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“MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

A study of experiential learning and
practice development of non-profit
managers

JANET MYERS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of Nottingham
Trent University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

© May 2006

The vitality of language lies in its ability to limn the actual, imagined and possible lives of its speakers, readers, writers. Although its poise is sometimes in displacing experience it is not a substitute for it. It arcs toward the place where meaning may lie.

Think of our lives and tell us your particularized world. Make up a story. Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created.

Toni Morrison (1993, Nobel Prize Lecture)

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks go to the hardworking and dedicated research participants who were always so willing and generous with their time and contributions. It was a great pleasure to spend time in their company and to learn from their experience and expertise – this is a gift extending beyond the life the research.

Thanks also to my director of studies and supervisors for support, criticism, smiley faces and keeping me on track

And to my partner, family and friends who have wondered what it is I've been doing for these past several years ... thank you.

***** For M.J. Jackson, thank you, mum *****

Abstract

Much research undertaken in the non-profit field over the last twenty years has focused on size, definition and economic contribution of the sector. Practitioner literature has focused on tools and techniques for managing and working in the sector. Managerial experience in the sector has been largely absent from mainstream management discourse. This study seeks to address gaps in knowledge by exploring the subjective experience of managers in non-profit local development agencies (LDAs).

Qualitative research, undertaken with 20 LDA chief executive officers (CEOs), aims to describe and explain how these CEOs make sense of what they do. More specifically, to consider how concepts of self, image and identity influence CEO thinking and capacity for action; how CEOs construct the concept of leadership and what effective leadership looks like for their sector; and how they manage, learn and enhance their practice.

In doing so, a pragmatist philosophical framework links life, work, theory and practice. A social constructionist research methodology provides a means to consider how CEOs make meanings and construct personal theories, and concepts of sensemaking, autopoiesis and legitimate peripheral participation provide a robust analytical approach. Research methods include in-depth interviewing, adaptation of repertory grid technique and a period of intense shadowing of two CEOs.

Findings from the research make significant contributions to understanding and current knowledge of managerial experience in a non-profit context. The thesis points to the need to extend current thinking on conventional approaches to management development. It brings in to view concepts of *modal participation*, *networked practitioners* and *positive marginalisation* as aspects of expert practice for LDA CEOs. The methods used to elicit leadership constructs and produce a model of leadership dimensions has potential for exportable, future use and encourages further debate around social entrepreneurship and social change leadership. Additional implications for further research include learning in inter-organisational settings. As such, the context for the research is non-profit LDAs, however the learning gained from the research extends beyond non-profit boundaries.

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Part I

Viewing the Sector

The title of this thesis reflects a phrase consistently used by all the research participants in this study: "making a difference". More specifically, making a difference relates to a concept of "social justice" that holds social, political and historical meaning for research participants. This underpins their sense of self and place in relation to why they work in the sector; it informs, and is informed by, the ways in which they engage with their work and their colleagues. Moreover, making a difference is the yardstick by which they measure their individual and collective impact, and how they judge others' contributions to achieving social change.

The private, public and voluntary sectors have, in the UK at least, a history of co-existence, collaboration and uneasy alliances. The public sector may have its Cinderella services – drug misuse services in health services, radiography in professions allied to medicine and older people's services in social services (Allen, 2004), but in many respects the voluntary sector as a whole has historically been seen as a Cinderella sector. A messy environment for disenchanted youth to organise campaigns and protests; a career backwater for those who have had a productive working life in private and public sector enterprise and now want to "give back" for their success; a haven for those who want to "do good". A sector that seems to be occupied by people wearing variously and at different times, blue stockings and tweed skirts, flowery hats, woolly jumpers, bobble hats and open toed sandals. The sector can also be seen as a safe training ground for those who prove to be successful managers and leaders and who will then use these skills and competencies in the natural progression to the "real" world of work (in the public or private sectors). These are all some of the perceptions, recounted by non-profit managers, that make up the overall image of the voluntary sector.

Part of this image is due to a generalised lack of understanding and opacity of the sector itself. Once aptly described as a "loose and baggy monster" (Kendall and Knapp, 1995), the range and scope of the sector can

be as confusing as it can be misleading. Most people might be able to recognise and appreciate charities and charitable activities, but would not necessarily be able to distinguish exempted charities from registered charities and charitable companies. They may not recognise, for example, some of the large service providing organisations (for example, child welfare services, palliative care and hospice provision) as being part of non-governmental provision.

The changing profile of the sector has been adequately described (Leat *et al*, 1981; 6 and Leat, 1997) and the sector is becoming a more accepted and acceptable place to work and find a career – particularly in larger non-profit (service providing) organisations. In this respect, there are many points of comparison with public sector organisations and indeed private sector organisations in how “goods” are produced, and services are provided and managed. However, there are pockets of activities that are particular to the sector itself and the context for this research is one such area: local infrastructure or local development agencies.

Even though particular to the sector, they have a generalised impact in their relations with the broader non-profit sector as well as working at the interface of public and private sector agencies. There is replication of these organisation types in other countries (for example, Australia) and there are some parallels with some international development agencies although as the name suggests, *local* development agencies tend to work in cities, districts and counties in specific geographical locations (in the UK).

In order to consider the specific needs and experiences of local development agency chief executives (the focus of this research), it is necessary to provide both background on the impetus and focus of the research and information on the sector. As such, Part I of the thesis consists of four chapters, which guide the reader through processes and content, the methodological considerations and methods used, and information on the sector itself. These chapters will help to provide the background, rationale and focus for the research questions and provide a foundation for Parts II and III of the thesis.

It should be noted that research participants have not been identified in the thesis. Chapter Three will explain the reasons for this. However, there

are practical issues that arise from this decision. For example, in order to provide an "audit trail" to raw research materials and to attribute particular quotes and information, the following index has been devised and is used:

- (FIAB): FI = First Interview, A = individual identifier, B = Geographical Location
- (FICC): First Interview with C (person) of C (location)
- (SIJB): Second Interview with J (person) of B (location)
- (SHNS): SH = shadowing of N (person) in S (location)
- (SHJB/T): SH – shadowing of J in B, additional interview with T
- (EQOR): EQ = Email Questionnaire from O (person) of R (location)
- (PIJM): PI = Partnerships Interview with J (person) of M (location)

All quotes from participants are shown in the text (either as part of a paragraph of running text or in a separate indented text) in Garamond font size 12. For example:

My experience now is actually that the voluntary sector – that is the voluntary sector that I have been involved with – is far more professional and certainly much better planned and ...more efficient than my private sector experience (FIAB)

A further quick note on style and presentation patterns: quotes from relevant literature are recorded in the main body of the thesis in same font as main text but smaller and in separate indented paragraphs. This helps to distinguish between the work of other authors and my own. For example:

This synergy not only helps to create "a sense of personal integrity and consistency over time" as suggested by Moran and Brightman (2001: 111) but also maintains a sense of personal and professional congruity.

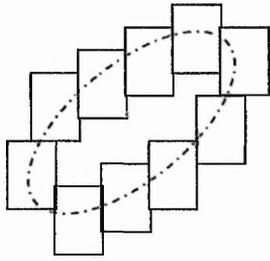
and

Central to all philosophies are the questions of "Who am I?", "How did this universe come in to being?", and "What is my relationship to it?" The answers or beliefs we have about these questions affect the way we structure and control work, our views of ownership and profit, our leadership style and the way we deal with each other in the workplace (Cacioppe, 1997: 340).

Finally, in editing a set of papers to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Centre for Voluntary Organisations of the London School of Economics in September 1998 and published in 2001, Harris and Rochester (2001: 17) comment on their own preference for the terms, *voluntary organisations*, *voluntary agencies* and *voluntary sector* while recognising that:

...there is a bewildering variety of terms in use and a lively and unresolved debate about which should be preferred. In the absence of a consensus and in what we think is an appropriate spirit of pluralism we have suggested to the contributors of this book that they should use the terms with which they are familiar and comfortable

These terms will also be evidenced in the voices of the participants of the research whose language will reflect their own comforts and preferences. For my own part, and throughout the thesis, I use the terms voluntary organisation, non-profit organisation, non-profit sector, voluntary sector and voluntary and community sector.



1. Making sense of process and content.

By way of introduction, it may be useful to consider some of the ideas for enquiry that underpin this research and guide both the methodological and literature review processes as well as frame the presentation of information. This in turn provides an overview of the research document itself.

Primarily, interest in the subject arises from my practitioner experience of working in the non-profit sector: initiating projects, managing within voluntary sector agencies and of setting up and working in what would probably now be called social enterprises, but were then more commonly referred to as worker co-operatives. My experience of working in an independent capacity with both non-profit and public sector organisations has increasingly added to my knowledge and curiosity about managing, learning and collaborating both between same-sector organisations and working across sectors, particularly in the context of strategic alliances and partnership arrangements.

This process has been continuing throughout my working life, yet the crystallisation of a focused research project was first set in motion after completion of a master's degree and observing the participants of a subsequent cohort of students. While having a much younger age profile than the cohort I joined, with a greater number of women and public sector participants, there was significant absence of non-profit sector managers and professionals. Having asked the question, not for the first time, "Why aren't more voluntary sector managers signing up to masters and other post-graduate levels of education?", the onus was put back on me to come up with some ideas.

Having been prompted into action, I was soon to leave my voluntary sector occupation to move into both doctoral research and life as a part-time academic. Having obtained this *intellectual milieu*, there were increased opportunities for rigorous thinking about the focus of research inquiry.

Knowing that there were some, albeit a few, higher education institutions catering specifically for a non-profit market, it was apparent that voluntary sector managers were not absenting themselves totally from their continued professional and personal development. Indeed, some of the reasons expressed by research participants for taking up additional opportunities for formal training or returning to education included the need for vocational qualifications and catching up on opportunities missed early in careers. Other reasons were general progression in terms of finding one's way or occupational niche (often aligned to personal values) and benefits for future employment. For example:

I took three years out [from director's post] and went to university because I'd left school at 15 and I had no qualifications at all...It was partly to do with self development because I wanted to do it and I actually felt I'd missed out with leaving school at 15. And I did a degree that was relevant, partly because that was the area of work that I knew I wanted to continue in, partly because I thought I can use my experience and fit this into this sort of framework now. So, that was really useful from my point of view (FIIR)

I wanted to be a doctor and didn't - in my A levels, I needed two Bs and a C and I got two Bs and a D and so I didn't get into medical school. ...And so - I sort of - I went and did a - just did a science degree instead ...And I had friends who were social workers and so I decided that I would leave [industry] and go into social work. ... And then, I went to university and did my social work qualification and my masters in social work. [And then, I] did [an] MBA... to challenge myself ... [and to] get some additional qualifications because all the sort of jobs going round at the moment, they want management qualifications. So those sort of two personal reasons. But then also, you know, from the organisational point of view, I sort of said well, because of the way the world's changing and the way the environment we're in is changing, we really need to be sharper about management practices and making sure that we're, you know, we're developing good practice and delivering it. (FIKL)

At the same time, there were other voices - and sometimes the same voices who had demonstrated an interest in their personal and professional development during the early parts of their career - expressing no further need for formal education or qualifications. The reasons given for this were age, experience and limited relevance for future career opportunities. There were also more cynical responses to the types of education and provision currently on offer. For example:

...well, back in the mists of time...I did personnel management. That was like after university, really, as a night school thing, which stood me in good stead for lots of jobs...I've done lots of management training and I've increasingly stopped doing it and it's just being very old really, I think, and ten years in the job, I don't find it as helpful. (FICC)

There are a number of certificate courses for managers in the voluntary sector - and, er - I think it's great if people want to pursue that - I suppose I lack the commitment perhaps to dedicate to learning those skills now. (FIIR)

I haven't done a lot of formal training other than IT...we've just been looking at leadership, thinking how I might develop my leadership skills, although it's actually quite difficult to find something that actually crosses over those political and management, [areas], so really, no, I haven't really done a lot. (FIJB)

JM: Hmm. I mean have you thought about doing any - formal courses or further training?

