's values from the dominant functionalist perspective. They have also gone on to explain that when these approaches are used it leads to conflict, but the practice that they describe as matching their needs and expectations has been from the constructivist position. Thus, leaders operating from the pluralist position are meeting the needs of the organisation and its people, which implies that a new emergent paradigm with a constructivist conceptualisation of leadership is now appropriate for the EFRS.

While EFRS followers will exercise choice, and not readily subordinate themselves to the authority of leaders, the culture and followership will accept inequality in the leader / follower relationship. As such, leaders in this constructivist situation can do something to emerge from this socially negotiated process as leaders. Grint (1995, 1997) identified a means of developing leaders from the bottom-up perspective via a method he called 'persuasive rhetoric'. This can be conceptualised as an awareness of the situation and the role of the followers and the leaders in it. In this construction leaders recognise that there are many different positions in any given situation and their role is to try and emerge from the pluralist interactions that make up organisational life in the EFRS as 'winners', both for themselves, the followers and the organisation. Thus, this suggests that leaders in the EFRS can view and adapt their leadership styles as practitioners. This approach will alter the professional practice of existing and future leaders and thereby contribute to more harmonious interpersonal relationships, from which improvements in service delivery will follow.

The findings have also had one surprising outcome. Although I did not suspect that Adair's 1968 theories could still be relevant for the EFRS in modern times, I did not expect to discard decades of leadership theory as unhelpful. The functional approaches, such as Adair's, only seem to be useful if followers subordinate themselves to the authority of leaders. Whilst they appear to have done so in the past this is not now the case. The theories are functional for a functional situation, and as such the underlying assumptions upon which they are based seem inadequate for the EFRS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Exploring the situation from the followers'

perspective has enabled me to understand the situation in the EFRS more fully. I believe that the evidence has shown that the EFRS is not a unitary organisation, with a concomitant collectivist culture and followership. It is highly political; people are individualistic, and will exercise self-direction and choice. Thus, the constructivist viewpoint has not only allowed this pluralist perspective to be examined but it has also suggested how professional practice in the EFRS can be adapted in order to avoid conflict and promote improvements.

**So how has this contributed to knowledge?**

I did not set out to extend our understanding of leadership or generalise for the wider UK fire service, because these findings were intended purely for the EFRS. This investigation has combined disparate concepts to provide a contemporary understanding of the new specific context of the EFRS. This was achieved by setting all of the theories that have been used within a philosophical framework. It is also significant that not only is there a dearth of material examining leadership from the followers' perspective, but it is also the first time that research has looked at the EFRS from this standpoint. Thus, this research will not align with or add to academic theory significantly, but it should contribute much to professional knowledge and practice.

In terms of professional practice therefore, the conceptual conclusions imply that modifications can be made to leadership development in the EFRS. The evidence shows that Adair's and other functional theories are inappropriate for the EFRS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This implies that substantial changes to leadership training are needed. As a consequence, viewing leadership from the bottom-up appears to make professional practice more appropriate for the needs of the individuals and the organisation, and thereby contribute to knowledge and improve the service provision. Thus, recognition of the difference between values and practice, the need for participatory approaches that avoid damaging conflict, and the followers' and leaders' roles in negotiating the constructed reality of leadership, are key components of a new leadership paradigm that will equip the EFRS to cope with changing and turbulent times.

This study has supported Grint's (1995, 1997a) constructivist view of leadership, and McGregor's Theory Y conception of the human side of enterprise (1985). It has also added to other theories in new ways. For instance Morgan (1997) has provided a theoretical framework for examining organisations from the pluralist, unitary and radical perspectives, and Triandis (1995) has explored notions of individualism and collectivism in culture. This investigation has not only set these theories within a philosophical framework and the context of the EFRS, but it has also integrated within these models a constructivist conception of leadership and leadership development. Furthermore, the conceptual conclusions add to Morgan's organisational framework notions of followership and culture, and to Triandis's model of culture concepts of organisation. The conceptual framework also seems to update Burrell and Morgan's (1979) view of pluralism, since their concept saw pluralism as a functionalist theory and not as I have positioned it within the interpretative paradigm.

### **Future research**

Looking at the EFRS from a modernist perspective appears to portray a dialectical situation in action. When the EFRS adopts a unitary approach consistent with its values, the organisation enters the radical perspective of 'all out war'. However, when leaders attempt to manage the paradox that this situation creates the relationship becomes pluralistic and leaders emerge from the socially constructed process of leadership. It may be suggested that this situation in the EFRS can only really be understood from this 'wave-three' constructivist or emergent position, where there does not have to be the one-best way attitude of the modernist perspective. The constructivist viewpoint not only enables us to look at the leadership situation in the EFRS from the 'life world' perspective of the follower, but it also allows us to oscillate between the dominant paradigm embodied in the followers' values and the followers' constructions on events.

Adair's theories, along with other notions of top-down leadership, seem inadequate for understanding the contemporary leadership situation in the EFRS. These tentative views of leadership are based upon a set of assumptions that believe that followers will subordinate

themselves to the authority of the organisation. They do not allow us to understand what is happening in the EFRS in terms of the way that followers play an important part in the socially constructed process of leadership. And while Adair's theories appear useful for the fire ground situation, this is only relevant for the 3% of the time that fire fighters spend at incidents. Thus, it is appropriate to suggest that traditional notions of leadership are not useful in the EFRS, other than as an accounting practice for explaining what those people 'do' who emerge from the socially constructed activity we call leadership.

The thesis consequently allows the following propositions to be advanced that other researchers may wish to test in their research.

- In situations where followers exercise choice, unitary approaches to leadership will result in conflict.
- The environmental assumptions regarding human nature that underpin Adair's modelling of leadership can be seen as period specific.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century values emphasise individuality and self-direction, with associated expectations for participatory styles of leadership in the EFRS.
- A leadership approach that denies opportunities for followers to exercise choice increases the likelihood of an adversarial outcome.
- In an organisation where staff exercise choice a constructivist conceptualisation of leadership should meet their needs, and thereby avoid conflict.
- Fire Officers in the EFRS who view leadership as a bottom-up process should avoid conflict, thereby meeting their followers' needs and thus improving the quality of professional service.

Outcomes from the Research are shown in Figure 8.1, and the Potential for the Research Findings are shown in Figure 8.2. The former sets out the findings from this investigation and its impact upon EFRS leaders in terms of their future leadership practice. The latter shows how these findings can be applied to both the role of practitioner leaders in the EFRS, and those responsible for leadership development locally and nationally in the fire service.