FIAB: Not really, no, not really, because I don't think it's necessary to get another job to be honest, because it's not something that people ask for. And it would take me away from my current job but er - I just try and pick up on certain skills, like the employment law bit and equal opportunities and things like that.

JM: So things that are directly related to how you work?

FIAB: Yes

I'm quite cynical about management training and I'm very cynical about the MBA route, which is often the route that voluntary sector people go down...because mostly people I know, - mostly people I know who've done it, - are hopeless managers. It doesn't seem to have affected their practice at all and I just think well...! (FILS)

In considering the general profile of the 20 chief executives officers (CEOs) in this study, many have followed a formal education route from school to higher education before entering the labour market proper. Those that did not follow this route, returned later as mature students to obtain first or higher degrees or further vocational or work related qualifications. In this way, all had at least a first degree, a number had professional qualifications and some had or were seeking higher degrees. This type of educational background corresponds with UK national profiles, which indicate a higher level of educational attainment for voluntary sector employees compared to other sectors:

25% of paid workers are educated to degree level or above, compared with 23% in the public sector and 10% in the private sector (van Doorn and Hems, 1998: 12)

This may account for the surprise of one chief executive (a first degree, 2 master's degrees and professional qualification holder) who had taken part in a number of high-level public sector recruitment processes and the remarks of another non-profit manager, specifically concerned with development and research:

I've been involved in a couple of things recently. I mean I'm on a whole stream of committees and boards at the moment some of them very public sector oriented, a number with the private sector and have been on recruitment panels for high-flying chief execs who are on double the salary that I'm on and witnessed how low-flying the candidates are. It was quite a shock to me....And out of this shortlist for this chief exec's job, two of the short list didn't even have degrees, which just astounded me, you know, and none of them had post-graduate management training. And this was an economic chief exec post and I just couldn't believe how poor the standard was. (SIKL)

I've never known any employment environment where the obsession with training is tangible - against evidence. The evidence shows that the sector is, if anything more highly educated than any other sector, apart from probably the academic sector... (SHJB/T)

A further observation made was that investment in additional education and training may often take place without resource inputs from an employing organisation:

I'm amazed that people will pay for their own training to do the job that they are employed to do (FILS)

Indeed a number of participants had taken time out of full time employment to go back into education or had/were financing courses as part of a commitment to both personal and professional development. These types of comments raise issues around not only the access to, focus and quality of continued formal training and development routes for executives in the sector, but also about thinking and learning "on-the-job".

If, in the main, these CEOs do not continue to access formal courses and education throughout their careers, then what kinds of sources of information and influences affect their capacity to learn? The focus of the research, then, becomes less about why CEOs in the sector are not accessing formal education, and more about the interplay between formal and informal learning and practice development.

Having reviewed some of the available literature to refine my thinking and research objectives, it appeared that there was a rich literature on learning and managing in other sectors, particularly for private sector leaders and entrepreneurs, yet there was little consistency and no sustained approaches to management development in the third sector. Indeed, in trying to assess information on strategic activity within the sector, Butler and Wilson (1990:21) conclude:

...when we look for evidence in the ways in which such organisations are managed and manage themselves in relation to their environments, evidence is sketchy.

Furthermore, one of the main obstacles for the UK voluntary sector has been the significant lack of discourse around management issues, particularly within the realms of mainstream management thinking (Batsleer, 1995). In this way, it became clear that in order to provide insights into how chief executives "modify or develop their understandings and practice" (Watson and Harris, 1999:17), the research needed to consider the emergent and experiential nature of managing and learning in the sector (Leat et al, 1981; Billis and Harris, 1996). Furthermore, from this initial investigation, there appeared to be gaps in knowledge relating to how voluntary sector leaders and chief executives made sense of what they were involved in and how that impacted their strategising, their practice, their ability to perform; how they might, as suggested by Easterby-Smith *et al* (1995: 73):

...construct the meaning and significance of their situations from...the complex personal framework of belief and values...in order to help explain and predict events in their world.

From here, an interest developed in how individual chief executives are learning to manage and conversely how they might continue managing to learn. Moreover, the concern was not so much with how they organise and schedule operational tasks, control and direct resources or how they use training and development tools and techniques to make themselves more effective as managers. Rather, curiosity was raised as to how proficiently CEOs, in their own terms, made sense of and handled complex and ambiguous relationships in "real world practice" (Weick, 1995:9), both within their organisations and in their work outside in partnerships and cross-sector alliances; linking to more strategic and leadership roles and identities.

To look more deeply at these puzzles, I was interested in a number of questions such as how might local development agency chief executives respond to changing circumstances. What are the formal and informal support mechanisms they use to reflect on their situations? How do they learn from their experiences and construct personal theories (Kelly, 1955)? How might they enact these belief systems in the process of everyday working and learning?

These questions were distilled in to two main objectives to give the research both a foundation and a stepping off point for exploration. These were to:

- describe and explain the impact of experiential learning on voluntary sector chief executives' accounts of their managerial and leadership behaviours

and to

- explore, through the respondents' process of "sensemaking" (Weick, 1995), how personal theories emerge and the rules of thumb chief executives use to develop and enhance their practice

Further questions around individual and sector identity and image flow from these objectives. For example, Weick (1995: 23) suggests, "sensemaking occurs in the service of maintaining a consistent, positive, self-conception" and that "when people transform their knowledge and abilities into action, this transformation is mediated by thoughts about themselves and their capabilities" (Weick, 2001: 69). Moreover, that if "people think they can do lots of things, they can afford to pay attention to a wider variety of inputs because they will have some way to cope with it" (Weick, 1988: 311). Thus when "people begin to act (enactment), they generate tangible outcomes (cues) in some context (social) and this helps them discover (retrospect) what is occurring (ongoing), what needs to be explained (plausibility), and what should be done next (identity enhancement)" (Weick, 1995: 55). In this way, as LDA CEOs describe their learning and experience in the context of a wider non-profit sector and community, this both reflects a retrospective interpretation and provides a springboard for future actions and behaviours, which may, or may not, lead to developed or enhanced practice. In addition, the place of CEOs' informal learning is brought more keenly in to view, in contributing

to a broader identity focus or enhancement in relation to, what LDA CEOs term 'making a difference'.

At an individual level, then, it may be fruitful to consider the inter-dependent relationships between everyday life and LDA CEOs' sense of "place", with managing, leading and learning for these chief executives – their praxis (Lave and Wenger, 1999). From this starting point of describing everyday practice and considering the personal constructs used to explain this, Watson's assertion - when considering private and public sector managerial learning - may also apply to non-profit sector managers. He suggests:

...managerial work has to be understood in the light of their *life, identity and biography* as a whole... [and we need to]... abandon the notion of management learning and talk instead about 'life learning relevant to managerial work' (Watson, 2001a: 221, 230, my italics).

At an organisational level, March (1984) cited by Weick (1995:8) argues that organisational life, too, involves "metaphors of theory and fitting our history into an understanding of life". This is further demonstrated by Whetton and Godfrey (1998: viii), who emphasise from their own experience and research that "concerns about identity are just as profound as concerns about survival" and use an interpretative framework to make sense of their own experience as faculty members in times of change. Similarly, Goodall (2002: 103,106) in his research on Heads of charity shop organisations, makes a point that generally much voluntary sector research does little to address the concept of identity and he suggests:

...the concept of identity (or being) in organisations is very important if we are to better understand organisational practice (or doing).

These observations have influenced my thinking and organising of subsequent research; helping to provide a link to consider individual experiences and values in the context of organisational life. This is shown in an initial conceptual framework below, Figure 1.1, page 12.

From Figure 1.1, we can see the reciprocal relationships between informal and formal learning and contextualised or situated performances (CEOs' 'being' and 'doing' in the sector). To help to explore and develop this preliminary framework, a number of conceptual tools and frameworks are

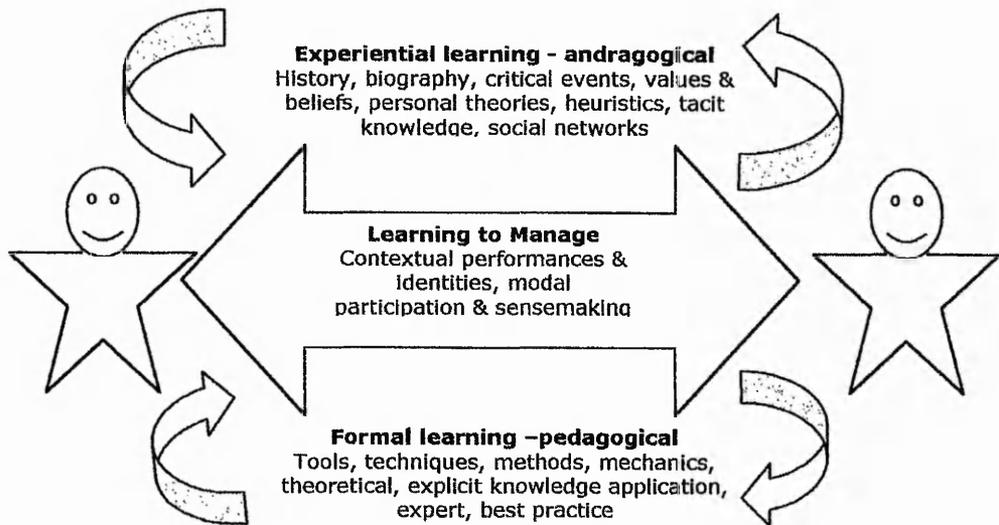


Figure 1.1: Towards a Conceptual Framework
Source: author

used. These are discussed in more depth in following chapters, however at this point, it is useful to highlight some of the key constituents that frame and guide the research process, which include:

- environments and systems: the complexity of managing in the sector and how tensions between internal and external environments are managed; autonomy in strategising: linked to the concept of autopoiesis (Maturana and Varela, 1980, 1998; Luhmann, 1995)
- contexts : "their worlds" , that is the life or social worlds of non-profit chief executives and the cues linked to sensemaking processes and enactment (Weick, 1995)
- social construction of meaning (Searle, 1996; Sjöstrand *et al*, 2001)
- emergent and experiential aspects of managing, leading and learning including legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1999) and phronesis or practical wisdom (Baumard, 1999; Czarniawska, 2001)

As such, this is neither a search for "truth" nor an attempt to provide tools and techniques for CEOs. Instead, it represents a concern for and interest in how people - "puzzled" individuals (after Baumard, 1999) - who have to deal with ambiguous situations day-by-day, juggle multiple realities and what informs their thinking and actions.

The field work undertaken offers opportunities to engage with non-profit chief executives in “their worlds”, and provides arena for on-going and iterative sense-making processes both for the participants and for researcher. The thesis is structured to take account of that journey of discovery and exploration and to provide a meaningful and sensible narrative on the aims, processes, findings and conclusions drawn from this experience. An outline of the content and structure of the thesis is shown in Figure 1.2, and explained below.