## 8.1 Outcomes from the Research

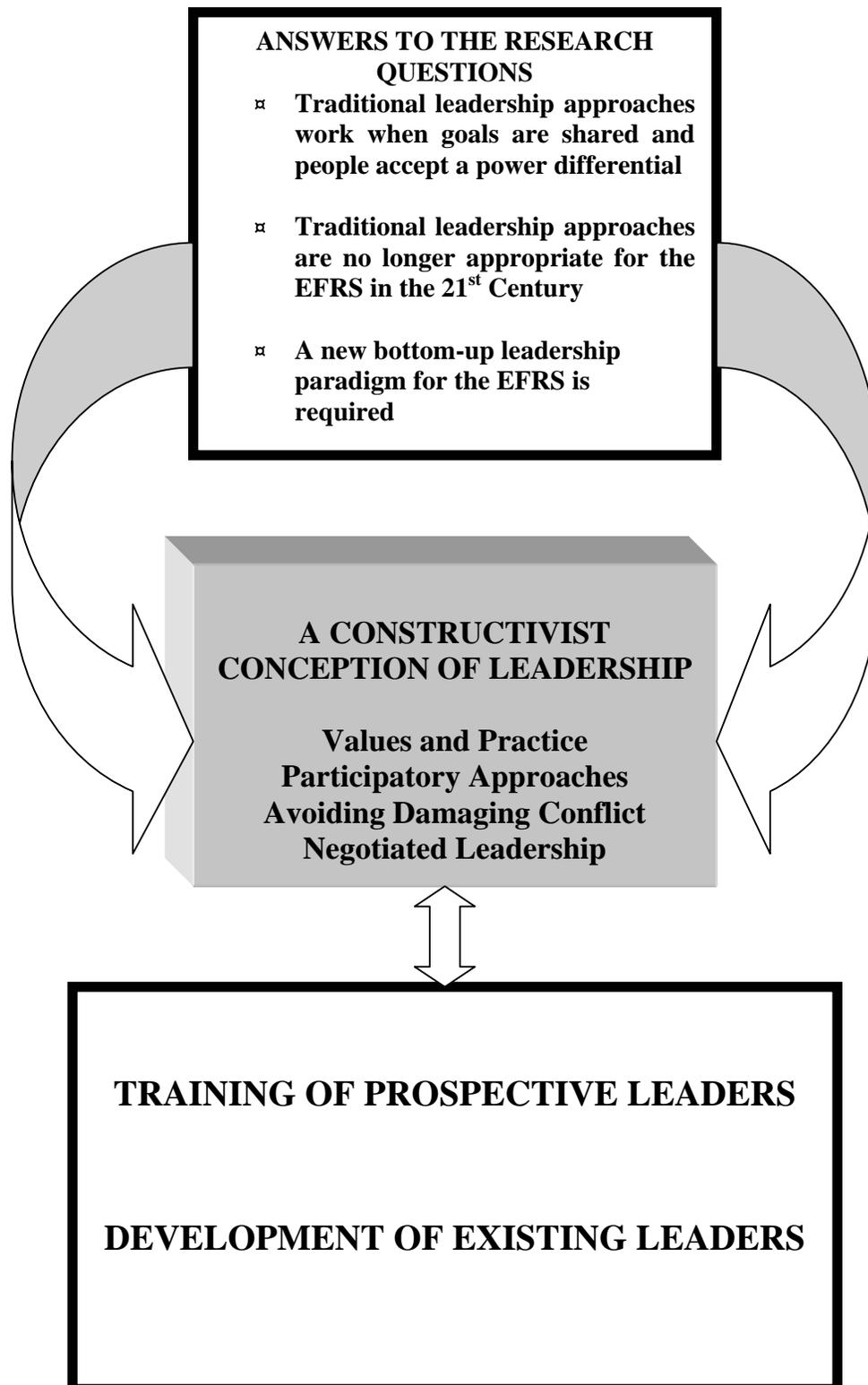
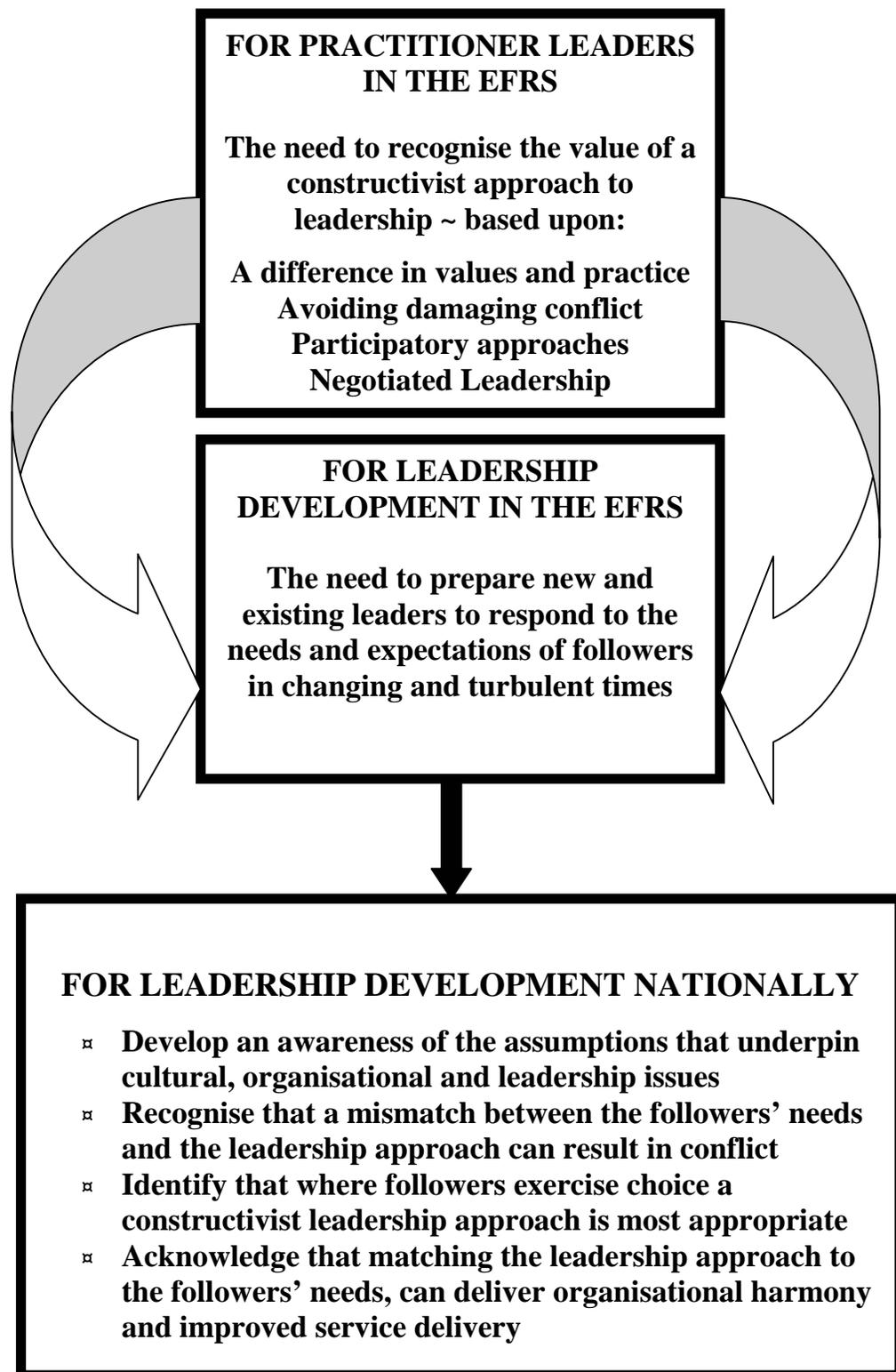


Figure 8.2 Potential of the Research Findings



## **Critique**

Whilst I suspect that the factual findings could have been predicted at the outset of this investigation, examining the evidence from a conceptual perspective has revealed many secondary and in some cases unexpected findings. However, I would question whether the answers have been predictably constructivist. Was the outcome inevitable, in approaching leadership from a constructivist perspective?

The followers did not portray circumstances where they readily subordinated themselves to the legitimate authority of the leaders, they described a state of affairs where they freely exercise choice ~ even on the fire ground where they perceive that top-down approaches are appropriate. Thus, the constructivist approach is located in the real world, and if the real world of the EFRS had been a purely unitary or radical one then this would have been reflected. The followers' constructed reality could easily have been a modernist one, whereby they describe themselves as continually at war, or subordinate to the leader's authority.

Yet could I have done anything differently? The study not only provided the answers that I was seeking, but Stage One of the EdD programme also allowed me to explore in some depth the research approaches that were used in this investigation. With hindsight I would do some things differently, but only because of the position that I am now in. I needed to take the journey that I have been on to see the extent of the problem and reflect upon my role as the researcher in that problem.

It is significant that the research design has allowed the investigation to be contextualised both environmentally and theoretically, because it has provided sufficient data and evidence in order to build a new construction of events. Although on reflection this might have been achieved more effectively by other means. Having said this I would not change the conceptual framework that has been used, because it has enabled the situation in the EFRS to be deciphered and allowed me to explore my own frame of reference as a researcher. The research instruments are

a different matter. The blockage instrument was incongruent with the constructivist research approach, and I could have collected data that was so much richer. The blockage instrument did provide worthwhile supporting evidence and it did shape the interview schedule, but in hindsight I could have used other means, such as participant observation, oral histories or videotaping to access the same data. These methods present their own problems, but more and different data could have been generated through the use of additional methods of data collection. Moreover, these methods also provide a methodological consistency, which is appropriate for the investigation's inductive approach, as well adding more depth and richness to the data.