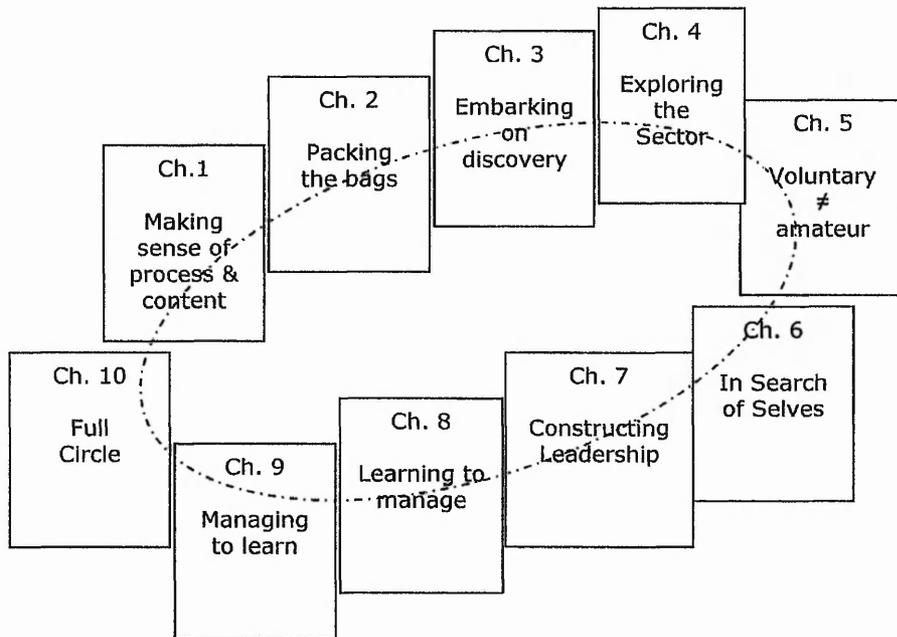


Figure 1.2: Route Map: a tour of the thesis structure
Source: author

The thesis is in three main parts. Part I – *Viewing the Sector* – as explained in the opening piece to this section, consists of four chapters, which provide an overview of methodology and methods involved in the research study as well as an overview of the scope of the research and the non-profit sector. As can be seen from this introductory chapter, there is integrated use of theory, reference to appropriate literature and the sector managers’ “own voices” throughout to develop and present in a structured, narrative format the unfolding story of the research undertaken. This interlacing of empirical research and theoretical framing is intended to infuse the narrative, conveyed by the research participants, “with meanings...without, however, obliterating the facts” (Gabriel, 2000: 6), an issue that will be returned to when considering theoretical frameworks and

methodological concerns (Chapter 2). It is also relevant in relation to scholarly review and inclusion of appropriate literature, to which attention is focussed towards the end of this chapter.

Having used the more positive language around "framing" and "shaping" discussion, one might also rephrase or reinterpret these terms as "bias" and/or particular levels of "subjectivity". As such, it is necessary that this is confronted and addressed, which will form part of the discussion in both Chapter 2, *Packing the Bags: methodological considerations* and Chapter 3 *Embarking on Discovery: tools and techniques*.

Before considering individual identity, there is a need to review the identity of the sector as a whole to provide a cultural, political and historical backdrop to LDA CEO experience. The identity of the sector has been a continuing debate within the sector for a number of years. As such, in Chapter 4, *Exploring the Sector*, space is given to outline some of the literature to date, on the size, identity and economic contribution of the sector as a whole. This helps to clarify the boundaries and the scope of this research, which looks primarily and specifically at the experience of chief executives of a specific sub-sector of the non-profit sector: local development agencies or infrastructure organisations (LDAs or LIOs)

Part II of the thesis – *Voices from the Sector* - consists of three chapters. This part presents and identifies, through the voices of chief executives and key respondents, some of the tensions, challenges, issues and needs of voluntary sector executives arising from the empirical research. For example: the shifting and dynamic nature of identity and sense making at an individual level, creativity and constraint, notions of accountability and legitimacy, the nature of professionalism in the sector, fear and confidence, illustrated by such comments as:

And I said to people – I've got a 'proper' job now! It did feel like that, because people could relate to the job. Oh, public sector- oh, yes. [Rather than] CV- what? Oh, right, charity..? Oh, mmm ..? And that's kind of interesting. And the other thing when you sit on this side of the fence you start to realise how little understanding there is of the voluntary sector. It's appalling really, how much guff goes around. (SIDND)

The identity of [the organisation] is...still a problem. Where most voluntary organisations grow organically out of a perceived caucus of campaigning activity – Shelter, CPAG, Oxfam even, where there's this drive from the centre, that defines their personality, [our type of organisation] doesn't have that at all. Trying to actually explain to the outside world, what it is and what it's for is really very difficult... Building that kind of identity is difficult ... What we've allowed to happen is to allow the definition of the sector to be dangerously one dimension it's either a raggle-taggle bunch of nutters or it's a quasi-business sector...I think it's multi-layered and should accommodate all sorts of those organisations across the spectrum (SHJB/T)

I think all that latent creativity and problem-solving, that I hadn't been able to do [in local government]...I'd done through the union really. The union had become the place where all the creativity went, you know? Because...we'd got quite a radical shop stewards' meeting really...and I think all that learning came into the voluntary sector. I think that was more than my day job really (FICC).

I think we should be a professional organisation and I think that's what we didn't have before, very often. I think what sometimes happened was very unprofessional and we've still got a long way to go. I wouldn't say that this organisation is by any means perfect - we've got to put a lot in place to make it more effective, more responsive, more accountable and I think we need to strive to do that (FIIR)

I've always been very keen that we are proactive as an organisation, that we actually seek to set the agenda rather than waiting for somebody else to do it and to be consulted (FIKL)

I think it [developing a vision] is a gradually emerging thing. You know, it did feel as if - I mean I've always said it was 2 yrs before I really felt I knew what I was doing - and it's partly that confidence kind of thing really (FIJRN)

More specifically, Chapter 5, *Voluntary ≠ Amateur*, builds on exploration from Chapter 4 and looks at the image of the sector as a professionalised arena of work and the pressures to become more like for-profit and public sector organisations. Some of the assumptions around this push towards isomorphism are challenged, together with the confusion created by the label "voluntary" and the conflation with sub-standard performance, inefficiency and ineffectiveness (hence voluntary is not equal to amateur in a pejorative sense). In addition, the appropriation of for-profit tools and techniques to demonstrate efficiency, accountability and effectiveness are considered.

Having situated the voluntary sector in its political and historical context, this needs to be further explored in relation to individual and organisational identity. Chapter 6, *In search of selves – individual and organisational identities* – considers the personal and professional identities of LDA CEOs. Concepts of multiple identities and performances are identified and consideration is given to how this affects CEOs' sense of self and their abilities to effectively perform. This brings in to focus the complexities and tensions faced by CEOs in this endeavour.

Dialogue around identity and sense of selves in work and life also brings to the fore concepts of power and efficacy. Linking to a perceived marginalisation of the sector and the image this promulgates, makes the range and scope of power and influence of LDA CEOs a significant area for investigation. For example, LDA CEOs are the titular heads of their organisations and they are increasingly taking a leading role in relationships with other agencies and as ambassadors for their organisation and the sector as a whole. In this latter arena, cross-sector knowledge, political awareness and influence in brokering relationships and advocating the position of the sector can make a difference to their self-concept, their extended self-image and co-regulated identity (Lee, 1997). This, together with the image and activities of their organisations is a pivotal part in making a difference to government and others' agenda and addressing LDA CEOs' key issues of social justice and change. How LDA CEOs describe key characteristics and define success and/or effectiveness in being able to make a difference in these contexts, is the focus of Chapter 7, *Constructing Leadership*.

The concepts of leadership and the associated concept of entrepreneurship are discussed in Chapter 7 with the aid of a modified approach to Kelly's (1955) personal constructs theory and repertory grid technique. As Warren (2004: 40) suggests, "Kelly (1955/1991) acknowledged that the individual's constructs would find a significant origin in that individual's micro and macro social contexts" and, as such, this allows for an exploration of social construction of leadership incorporating individual values and beliefs and a wider LDA/non-profit context. This exploration also provides a bridge to link the discussions from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to the themes of managing and learning in the final part of the thesis, Part III, *Managing and Learning in the Sector*.

The concepts of leading and leadership in the sector, shifting identities and roles and entrepreneurial practices of LDA CEOs provide significant development experiences and opportunities for learning and for becoming proficient performers. Individual learning and development linking to themes of values-led management and leadership are explored in Chapter 8, *Learning to Manage* and Chapter 9, *Managing to Learn*. These chapters provide a framework to consider the relevance for the sector of traditional approaches to employee development and emerging discourse on management development, and an exploration of life learning (Watson, 2001a) linked to practice. Consideration is given to the transfer of learning between sectors, situated learning, communities of practice/practitioners and partnership learning.

Chapter 10, *Full Circle* reviews the thesis in relation to its starting points. The finishing post is in sight now. Often this denotes the end of an event or programme, which in many cases the binding and handing in of a thesis can seem to be, yet there is also another sense where the process is stopped temporally. If one imagines a horse race or an athletic long-distance running event, then the finishing post or line is actually part of the course where the horse or the human runner has crossed before in the process of the race and they continue through it to another part of the race, the post-event space. In a similar way, this chapter gives an opportunity to return to review and conclude, while also providing a foundation and platform for further enquiry post the "doctoral event".

As well as empirical research, the review of literature relevant to my pursuit is equally important. As such, I will take some time in the following pages to consider my approach to this in more detail.

"Don't become a bibliophile unless it suits you"

(‘Of methods and manners for aspiring sociologists: 37 moral imperatives’ Marx (1996) cited by Silverman, 2000:227)

In many respects, a single chapter entitled "A Literature Review" would be too limited and limiting in capturing the richness of academic and practitioner discourse on manager development and learning. Throughout this document, I make use of literature to give a flavour of discourse relevant to the research being undertaken. Moreover, I use the literature to emphasise, illustrate and underpin not only the choice and rationale of

the research study and the direction taken, but also to frame the analysis and the contribution to on-going discussion in the arena of mainstream management studies as well as new public management and non-profit studies. The approach taken is rather as Watson (2001b: 2) describes where appropriate methodological inclusions are integrated into the narrative because:

...conceptual and methods issues are too integral to the story to be set apart in separate theory or methods chapters.

In this way, relevant literature is organised and presented around a series of themes and patterns emerging both in primary and secondary research. For me, this solves both practical and conceptual difficulties in that writing more thematically helps to illustrate the review as an on-going process rather than a one-off, finite event that "a" or "the" implies. Acknowledging that what is written here will never be complete, it seems reasonable, then, to present the review as something more than a series of events that occurs initially to justify the research proposal (which indeed it does); takes place, in the main, before fieldwork begins and, perhaps finally, is revisited during analysis of findings. There are undoubtedly a number of stops and starts in the process, which are well described in Sambrook's (2002) useful account of producing a review. Yet I am inclined to favour Silverman's (2000) suggestion, that to write "a" literature review early on in the research project is difficult and, often, a fruitful time to link theory and empirical studies, is when analysis takes place. Furthermore, in citing Wolcott (1990), Silverman (2000: 230) highlights a possible danger of confining to one chapter relevant literature that consequently:

...remains unconnected to the rest of the study. I [Wolcott] want them [his students] to draw upon the literature selectively and appropriately as needed in the telling of their story...Ordinarily this calls for introducing related research toward the end of a study rather than at the beginning, except for the necessary 'nesting' of the problem in the introduction

As Silverman (2000: 231) goes on to suggest:

[This] means that you can bring in appropriate literature, as you need it, not in a separate chapter but in the course of your data analysis.

There can be no denying that part of this approach may also provide a useful justification of a delaying tactic until the felt need to find everything that has been said and written, everything that is currently being said and

written and everything that will or might be said and written is satiated. An impossible task and yet one to which I feel drawn in attempting to focus in on the state of the non-profit sector, and in terms of learning and sense making around highly politicised and socialised managerial positions in a particular part of the sector. The focus and task is, de facto, dynamic and open to change and interpretation. There has been additional benefit in focussing thought processes around particular themes in order, for example, to present a conference paper, write a journal article, and provide some accountability to supervisors and others. These events and encounters - with other practitioners, researchers and academics - further influence additional forays into the available literature and contribute to my own sense making processes as a seasoned practitioner and a neophyte academic.

It is also relevant to consider other influences on shaping and directing attempts at seeking information. For example, Hart (2000) describes a literature review in terms of tracing the ancestry of one's academic career and I would suppose it would also be relevant to include the influence of practitioner literature associated with one's area of professional practice. Taking in to account the wider perspective of my academic career to this point may help to deepen insight into particular preferences and choices and to track development and changes in ways of conceptualising, researching and writing about the subject area.

A brief reflection on my own "academic career" points initially towards a first degree: a joint honours focusing on (mainly Marxian influenced) sociology, psychology, social psychology and the more practice focus of law, economics, social policy, psychiatry and social work practice. This gives grounding in multi-disciplinary approaches and cross-fertilisation of academic frameworks of analysis, as well as practical experience of individual and group interviewing techniques and recording processes. This early experience has also been shaped by what Seebom (1968, cited by Billis, 1989:3) would refer to as a more "radical" approach to working in the non-profit sector and gives a leaning towards and interest in critical social research approaches.

My second degree, at master's level, is more firmly set in the arena of developing resourceful human beings, learning and knowledge and

exploring organisational dynamics and change. It is here, as mentioned earlier, together with associated professional practice, that questions arising around the current research were nurtured. In the context of master's level research, managers' coping with the interconnectedness of external/internal environments was explored and interest developed in systems approaches and autopoiesis to explore and move away from the problematic nature of a dualist approach and somewhat artificial split between inner direction (organisation) and outer direction (environment). Coupled with this was the use (and indeed, lack of use) of traditional management tools and techniques in strategising and decision making in the case study organisations, which connected with 'informal' and adductive learning and practice development in coping with organisational change and development. In turn, this led to consideration of crisis or creativity in dealing with ambiguous events, which as Baumard (1999: 2) comments can be used as a "shield" (reacting, crisis-driven) or an "opportunity to experiment" (proactive, enacting, creating).

Reflecting on that research, there were similarities also with Starbuck *et al's* findings (cited in Starbuck and Milliken (1988: 37) in that "the processes which produce crises are substantially identical to the processes that produce successes". This is significant when considering the processes and experiences that LDA CEOs face and the outcomes of this in terms of successful or enhanced practice development. During master's level research, a phenomenological approach was in evidence with an interpretivist framework, although themes of enactment and sensemaking were also utilised. These themes, too, straddle my current thinking around issues facing chief executives in the non-profit sector.

As mentioned above, I have been able to explore links between academic research and relevant literature through production of conference papers, which - subject to peer review - were later accepted as journal articles (See Appendices A, B, C and D, plus co-author's permissions letter, Appendix E, in relation to Appendices A and B). To some extent, this also charts my growth and development towards becoming a doctoral level researcher.

My master's level research focused on case studies in both the non-profit and public sector. Current doctoral research is more firmly set in the non-

profit sector and particularly in local development agency settings. The context and profile of this particular non-profit sub-sector will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 4. However, it seems pertinent at this point to introduce the research participants.

Raising the curtain: key players and supporting cast

As stated above, Chapter 3 will look more closely at the selection of research participants and their involvement in the research process. Here, I want to give a brief profile of the people and the ways in which they have been involved. I have used the word "participant" because I feel they have had an active role both in providing documentary information and in shaping the study over the period of their involvement. This connection has been through direct face-to-face communication, and via virtual association and connection through email, listening to tapes and digital recordings and in transcribing and reading their texts. Appendix F provides some basic biographical details of "core" participants.

At the time of the first set of semi-structured interviews (2001), all twenty participants had been working in their capacity as chief executives (CEOs) of infrastructure organisations for between 1 year and over 25 years. Most had been in the sector itself for more than 3 years. Their ages range from early thirties to late fifties and, as stated earlier, all had been educated to graduate degree level or above.

Ten are female and ten are male. This is serendipity rather than conscious planning – although it does raise questions around the gendered nature of managing and leading. The impact and influence of gender is something commented on by some research participants, but remains beyond the scope of this particular study, except in terms of the situated nature of practice. Some participants had been working in the sector for most if not all of their working lives; others had moved from local political roles; public sector (local government, health and education) organisations and a smaller number from private sector (retail and manufacturing). These are the key individual players and, as a group, the focus of the research.

By the time of the second face-to-face contact cycle, some had moved to other senior management or executive roles and two (one male, one female) were no longer able to take part. For one, this was because of

internal staffing problems and workload; for the second, it was tied to the logistics of moving locations, jobs and competing timetables and commitments both of the research participant and the researcher. However, by this time there were also some supporting cast members to supplement and help to expand on some of the themes emerging from my contact with the CEOs. In particular, several senior voluntary sector managers took part in an e-mail questionnaire to explore the cues used, as well as any mainstream management tools and techniques, in strategising and decision-making.

As part of my research focus was in relation to CEOs' working relationships "outside" of their organisational boundaries – that is working and learning in active alliances with other sector organisations, I supplemented some information arising from CEO accounts of partnership working with the inclusion of key respondents employed in partnership arrangements. Specifically, this included senior managers from new 'quango' organisational structures (local strategic partnerships), voluntary sector and strategic health authorities.

There are over two hundred local development agencies across the UK. Yet, the world of the LDA CEO is a "small world". The research sample inhabits a much smaller geographical area than UK-wide and, consequently, the CEOs taking part in this study belong to a close-knit network of like organisations. Professionals working in this field tend to have a broad base knowledge of others working in the same or similar fields (locally, nationally and internationally). There are also issues of identification on a cross-sector basis as participants actively engage with public sector, private sector agencies, local, and national government departments. As such, participants in the research are not identified by name and personal details are limited to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. This was an agreed part of involvement in the research study and I shall return to look at this in more detail in Chapter 3 when considering ethical implications. As explained in the introduction to Part I, participants are identified by a series of letters (for example, FIDND) as can be seen in the following quotes, which give a flavour of participants' backgrounds and experience:

15 years might sound a long time but I suppose from my point of view doesn't feel very long – because I'm old, you know. So half my working life was in local government, where I think we all shared the view that the voluntary sector was a waste of time – ladies in flowered hats, messing about. And it was only when I came to work in it...I think the voluntary sector is an interesting way for ordinary people to get control over certain aspects of their life, that's the bit I'm interested in and that's the bit I find entertaining (FICC)

...even when I worked in the statutory sector, I worked with voluntary organisations quite a lot so, - and I just decided – that's where I want to work. I think mainly for the freedom and the opportunities to try out new ideas (FICY)

I worked in a camera shop and then I worked in a transport department. But I had been involved in the voluntary sector through the Samaritans...and my uncle was in social services. And I got quite interested in that area of work...And that was in the mid-70s and a job came up...for [...] as deputy...And I chose the voluntary sector and that's where I've stayed. So, for the last 25 years I've been in the voluntary sector (FIIR)

I was working on a voluntary basis with our local Friends of the Earth group – and, basically, they offered me a job... But, I mean, going back before that, since my early teens I've been involved in community work locally... And then... I went to work in London for a national organisation... [and] I became very aware of the NGO sector in the country, big national organisations... So growth, steady growth in knowledge and understanding of both the organisation and structure of community development organisations at a national level but also at an international level (FINS)

Having given a flavour of some of the research participants' backgrounds, it may also be useful at this time to look at their involvement and an outline of the research process is shown below, in Figure 1.3, page 24.

In summary, all core participants took part in first face-to-face interviews, with the majority followed up in second face-to-face interviews and constructs tasks. Two CEOs agreed to intense shadowing over a limited period. In addition, key individuals were approached to contribute via an e-mail questionnaire specifically around strategic decision-making and managerial tools and techniques; and a further three key individuals took part in semi-structured interviews around partnership working. In addition, shadowing CEOs in the process of their everyday activities allowed contact with a number of individuals associated with their practice (for example,

colleagues, trustees and staff). Chapter 3 will outline in more detail the methods and approaches used to gather information.

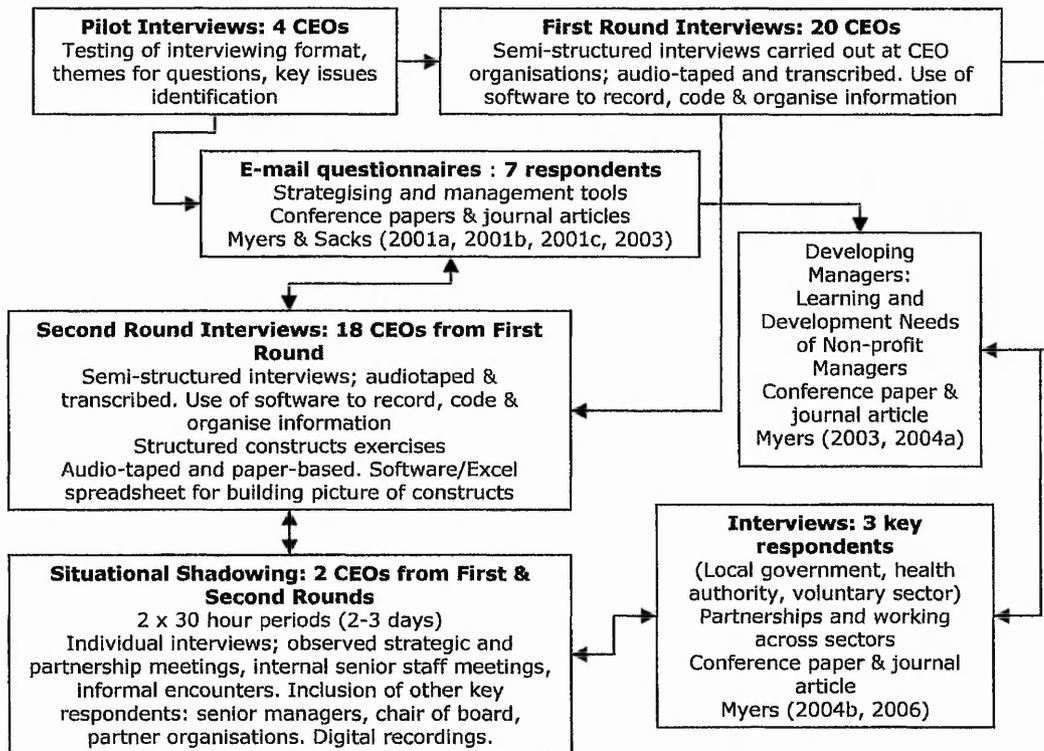


Figure 1.3 Research Processes, Outline of Participants' involvement & research methods
Source: author

Reflecting and moving on

In order to explore through the respondents' process of sensemaking how they explain their managerial and leadership behaviours, learn and enhance their practice, it is necessary to consider the life, identity and "real world practice" (Weick, 1995:9) of LDA CEOs. As such, the thesis describes and explains the social and political contexts in which CEOs act; how they create, sustain and account for a positive self-image and self-efficacy, which is linked with identity and leadership construction. From this, how they produce plausible concepts that contribute to maintaining congruence between their values, identity and actions and from which they learn and develop, are also considered.

LDA CEOs' sense of self and identity is examined in terms of sense of place, which is historically and politically situated and individually defined in terms of values, personal commitments and ambitions. Some of the

research participants have sought work in the sector to find congruence between their individual values and beliefs (commitment to social justice) and a place where they can enact these to the best of their ability and to have greatest impact (creating systemic change through making a difference). Others, having come via more circuitous routes, discover their personal and professional potential in the sector and a new "home". All find it difficult to leave. Positive self-image and sense of ability to influence change, is set against a backdrop of a sector, which is seen as peripheral to mainstream activities. A perceived image of marginalisation has potential weaknesses and strengths. Three examples drawn from participants' experience help to illustrate this:

A weakness is that both organisations and associated individuals appear to be ignored or at best tolerated in relationships with other (non-voluntary sector) organisations, giving a low level of influence in these situations. A strength arising from this is that it may provide an independent platform for critique and in some instances help to build credibility and influence.