The interviews were designed to provide the primary source of data for the investigation, and this proved to be the case. However, not all of the questions produced the type of data that had been expected. For instance, I had assumed that in designing the followership questions that leadership expectations would be discussed in terms of tradition, the fire ground, task centred leaders, and economic factors. This did not prove to be the case. So if I were to approach this task again, questions would be designed that allowed followers to consider the leaders roles and responsibilities, and not what they expected of them. Nevertheless, it is significant that all of the topics used in the research instruments over-lapped to some degree, and provided data that was not only useful in other areas, but appeared to overcome many of the limitations in the design of the questions. This was particularly the case for the documentary evidence, which worked extremely well as a research device. The problems that were experienced related to the quantity of information and not its quality.

It is possible that these small difficulties were overcome through my role as an insider researcher. Equally, perhaps this role could have been exploited more than it was. I could have videotaped EFRS leadership development sessions, I could have sat in on and observed meetings, and I have one colleague who has been in the EFRS for over 40 years, so I could have gained access to someone who has spanned the period, pre and post Adair. Nevertheless, I did arrive at the factual conclusions that I had expected. These findings are extremely valuable to my professional practice because realising that a new paradigm may be appropriate for the EFRS will avoid conflict and thereby contribute to a more harmonious organisation and improved service delivery. As a senior manager, and a tutor on the EFRS leadership development courses, once I have finished the Doctorate I will be in a strong position to

influence the leadership training of existing and future fire service leaders both locally and nationally. Thus, despite these implied criticisms of my research, they neither invalidate nor reduce the significance of my findings for the professional practice of myself or the Essex Fire and Rescue Service. My research has therefore generated very positive contributions to my professional role, to the fire service leadership development course curriculum, and to my own understanding of the EFRS.

### **Some final thoughts**

This investigation has been a culmination of my studies, and not just in terms of being a researcher. It has certainly answered many questions that have been ‘disturbing’ me as a researcher in the vocational setting, but it has also filled in many gaps in my professional understanding of the EFRS, and the fire service as a whole. In fact, Hofstede’s view of culture may also apply to leadership in the EFRS. He suggested that a leader is the follower of their followers, there is a free choice in behaviour, but the constraints are much tighter than most admit (Hofstede, 1997). The bottom-up view of leadership not only recognises this fact, but also acknowledges that leaders can do something to emerge from the socially constructed process of leadership as leaders. Awareness of this fact seems powerful, because it will allow professional practice in the EFRS to be adapted, and thereby improve the organisation.

So perhaps the answer was postmodernist after all! Well...at least in the sense that leadership in the EFRS is emergent, pluralist, participative, socially constructed, anti-hierarchical, eclectic, and has no one best way. And what better way to be anti-hierarchical than from the bottom-up.

## **Chapter 9 – My Doctoral Journey**

The critical moment for me during this investigation was related to both my role as a practitioner researcher in the vocational setting; and to the point when the study refocused to concentrate on philosophical aspects of the conceptual framework. Stage One of the EdD programme finished ahead of schedule, so I started reading for the thesis earlier than anticipated. I read for about 9 months before putting pen to paper; and things were going really well. After about four months of writing however, I started to get concerned. Was I merely constructing a very large MSc Dissertation, and was my interpretive approach consistent with the functional concepts that I was examining?

As a result of these questions I went back to reading. For three months I read books on postmodernism, modernism and sociological paradigms. As I have said, this was a critical period for me, because it has since shaped my experiences on this programme. In the first instance it resolved the philosophical tensions that I had been experiencing. I was able to see for the first time where my approach as a practitioner researcher matched the methodologies ~ or not ~ that I had been adopting.