A further weakness is the temptation to "go it alone". To be responsive and accountable to immediate stakeholders (members, trustees and possibly – but not always - service users) without accountability to and involvement of wider interests (funders, government, the public). Strength is the ability to see the possibility for wider strategic activity and influence through active involvement with and participation of key stakeholders and to seek out these relationships and active alliances.

Linked to this is the third example. A possible weakness is an (un)identified danger of individuals and organisations being subsumed by a wider public agenda that skews away from individual and organisational aims and objectives (Myers, 1996). This is seen to decrease independent strategic influence and bargaining power. Strength comes from clarity and commitment to individual and organisational purposes together with an ability to look for confluent aims and intentions in multi-stakeholder environments. This may provide opportunities for cross-sector learning.

These potential strengths and weaknesses have been commented on, by research participants and in previous research undertaken by the author (Myers, 2006). Whereas previous research looked at some of the

weaknesses and challenges for non-profits, the current research explores the challenges and strengths. The ability to move from a position of weakness to strength and the ability to maintain positive peripheral participation while being central to inter-organisational actions and the learning and practice that is encompassed by this dynamic is thus examined.

In order that the research is robust and the tools used are appropriate, consideration needs to be given to methodological challenges and theoretical frameworks associated with this particular task, to which attention is now directed. Chapter 2 outlines methodological considerations.

that in pragmatism "an idea is like a tool...and the value of an idea derives from its practical consequences". The open-endedness of such descriptions means that pragmatism is a broad umbrella and, as such incorporates diverse perspectives. For example, Putnam (Helfrich 2002, radio discussion) suggests a distinction between pragmatists or classical pragmatists and neo-pragmatists. Putnam ("not a pragmatist" – Helfrich, 2002 "Odyssey" radio discussion,) places Rorty in the latter camp as its main protagonist and a key thinker in putting pragmatism "back on the map" and in the former, he identifies Peirce ("a conservative"), James ("a liberal anti-imperialist") and Dewey ("even more radical than James"). While Dewey is probably most associated with his writings on knowledge, education and experience, which are of relevance here, it is his work and thinking on participation, democracy and social action, which also helps to provide a framework for understanding the lived worlds and language of LDA CEOs.

The breadth of definitions of pragmatism has allowed for a continued and simple relationship between pragmatism and practicality and, as such, pragmatism has been linked with both an abandonment of theory and with expediency (Hildebrand, 1999; Sundin and Johannesson, 2005). However, the usefulness in these definitions (and my understanding of the ideas and thinking that underpin them) is that they describe our worlds not as fixed unitary notions, but as a something with which we interact and make meanings both individually and in interaction with others. Furthermore, these meanings are experimental, negotiated and constructed and therefore they can be changed, developed, improved upon or abandoned. This suggests, as Lave and Wenger (1999: 50) point out, that there is "interdependency of activity, meaning, cognition, learning and knowing". This is significant for the purposes of the research and the approach taken: it centralises LDA CEO knowledge as "constructed through social practice" (Boland cited by McAuley, 2004:194), which gives an opportunistic starting point to the research enquiry. As such, the research combines existing theory with observations of practice to examine, confirm, refine or create new connections between theory and practice in relation to LDA CEOs and the context of their lives and work.

Linking theory and practice also needs to take account of feelings and emotions of the actors/agents as this will also have consequences for sensemaking, that is how meanings arise and their inter-relationship with

behaviour. This is demonstrated below where respondents identify pivotal moments that changed their 'world views':

And er - I have a great sense of justice and social justice - what's fair and what's unfair, you know...And I can just remember this one occasion where we got talking to this bloke about his life and what had led him into prison, and he was trying to tap me for a few bob, you know. But er - and that had a kind of profound effect on me, you know; and it made me think well, I want - when I grow up - I want to do something about that (FICY)

I'd read...the stuff that was around in the early seventies and just thought I've got to do something about this, you know. I can't - I've got to make some impact on the planet, and this is some opportunity for doing it. And - er - that's all there was to it really, I was just motivated by a desire to change the world. And I'd still like to think that's there...I mean there have been occasions over the years where people from both Labour and Liberal parties said, 'why don't' - you know - 'why don't you join the 'real' world and come over to us?' It just never appealed to me. (FINS)

By embedding LDA CEOs' beliefs and localised actions into a broader "world view" of social change and social justice also helps to counter one of the criticisms laid at early pragmatists' feet (notably Dewey - see Rytina and Loomis, 1970) in failing to deal with power. Where public action is linked to private conviction, this brings in to focus not only the emotional and felt experiences relating to self and identity, but also the politicised nature of interactions. For example, immersing one's self in the issues of the day and using this understanding to raise questions around difference, diversity and exclusion can be perceived as a highly politicised process; one that recognises power as a socialised concept. Indeed, contrary to Rytina and Loomis's critique of Dewey, Dewey's experience as a social activist - for example, marching for women's suffrage (Anderson and Major, 2001: 104) places his theory and practice within a political realm. Furthermore, Shalin (1992: 265) points to both Dewey and Mead as recognising the possibilities for using power to marginalise some individuals in favour of others in democratic societies, and cites Dewey in relation to the problems associated with representational democracy:

No government by experts in which the masses do not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an oligarchy managed in the interests of the few (Dewey, 1927/1954 cited in Shalin, 1992: 265)

This resonates with current LDA CEOs' experience both in their interests in participatory democracy (viz. SHJB) and in their roles within government modernisation structures. It also recognises differentials in relations due to power, influence and position. For example, with regard to the experience of non-profit CEOs, we can see through their use of language, descriptions of a social order or reality that needs to be changed (*commitment to social justice*). It is a field of action where their sense of self and abilities as a performer can directly and indirectly influence change (*make a difference*); and, in interconnecting knowledge and power, gives life to an "informed desire that drives praxis on" (Bhaskar 1993:169):

...my motivation is about community empowerment; a belief that everybody is capable of achieving great things themselves and it's about, you know, it's a lack of opportunity, it's a lack of confidence, it's a lack of, er, pushing that prevents people from getting places (FIKL)

I think I've always thought about the voluntary sector as fairly political and about societal change (FIJB)

... the whole work on the regional agenda was about saying the sector hasn't got a voice and a face at the regional level and we really need to make that happen because we're being left behind. And trying to take that basic concept and turn it into a practical idea is the sort of thing that I like to do really (FIJGM)

I think a lot of people end up in this sector by accident rather than because they've got a burning desire to change the world. But I think there are probably more people trying to change the world in the voluntary sector than in other sectors (FIDND)

I think a lot of this is about poverty, which we don't talk about any more - social exclusion and all that crap - but I think it's still poverty. Well I think community enterprise is quite a dignified way for people to run their own things and charging people, and not be the recipients of so called handouts, yeah? (FICC)

In the final quote above there is an apparent disconnection from current discourse, "social exclusion and all that crap" to a more enduring interpretation of social reality for the speaker - "poverty". In this way, we see a reference to an embedded historical interpretation of structural, economic and social conditions. However, there may be, through re-labelling (re-interpretation or (re)discovery) an ability to seek new or different ways of addressing this problem. Bringing the "new" concept of social inclusion in to this LDA CEO's preferred discourse may help to create

a range of ameliorative and positive actions (a different state of affairs) rather than continuing to try to address widespread reduction of poverty in "old" ways and from the basis of "old" definitions. From this "new" interpretation, there can be identified solutions and ways of transforming this reality through associated concepts of "community enterprise" and other "dignified" ways, which assume power and control to an individual and remove dependence on, presumably less dignified, "handouts". Even though the speaker rejects the concept of social exclusion over poverty, the language of the new solutions is now part of the speaker's frame of reference; in this way, there is a renewed connection between discourse and practice.

This process of connecting individual preference and socialised concepts allows for a certain amount of cognitive dissonance and ambiguity, giving access to appropriation of new conceptualisations of a problem through language while retaining a sense of stability with individual aims and values. In this way, pragmatism as a "method of orientation" (Dewey, 1908) supports the here and now focus of the research in including particular and individual experience of research participants, together with interest in the language they use to describe and explain that experience in the situation and context in which they live and work.

Hull House Associates

The experiences and focus of the early pragmatists – Dewey (Field, 2001) and pragmatist feminists – Addams (Whipps, 2004) - are mirrored in present day experiences of LDA CEOs. There are particular points of contact in their activities around democracy and social change. For example, Addams was recognised as "a pioneer social worker... a feminist and as an internationalist (Addams, 1931). More contemporary voices for example, Bourdieu (1986), Giddens (1999) and particularly Putnam (2000 – Robert, not Hilary) also frame the context in which these CEOs live, work and relate with others (for example, the language of communitarianism, social capital and civil society).

There are similarities too in the context of work. For example, Addams spent most of her working life at Hull House (Luft, 2005 V7) – a settlement house modelled on Toynbee Hall in the East End of London and

her writings flowed from her own and her observed experiences of poverty, immigration, poor health as well as involvement in the women's suffrage movement. The settlement movement is a current source of social welfare provision in the UK (childcare, employment services, cultural and education activities) as well as advice and advocacy. LDAs may not provide the breadth of services in the same way as settlements, however, they do engage in advocacy and campaigning around marginalised communities and building the capacity of other organisations linked to this agenda. In this way, there is an affiliation between the social conditions brought into focus by the social activists associated with pragmatism of the early twentieth century and some of the twenty-first century concerns around social inclusion, health and education. LDA CEO involvement in partnership and in putting forward the voices from the non-profit sector also bears resemblance to social reform movements focused on civil responsibility and social action.

From the researcher's point of view, pragmatism provides a "humanist agenda" (Shalin, 1992: 258) finding its "heart" in the "insistence on the supremacy of the agent point of view" (Rorty, 1993: 443). This is consistent with my research approach in giving primary focus to the voices of the research participants and it provides a broad framework to interconnect and explore how research participants construe their lives, identities and practice.

As a useful platform to think about the socially constructed and mediated nature of thought and action, pragmatism, as an overarching philosophical framework, provides a common anchor for a social constructionist research methodology and the analytical frameworks provided by sensemaking, autopoiesis and legitimate peripheral participation. Each of these frameworks helps to develop insight into the "research problem" and are discussed below.

Social construction and reality

In trying to find a comfortable methodological 'fit' there are numerous hurdles with which to contend. Debates around, for example, passivity/active engagement and power; structure/agency; positivism/phenomenology; qualitative/quantitative; realism/relativism

and, within this latter debate, realist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. The dualism between subject and object appears an ever present tension, even when seeking to access constructed and interpreted worlds of research participants.

For example, when considering social construction of realities, there are tensions between "subjectivist attentiveness to actors' meanings and an objectivist treatment of them as phenomena that exist out there independently of analysts' identification of them" (Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 58); a reification of our perceptual processes. In this sense, our socially constructed realities once created are seen to be independent from us and can be more or less immutable. This is illustrated in the following quote:

I've been saying to some people on some of the committees about the frustrations of the systems we're working with and how difficult it is to get decisions taken, how difficult it is to get things changed, and I say, well, we created these systems, we can change them. We shouldn't allow ourselves to become slaves - so many people just become slaves to a system, rather than change them. (SIKL)

Here, the systems and processes that are created, or enacted, by a community of practitioners, can be experienced by those same practitioners as concrete and immovable. Rather than being open to re-definition, they are construed as obstacles and constraints by the very people who continue to reproduce the conditions of their experience.

There may well be constraints as to the options available to individuals actively to change the rules of the game. However, for SIKL the issues are about freeing oneself from determinist approaches to experiences and expectations and acknowledging the role of power and choice:

I've always had this thing in terms of careers about how little choice we exercise in life - what we do in life. I would say the same about marriages and partners is how little choice we exercise, you know. The number of people who have careers because that's what their parents did - because that's what they knew, they lived with it and it was obvious and they just did it and then don't change. And think, well this is it. They forget that they have some power. (SIKL)

By the act of examining language and meaning of others, we appear to be externalising and giving credit to a conceptual independence. Even where external worlds are deemed inaccessible except through the language

employed in social interaction to construct and give life to events - the output, discourse, is accessible to others and is, in this sense, real.

Furthermore, as Johnson and Duberley (2000: 65) point out, in examining Kant's undermining of subject-object dualism, "a condition of consciousness is that there must be something to be conscious about" and that cognitive and mental structures need to exist in order that we might anticipate and organise sensory experiences. Similarly, Bhaskar (1978: 31) provides a useful illustrative example:

For Kepler to see the rim of the earth drop away, while Tycho Brahe watches the sunrise, must presuppose that there is something they both see (in different ways). Similarly when modern sailors refer to what ancient mariners called a sea serpent as a school or porpoises, we must suppose that there is something which they are describing in different ways.

The example given above also raises the need to be cognizant of the words and language individuals use as the same words may mean something different in different contexts and when spoken by different speakers. In this way, we have to place text in the context of time and place to help explore meaning. As such, social constructionism gives a means of exploring a range of dialogues, discourses and social practices that may become institutionalised over time. The concept of institutionalisation also provides a tool to help conceptualise subjective and objective realities. For example, Berger and Luckmann (1996: 51) suggest:

Institutions always have a history, of which they are products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced... An institutional world, then, is experienced as an objective reality... It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death. This history itself, as the tradition of existing institutions has the character of objectivity.

We can see how this can be demonstrated in the accounts of research participants. For example, in hearing the voices and listening to the language of LDA CEOs, we might make assumptions that the collective use of terms such as 'social justice' may represent an enduring observed reality to which CEOs are responding ("diachronic reliability", Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 50). Yet, we need to consider how this 'reality' is created and mediated and how, in turn, the use of language both shapes and constructs meanings in relation to our own and others' experiences. This

brings together the similarities and differences in how CEOs currently construe their worlds and the constraints and opportunities associated with prevailing discourses ("synchronic reliability", Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 50). In addition, this supports a need within the research to consider the history and discourses surrounding the development of a voluntary sector in the UK, as these become part of the 'reality' that LDA CEOs individually and collectively interpret, and selectively use, to shape their identities and shape their practice. As part of this enquiry, the research adheres to Gergen's (1985: 266) definition of social construction as being a process that

is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live. It attempts to articulate common forms of understanding as they now exist, have existed in prior historical periods, and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed.

In this respect, while I am interested in how meaning is constructed at a local and immediate level, nevertheless, this is tied with a research focus also interested in uncovering the politics, values and knowledge claims of the individuals within the historical and contextual situations in which they find themselves. In this way, "particular and individual experiences" are included "in a pluralist discussion of multiple realities" (Whipps, 2004: 9) which, in turn, gives focus to participants' voices and also helps to situate those marginalised voices in mainstream discourse of business models of organisation and management practice.

It is with this intent in mind, that I am keen to learn more about how these particular CEOs make sense of what Bhaskar (1993: 49) would term "pre-existing material". That is, the cues CEOs take from social interactions that inform their analyses and interpretations of contexts and life events, out of which emerges new concepts; a process which Bhaskar (1993: 49) describes as "creative, as autopoietic". At this point, then, it is useful to consider in more detail the devices or operating frameworks of autopoiesis and sensemaking that contribute to the research project.

Believing is Seeing

(Weick, 1995: 133)

Sensemaking is nested in pragmatism in that if we consider some of the characteristics and usefulness of pragmatism as a frame of reference, outlined earlier, some of these are also mirrored in sensemaking. For example, it is a continuing and iterative process, which is action-oriented and focuses on the inter-relationship and dynamic between thought (interpretation) and behaviour. Often dissonance between perception and beliefs/expectations (sensing difference – unsettlement; surprise; problems) characterises episodes of sensemaking. Seeking meaning or solutions to these events (testing and experimenting) are based on situated and historical cues but choice and decision-making are also future oriented (or prospective). Furthermore, justification for decisions and choices is described in relation to consistency and plausibility in making a difference to, or helping to understand, lived experience. Even though focus for sensemaking may be on micro-level actions and behaviours, these are situated in the context of larger social worlds and in this way, sensemaking may have evolutionary, adaptive or transformative outcomes.

In this way, what individuals believe influences what they notice, shapes selective perception and helps to create personal theories. Furthermore if, as Argyris (1976: 12) suggests, "we construct the reality of our behavioural world through the same process by which we construct our theories-in-use", we also find a connecting route between perceptual worlds and behavioural worlds.

In Duffy's (1995) account of "doing" learning and teaching, she suggests that Weick's (1995) work on sensemaking

...provides a means of attending to cultural inscriptions about education, while acknowledging that when people do show up at the classroom door, they influence that cultural inscription just as surely as they are influenced by it. Such a perspective is implicitly reflexive. The distinctions between self and other, teacher and learner, culture and individual become blurred (Duffy, 1995, para 13).

The relationship between the researcher and the research participants as well as the research participants "doing" learning and managing can be viewed in a similar way. This emphasises the inter-subjective nature of

interpretation and conceptualisation, the socialised aspects of action and its consequences, and the need for reflexivity. In this way, knowledge is seen as being developed through social action and interaction (Sandberg, 2001).

Weick (1995: 17) suggests seven properties that characterise sensemaking and sensemaking activities - identity creation, retrospection, socialisation, enactment, continuous events (which are iterative and open to enquiry), selective perception (extracted cues) and plausibility. We can see aspects of these reflected in the research aims and enquiry.

The first is in relation to sensemaking as "grounded in identity construction" (Weick, 1995: 17). A focus of the study is exploration of the creation and maintenance of both individual and organisational identities, where LDA CEOs seek to maintain a coherent and plausible account of themselves and their behaviours as competent and leaderful (Raelin, 2003) individuals. Part of identity creation for Weick (1995) is how and what each of us thinks. It is, according to Weick (1995: 77), "the root act of sensemaking". We might add to this, identity creation is also what we think in relation to how and what others' think (and judge) our actions and us to be. As such, individual identity is socially constructed (Mead 1943/2004) and mediated. In this way, we perceive, frame, filter and make assessments and judgements in relation to our social experiences and in anticipation of our "audience".

The second property - retrospect - considers learning in terms of our reflection of events and discourse, which may confirm or disconfirm previously held opinions and beliefs. We can also assess actions conceived as part of those beliefs, in terms of their plausibility and practicability.

This gives sensemaking a transient quality, which confirms the need for a continuous process that can give rise to further reflection and sensemaking. Like the earlier pragmatists taking inspiration from evolutionary biology, there is an "evolutionary epistemology" intrinsic to the process of meaning making (Weick, 1995: 67).

Autopoiesis as a frame of reference

The most striking feature of an autopoietic system is that it pulls itself up by its own boots straps and becomes distinct from its environment through its own dynamics, in such a way that both things are inseparable (Maturana and Varela, 1998: 46-47)

Both early pragmatism and autopoiesis (particularly associated with Maturana and Varela, 1980) look to biological evolution and biological systems as part of their theoretical bases. For Maturana and Varela (1998: 43), the definition of autopoiesis arises from their observation of living cells. As such, they suggest that autopoietic organisations are "continually self-producing" (ibid, 1998: 43 – auto/self; poiesis/production) and that "living systems and the environment change in a congruent way" (Maturana cited by Marriotti, n.d.:3). In this sense, autopoietic systems can be described as both open and closed in relation to their environments: in producing itself and the conditions of existence that keep organisations distinct, an autopoietic organisation governs contact with its environment and determines when, how and what is exchanged with that environment.

Luhmann (2006) in adapting biological autopoiesis as a useful analytical tool for social systems, describes the evolution of systems theories from closed and open systems to a third stage – autopoiesis – "the theory of observing or self-referential systems" (ibid, 2006: 37). For Luhmann (2006) the starting point for considering a system and its environment is difference rather than unity and how this difference is sustained in interaction. This process is usefully illustrated in Seidl and Becker's (2006:17) example of Luhmann's psychic system (the human mind). This also helps to illustrate how Luhmann defines and puts into practice his interpretation of autopoietic systems:

... the psychic system can be conceptualized as an autopoietic system reproducing itself through thoughts. ... The psychic system is clearly operatively closed: no thought can enter the psychic system from outside – for example, the thought in the mind of one person cannot enter into the mind of another person – nor can any thought produced by the psychic system get out of the system and enter into the environment. ... [T]he internal thought processes are influenced by perturbations from the environment, but what thoughts are 'triggered' from outside depends on the specific thoughts already present in the psychic system.

This explanation of the inter-relationship between a stable internal system and external environments can be used to illustrate the struggle between similarity and difference for LDA CEOs operating in a public sector

environment. In trying to maintain their distinction from public sector organisations, and to keep their concept of self and organisation in terms of their aims and objectives, LDA CEOs need also to be aware of and sensitive to changes in their environments. In this way, relevant changes are incorporated into the organisation's operating system and become part of that system. The externalisation of this "strategic absorption" may be an alignment of strategic aims of two or more systems (referred to by both Maturana and Varela, 1980 and Luhmann, 2006, as structural coupling).

This also helps to reframe the challenges of resisting negative isomorphic tendencies, described by DiMaggio and Powell (cited in Taylor and Lansley, 2000), for non-profits to become more like other (public and private sector) organisations. For example, in using Putnam's (1975) concept of functional isomorphism, non-profits can align their strategic intent with that of public sector and government agenda, where there is functional correspondence (structural coupling) between those agendas, while maintaining operational differences and differentiation.

We can see aspects of distinction, perturbations in external environments and exchange in the explanations offered by FIKL in Chapter 6. In relation to understanding other people's agenda, dealing with ambiguity and constant change, FIKL describes a process of noticing the changes that stand out in a variety of things "thrown at us", processing and filtering these (for example measuring against "changing people's lives for the better") and absorbing or rejecting. In many respects this process may also link with what Schön (1987:4) refers to as the reflective practice of "naming and framing" whereby "practitioners select things for attention and organising" and mirrors some of the earlier discussion around Weick's (1995) sensemaking. Furthermore, Czarniawska (1998:5) suggests "sensemaking can be seen as "attempts to integrate a new event into a [n existing] plot, by which it becomes understandable in relation to what has happened". In this way, "by projecting on to its environment, an organisation develops a self-referential appreciation of its own identity, which permits it to act in relation to its own environment" (Ring and Van de Ven (1989) cited in Weick, 1995: 22-23). As it does so, the system/organisation continues to change but also retains integrity with its values, identity, capabilities and culture (Collier and Estaban, 1999).

There are also echoes here of earlier discussion in relation to agency, generation of language, enactment and the systemic consequences that enhance or constrain future discourse. Indeed, Maturana (cited by Murray, n.d.:3) states that:

We live in a changing present, the past is conceived through the coherences of the present. We can't change the experience but we can change the explanation. Change the explanation and your life changes

This can be demonstrated by the earlier examples: FIKL's discussion of choice and FICC's articulation of the concepts of "poverty and "social exclusion". In recalling the shift from poverty to social exclusion in the example above, there now appear different options (life choices) from which to select in responding to a new explanation of this problem.