I realised from an examination of the interpretive standpoint that the constructivist approach matched my own, since both are concerned with the emic point of view, but from the perspective of the life world. This was an important point for me, because for almost all of my studies I have struggled with the underlying notion of methodological congruence. How could I approach research from an interpretive stance, and yet still employ traditional research methods. This was the first time that I had been able to settle these tensions, and as such I have grown from the experience. Because seeing the ‘edges’ of the research debate has been very useful; I now know where I sit as a researcher in this matter, and what this means for the investigations that I undertake.

The second significant point was linked to Burrell and Morgan’s sociological paradigms, because although I had decided to construct the conceptual framework from their theories, I

was not really sure how it would all fit together. Returning to reading allowed me to resolve the problem that I had been wrestling with. In fact revisiting the ontological, epistemological, human nature and methodological assumptions of these paradigms, enabled me to get to the root of the issue, and thus position the many theories and ideas that I had been exploring, within a philosophical and theoretical framework.

Yet this turned out to be a double-edged sword. While I felt as though I was ‘doing’ a Doctorate, I seemed to get too tied up with philosophical issues, and almost forgot the ‘practicalities’ of the EdD ethos. In addition to this, I came across so many good concepts that I tried to cover every angle in the thesis, and this was a big mistake. Not only did the text get too overcrowded with ideas, but it also obscured the thread of the story that I was trying to create. This was exacerbated by the fact that I also slipped into an irritating writing style that tried to include five words in every sentence that did not actually say anything ~ although I do hope that these faults are no longer present!

At this point I should mention the role of my supervisors in this experience, because on reflection I am surprised that they managed to stay so patient. In a very gentle way they kept trying to point me in the right direction. But being a fire fighter, I can be too task focused, and it was not until I had the complete document in front of me that I could see what they were saying, and more importantly what I had done to my work. Although, on reflection, perhaps this is part of the iterative process.

As a result of my doctoral studies, I am now far more critical. I find that I focus on the underlying assumptions that underpin the material that I read, and the situations I experience. Where are people ‘coming from’, what paradigms are they espousing, is it a functional concept, does it rely on a single truth ~ predict and control philosophy, what is the outcome of such an approach? This philosophical and theoretical framework is not only quite valuable to me as a researcher, but also as a practitioner leader in the EFRS.

Whilst the next step for me is to test these findings in practice, I would note that as a consequence of these studies I have learnt much about myself in the many roles I fulfil. I do tend to lead in the way that does include people in the organisation's activities; I just need to keep this uppermost in my thoughts and actions. As well as bearing in mind the underlying difference between values and practice in the organisation. Since this not only helps in deciphering many of the situations that my colleagues and I face in daily situations, but dependent upon the circumstances it can also mean different things for the leaders, the followers and the organisation.

In addition to this conceptual understanding of values and practice, the realisation that Adair's and other leadership theories are not useful to the EFRS anymore, in that they are based upon an inadequate set of assumptions regarding human nature, and an entitative view of leadership and organisation, is very powerful. It means that approaching my role as a practitioner leader in the EFRS from a bottom-up perspective will match the needs and expectations of the followers and the organisation. I also intend to approach the Chief Fire Officer with a proposal to adapt the EFRS leadership and management courses that are run at Maes Y Lade in Wales, to present this new construction on events. I fervently believe that a new leadership paradigm is needed for practitioner leaders in the EFRS, if we are to avoid the conflicts that we have experienced, and if we are to deliver a better service to the community.

I am also keen to influence the debate nationally. Although in attempting to influence this debate I do recognise that the majority of brigades are still run as unitary organisations. However, the underlying societal influences are clear, and should the adversarial situation that exists throughout the UK fire service emerge, and fire brigades 'lose' the legitimate authority to overcome this 'us and them' relationship, then a new construction on events may be useful to other leaders in the Service. Therefore on completion of this doctorate, I intend to contribute to the leadership debate by writing in the national 'fire' press, speaking at research events, and perhaps visiting the Fire Service College to talk about leadership and my findings.

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