Both Maturana and Varela (1998), in their discussion of knowledge and human understanding, and Luhmann (2006) place considerable emphasis on communication, language and languaging (living in language):

Since we exist in language, the domains of discourse that we generate become part of our domain of existence and constitute part of the environment in which we conserve identity and adaptation... (Maturana and Varela, 1998: 234)

But if we do not presuppose an objective world independent of us as observers, it seems we are accepting that everything is relative and anything is possible in the denial of all lawfulness. Thus we confront the problem of understanding how our experience – the praxis of our living – is coupled to a surrounding world, which appears filled with regularities that are at every instant the result of our biological and social histories (Maturana and Varela, 1998: 241)

In this way, autopoiesis rejects the duality between internal-external, subjective-objective via the linking or structural coupling of two or more systems and through a focus on communication: language, socially constructed texts and discourse. Again, there are themes exhibited in this statement that are congruent with earlier discussions on pragmatism, social construction and sensemaking.

It can be seen, then, that pragmatism, sensemaking and autopoiesis - in various ways - look at the relationship between a system/organism and its environment, difference and distinction, the selection of various stimuli, and evolution and development. Considering the use of autopoiesis as providing a "way of observing the world" (Luhmann, 2006: 14) and learning,

also brings into play concepts of filtering, perception, reflexivity and organising, which are also central to concepts of sensemaking (Weick, 1995).

Thoughts, words and deeds

Before looking more specifically at legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1999), it is useful to note that pragmatism, sensemaking and autopoiesis are concerned with thought, action and communication. In Luhmann's case (2006: 48) action "can be conceived as a solitary, individual operation" whereas communication has to be a socialised activity. Weick (1995: 90) maintains "sensemaking is heavily action oriented and cognitive" while elsewhere (ibid, 1995: 5) he cites Feldman's (1989) assertion that "often sensemaking "does not result in action. It may result in an understanding that action should not be taken..."". In providing an explanatory framework for the purposes of the research, the concept of action and socialised/non-socialised activity is pertinent.

Jones and Kibbee (1993: 153) remind us that words are deeds and so "*speech is also action*" (italics in original). In the act of speaking, we perform an intentional act and in the act of communication, we do so in relation to the receiver of such utterances. Important too is the concept that our narratives and story telling convey "images of actions, rather than actions themselves" (Weick, 1995: 183) and "take up some position in relation to some other pre-existing conversation or argument" (Skinner cited by Jones and Kibbee, 1993: 154). This is significant when considering the experiences of the research participants not only in their learning and communicating with others, but also in their "silent" sensemaking activities through self-talk. Rather than this being a passive activity where "sensemakers puzzle over whatever they are given" (Weick, 1995: 162), it can be presented as a retrospective on individual and organisational identity, a sequencing of events (Weick, 1995) and a problem solving and reasoned (internal) discourse. Sensemakers can therefore be perceived as both self-conscious and self-critical (Mead, 1943/2004); in the act of reflective activity we may surprise ourselves in the development and creation of new thoughts and action potential, and we take up a position in relation to a virtual other. In this sense, thought is also socialised. Action – as thought – may

be solitary, but it is also done in the company – virtual or otherwise – of others.

Even allowing for the significant inclusion of self-talk as seen above, Mead (cited by Huber, 1973:275) extolled the virtues of “extemporaneous speaking” and maintained that the best thinking was done in conversation. In citing Huber and Daft, Weick (1995) also suggests that in facing ambiguity and complexity in their practice, “managers use language to share perceptions among themselves and gradually define or create meanings through discussion, groping, trial and error and sounding out”. Both these observations are relevant to LDA CEO experience and are explored in relation to learning to manage and managing to learn (Chapters 8 and 9). This brings to the fore informal and incidental learning through action and interaction (Gourlay, 2001), the complexities of which, it has been suggested, have been excluded from traditional theories of learning and training (Brown and Duguid, 1991).

Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger (1999: 29) view situated activity and learning as “more than learning by doing or learning in situ”, and as such, they distinguish it from historical forms of apprenticeship. In doing so, they define situated activity as “an integral part of generative social practice in the lived world” (ibid, 1999: 35), which gives emphasis to

comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than “receiving” a body of knowledge about the world; on activity in and with the world; and on a view that agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other” (ibid, 1999: 33)

Learning in this context, has a specific characteristic process, which Lave and Wenger (1999) define as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). In defining LPP they stress the situated and social nature of learning and of becoming a practitioner:

[L]earners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and ... the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community (Lave and Wenger, 1999: 29)

Brown and Duguid (1991: 48) suggest that viewing learning (and innovation) from Lave and Wenger's (1999) legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) approach gives a framework for understanding how practitioners "learn to function in a community". Moreover, Weick (1995) centralises the concept of LPP to an understanding of sensemaking. As part of LDA CEOs learning is interconnected with concepts of identity, image, as well as becoming a voluntary sector manager, LPP and the concept of situated learning thus provide a useful analytical framework to consider the emergent and informal aspects of learning as they arise in practice.

Following from this, one of the questions asked in relation to situated learning is "what kinds of social engagements provide the proper contexts for learning to take place" (Hanks, in Lave and Wenger, 1999: 14). This is pertinent to this research enquiry as the social engagements, which provide opportunities for learning and innovation for LDA CEOs happen both within their organisations and, importantly, in contacts with communities of practitioners outside the boundaries of their work organisations.

LPP provides a way of examining the processes that lead to the successful integration of learners/actors into "new participation frameworks" (Lave and Wenger, 1999: 20). Given the considerations of identity and isomorphism highlighted above, the total integration of LDA CEOs into specific participation frameworks such as partnership working is questionable. However, LPP also considers individuals' capabilities "to move between modes of coparticipation" (ibid, 1999: 20) and, as such, provides a useful starting point from which to examine LDA CEO experience.

Specifically, LPP acknowledges the situated nature of communities of practice. This necessitates consideration of historical development as well as social and political processes and inter-relationships within such communities that can enhance or inhibit learning. This in turn, gives focus to the development and maintenance of dominant discourses within communities of practitioners, which - in considering the position and influence of LDA CEOs in partnership communities - helps to give attention to the place of minority arguments and influence (Weick, 1995). LPP is therefore also significant in exploring thinking around the different

"worlds" of practice and in enhancing working and learning where practitioners may not "share meaning [but] they do share experience" (Weick, 1995: 188) and where significant experience can "become the empirical basis for rules of thumb" (Robinson in Weick, 1995: 127) and theories of action.

Reflecting and moving on

A pragmatic frame of reference provides a way of looking at the world of CEOs that is inclusive of their voice and places their experience at the centre of the research enquiry. In many respects, this relegates the researcher to the position of "second-order observer" (Luhmann, 2006: 14), actively and critically considering the themes and patterns emerging from research participants' accounts to gain insight to, and understanding of, the inner meanings given to their experience and their lives as LDA CEOs. As such, the research task is to understand and explain how LDA CEOs "construct and tell the story of the processes" by which managing and learning in the sector is accomplished (McAuley, 2004: 194).

The methodology and frameworks of autopoiesis and sensemaking provide a robust basis for "getting to grips with the "taken for granted" assumptions and viewpoints of the actors" (Forster, 1994 cited by McAuley, 2004: 198). As stated above this has led to the development of themes and thematic clusters (identity, multiple identities, tensions, leadership, formal and informal learning) that relate back to the research questions and where the participants' texts and collected information help to "support the thematic interpretation" (McCauley, 2004: 195 citing Thompson *et al*, 1990). This has been achieved both by comparing individual LDA CEO responses (as individual case studies) against each other to validate emerging data and also to generalise across cases to "test" emerging themes and patterns.

The robustness of this approach has been achieved through both verbatim transcription of interviews and the subsequent coding of information. Initially in-vivo codes were assigned (that is the actual words of the participants). Through repeated revisiting and reflection at different stages of the research enquiry, further levels of coding were used to record the development of themes, relationship to theoretical concepts and the development of theoretical positions. This cataloguing and retrieval system

gives the opportunity "to retain good access to the words of the subjects, without relying upon the memory of the interviewer" (Glassner and Loughlin, 1987 cited by Silverman, 2000: 186). Furthermore it helps to "be more confident that the patterns reported actually existed throughout the data rather than in favourable examples" (Silverman, 2000: 187). As will be seen from the discussion of methods in Chapter 3, this research was also supported with the use of an instrument that offered some degree of measurability while still being congruent with a qualitative and pragmatic research framework - Kelly's construct theory linking "micro and macro social contexts" (Warren, 2004:41) and dimensions of leadership.

In this way, the research task can be seen as providing insight into the patterns and meanings and "kind of political competence" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000:144) assembled and exhibited by a particular set of managers (rather than the 'average' or 'ideal' manager). Moreover, study is geared to exploring the capacity "to decode, encode, interpret, reflect upon, appraise, contextualise, integrate and arrive at decisions respecting information" articulated by CEOs in the everyday activities of "being". (Simonds, 1989, cited in Alvesson and Deetz, 2000: 144). In reflecting this, the research questions specifically use language that suggests involvement of individuals in creating, enacting and shaping their experiences, of mediating and transforming: *experiential learning, accounts of managerial and leadership behaviours, process of "sensemaking", how personal theories emerge, rules of thumb, developing and enhancing practice.*

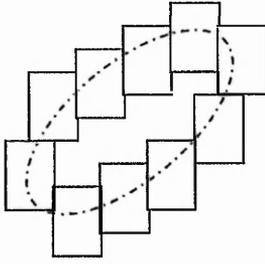
To return to the aims of the research enquiry, the broad philosophical stance of pragmatism together with a social constructionist research methodology give rise to the possibility to explore, through the respondents' process of sensemaking, how personal theories emerge and the impact this has on their behaviours and continued sensemaking. It also gives focus to CEOs' own accounts of their managerial and leadership practice. Taking on board a pragmatic stance to learning and education as being embedded in lived experience (without denying the contribution of scholastic and theoretical works), it is also possible to describe and explain the role of experiential learning for non-profit CEOs.

The claims from the research are grounded in participants' experience of practice and as such connect "how people see things and how people do things"

(Silverman, 2000: 283). This has practical implications for the connection between theory and practice. Some of these implications and critiques have been explored with research participants and in writing journal articles. They inform the research in terms of possible extended enquiries (for example in relation to developing managers and inter-organisational working). However, practical recommendations (or indeed recommendations for practice) are less evident as such in the body of and findings of the research and are presented more in connection to existing theory and theory development. In this way, "analytic schemes" (Silverman, 2000) are generated in order to provide a theoretical base for exploration of the use of, for example, management tools, approaches to development and dimensions of leadership. This raises the research from anecdotal description of LDA CEOs' experience to consider how LDA CEOs' accounts of their work is shown to "function in local contexts" (Silverman, 2000: 289) and, at the same time, the thesis provides theoretical tools to consider consistency and transferability of research findings in a broader context.

Some of the themes raised here and the contribution of the research will be returned to in more detail in Chapter 10, Full Circle. This will allow for a more comprehensive appreciation of the research and the knowledge generated by the process of qualitative enquiry.

Chapter 3, focuses on the adoption and utilisation of methods and tools in the process of the fieldwork. As mentioned above, there is congruence between the methodological stance and the methods employed. The chapter considers this in more detail along with the important issues of involving research participants in the research process and ethical considerations.



3. Embarking on Discovery

Tools and techniques

In considering the methods employed in the research, there are a number of important areas to explore, which are the focus of this chapter. These include, the congruence between research methodology, research questions and the tools and techniques used to gather and interpret information; the relationship between researcher and participants and expectations in terms of both involvement and ethical conduct; how research participants were chosen and access arrangements; and the iterative process of refining the research focus.

As previously stated my first foray into considering the research project as a whole was to focus on why non-profit chief executives were not taking up opportunities for management development education. After some initial investigation, this seemed to be the wrong question to ask. Even though such a project would have been useful, and no doubt would have produced some interesting insights, given the levels of education in the sector (Van Doorn and Hems, 1998; Wilding, 2000), the discussions in the sector around training and development (Hems *et al*, 1995; VSTNO 2003), and the proliferation of handbooks and "how tos" on management in the sector (for example, Adirondack, 1998, 2002; Adirondack and Sinclair Taylor, 2001; Dees *et al*, 2001), it was too narrow, too parochial.

Reflecting on my research at master's level and my work experience, my interest was geared more towards opportunities for informal learning. This included questions around how non-profit chief executives in local development agencies (LDAs) and infrastructure organisations (LIOs) make sense of the challenges and opportunities facing them and what they do - and less towards tools and techniques associated with "good" management. It was at this point, that the possibility of participant observation and ethnographic study within one organisation came in to view. This, as Miles and Huberman (1994: 8) suggest in discussing social anthropology, would focus interest "in the behavioural regularities in everyday situations: language use, artefacts, rituals, relationships...expressed as "patterns"

or "language" or "rules"... [which] are meant to provide the inferential keys to the culture or society under study".

In rethinking and honing the research objectives, I became more aware that this method of interaction and gaining information did not fit with the questions I wanted to ask. While it would allow me to move both within the organisation and in external network relationships, it was focused too much on the internal and operational aspects of a single chief executive's work. I would be able to gain more relevant and usable information if I could focus on more than one chief executive and look at their individual and combined accounts of sensemaking and strategising – a more ideographic research orientation bringing together a series of individual case studies (Tsoukas, 1989; Yin, 1987).

In preparation, I carried out a series of pilot interviews. These were in-depth, semi-structured interviews with four chief executives – two from infrastructure organisations and two from service providing organisations (one a provider of social housing and associated services and one from a community based palliative care service). All were aware that I was "just starting out" and as well as asking questions around some of the themes that would become part of the first round of interviews with core research participants, "my pilots" were also willing and able to comment on the scope, content and process issues of the proposed study. These interviews were invaluable in helping to refine the research objectives, and confirming where I wanted to direct the research.

It is worth repeating throughout the thesis the nature and role of local development agencies or nonprofit infrastructure organisations. The confusion around the definition, role and activities of the nonprofit sector, what it is and what it is not and the people who populate the sector is discussed more fully in the next chapter. While there may be some generalised knowledge about "charities", local development agencies and infrastructure organisations are substantially more removed from public consciousness.

Specialist infrastructure organisations provide services or development activities around particular needs, for example volunteers and volunteering (volunteer bureaux), self-help and mutual aid and financial management

and accounting. The more generalist infrastructure organisations – the focus of my study – are organisations such as councils for voluntary service, rural community councils and some settlement and social action centres. In the case of councils for voluntary service, some have been established for a hundred years or more. As nonprofit infrastructure organisations, they are charitable bodies (some of the larger ones are also charitable companies) that support the development and sustainability of other voluntary organisations. They can be found at local (i.e. district or city-wide), regional and national levels and have been likened to chamber of commerce umbrella organisations or business development agencies for the private sector. Indeed, in some parts of USA and Canada, networking and umbrella activities for non-profits have been set up as separate chapters under the auspices of private sector chambers.

With changes in public service provision (for example, health and social services), together with the increasing emphasis on regional and local development initiatives and cross sector working, non-profit infrastructure organisations have gained an increasingly central role in the UK Labour government's modernisation agenda (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996; Harris, 2000; Hodgkinson, 1999). Involvement in trying to bring in a full range of voluntary sector voices into strategic government agenda provides an organisational (and individual) context at the interface between voluntary and community sectors and public and private sectors, which is both complex and dynamic. There are particular challenges for nonprofit chief executives in "managing tensions between internal values or aims [of their organisations] and the external policy environment" (Scott et al, 2000). Given that the voluntary sector experience is mainly absent from management and organisational analysis and given the social and politicised nature of the environment in which LDA CEOs are working, this makes for a vibrant and interesting research area.

A key method to explore has been through the personal narratives and (life) stories of LDA chief executives (Atkinson, 1999; Rae and Carswell, 2000). Initially this was through a first round of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This was followed by a second round of interviews with some direct activity around constructs of leadership characteristics and finally short intensive shadowing of selected chief executives to link talk (through interviews) with action (through observation and questioning) and to

increase the likelihood of capturing "knowledge in action" (Sandberg, 2001: 168). Access to and involvement of research participants was developed on an incremental basis (Saunders *et al*, 2000) whereby at the end of the first round of interviews, I negotiated and gained agreement for follow-up. Similarly, at the end of the second round of interviews I negotiated and sought agreement for shadowing arrangements. Access and involvement will be looked again in more depth shortly.

How big does a big enough sample need to be?

Having decided to focus on chief executives in LDAs, I needed a number of willing participants. The key questions were from where and how many? The first question proved relatively straightforward. I could use both my own voluntary sector networks and access to national and local agencies' websites and directories of local development agencies. Additionally, as Cope and Watts (2000: 111) describe from their own experience:

Any attempt to try to construct a "representative" sample ... was deemed an impossible exercise; instead, cases were chosen based on the opportunity to learn the most.

A similar approach was taken in respect to identifying CEOs. LDAs differ widely: from micro-organisations to those employing close to a hundred paid workers as well as numerous volunteers. All LDAs carry out some basic core functions related to their aims of supporting voluntary and community action. Purposive sampling (Saunders *et al*, 2000) was therefore required in order to seek out those that were involved not only in supporting their membership organisations, but also in the wider context of partnerships and local, regional and/or national developments. The organisations chosen were all full members of a national network, had more than five staff (full time equivalent) at the time of the research and were within a one-hundred and fifty miles radius of my then hometown for ease of access.

Knowing how many CEOs to include in the research sample was more difficult. Looking at various case study methods and sample sizes, these ranged from intensive one case projects (generally organisation based), cases involving twelve research participants, to interviews with forty-plus individuals; often the latter involved more than one interviewer. As a sole researcher, I was concerned not to be totally overwhelmed with

information collected in the field, but also to have enough empirical material to give validity to the level of research being undertaken and to give confidence in any analytic generalisations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Here, concern is given to the ability to generalise from one case (individual) to another (individual) on conceptual grounds where using a sample of individual persons "gives us confidence that our emerging theory is generic" as it holds from one situation to another (ibid, 1994: 29). However, in order to provide that confidence "how many cases, in what kind of sampling frame" needed to be considered (ibid, 1994: 30).

In helping to answer the question at what point a survey is a more appropriate method to undertake than multiple case studies, and by implication an indication for confidence in findings, Miles and Huberman (1994: 30) suggest, "a study of more than 15 cases or so can become unwieldy". That being the case, from a shortlist of 35, I decided to set a limit of 20 chief executives. Even allowing for a relatively high drop-out rate of 25% over a twelve-month to two-year period this would maintain a minimum of 15 research participants.

Gaining Access

As much of my work experience has been in the non-profit sector both in the UK and abroad, as a trustee, paid worker/manager and trainer/consultant, this "on-the-ground" experience and knowledge helped in gaining access to organisations and individuals. In fact, I did have to call on my "trustee card" on one occasion where one chief executive was extremely well protected from unsolicited enquiries by a vigilant secretarial staff. Once past this first line guard, I met an enthusiastic response. In part, I think this was due to my experience and knowledge of the sector and of being known or known of, which offered a credibility and, in some instances, an assumption of informed interest. In this way, CEOs felt that the requested interviews would be less about "telling about" and more about engaged discussion. This was particularly useful in gaining the involvement of some of the participants who verbalised a resistance to or scepticism of "academic research":

The number of people who want me to take part in research is just, you know, sort of one a week really. So you're honoured. (FIND)

I've always had a quiet contempt for academics...I do [have contact with academics], quite a lot really given that I'm so rude about them! (FICY)

I think evidence is very flawed. Most social research is based on some very dubious methodologies – I know you're doing it – er, this is anecdotal isn't it?...I'm very suspicious of statistics...I think social statistics [are] very flawed...I think anecdotes are quite good really. I think people telling their stories, is quite good really (FICC)

That all participants showed interest in and commented on the usefulness of providing a platform for non-profit chief executives' experiences gave affirmation to a practical and ethical question around the value of the research. This was further reflected in chief executives' commitment to, and involvement in, various parts of the research over the period of the fieldwork.

I made first contact with CEOs by a combination of e-mails and letters followed up by telephone calls. The first twenty CEOs contacted agreed to be part of the research and appointments were made to visit them at their place or work during the late summer and autumn of 2001. Confirmation letters and emails were then sent which included a more detailed outline of the research (See Appendix G).

I outlined in my initial contact that I planned to follow up the first in-depth interview with a second interview some twelve months later, however I did not ask for this to be confirmed at that point. Rather, as suggested earlier, access was negotiated on an incremental basis. At the end of the first interview, I outlined again, what would happen with the information they had given and asked for a follow-up visit. All twenty CEOs agreed that I could contact them again to seek a second interview.

I kept intermittent contact in between face-to-face contacts: I sent thank you cards, Christmas or New Year's cards as well as updates and copies of any published materials to those who had expressed an interest in receiving such. Copies of individual transcripts of interviews were also mailed to each person as part of the "contract" between researcher and participant.

Roles and Expectations

My experience of working with marginalised groups and patients together with membership of a research network on self-help and patients groups, had given me some experience of action research methodology. Research undertaken by one of the research network members Bradburn *et al* (1995) and Bradburn (2001) has specifically involved cancer patients in setting up and devising research projects, in feedback processes throughout her research and in the evaluation stages of work looking at cancer services and relationships with professionals. Another network member co-edited a volume on action research in health and social care (Winter and Munn-Giddings, 2001).

While I have not involved research participants in all aspects of the research study, I have tried where appropriate to maintain some of the principles and ethical stances that action research incorporates. For example, Munn-Giddings (2001: 155) suggests that most action researchers support "the creation of a different knowledge base formed by predominantly hitherto excluded groups" – in this instance, by giving space and attention to the personal theories and professional practices of non-profit executives, this develops an under-utilised knowledge base in mainstream management and learning discourse.

In describing participatory action research as an extension of our everyday research and problem solving activities, Wadsworth (1998) links questions, actions and reflective practice, which can lead to new actions and new reflections in both an iterative and generative process. She contrasts this with a more conventional research process, which

...sees itself as proceeding from point A to point B along a straight line - commencing with a hypothesis and proceeding to a conclusion which may then be published in a journal" (ibid, 1998: 5)

This cyclical or spiral research process is reflected in my own approach where interactions with research participants led to further analysis and subsequent actions based on new or developed analysis. For example, although a preliminary contact outline with research participants had been worked out in advance, the content of the second planned contact with CEOs was revised following review and analysis from first interviews.

Feeding back reflections into subsequent interviews also helped to provide an opportunity for joint deliberation and participants' critique and theorising. For example:

JM: One of the things I'm interested in - what's coming out of talking to people like you in local development agencies - most of their learning, if you like, or their focus is actually outside of their organisation, in partnership working... And one of the things I've been thinking about is, well, there's a lot of information, learning and knowledge generated in those partnerships and what happens to it because very often it's based on individuals like yourself -

SIKLB: Yes!

JM: - who are there and then they're not there... So what happens to it?

SIKLB: Well, there's no structure in the voluntary sector for passing that on is there? Yeah, I mean, there are key people like {...} without whom the voluntary sector wouldn't have 50% of its effectiveness because they know their patch and they know who's not worth wasting your time on. Very simple but you need to learn. There is no formal way that it gets transmitted... It's a problem of resources - I could sit on any number of committees so it's looking at ones where I can contribute ... it does take a level of experience to begin to judge, too, what's worth doing and what really you ought to be saying no thank you to. And, actually, it's where you go from a sort of science to an art isn't it? A science is based on given principles that you can learn, when you start to apply that it becomes an art because you're bringing something personal, your experience and what have you. A science you can teach, an art you can only teach by example - I think. Doing [something] with someone, whereas you can explain the science bits... If you look at those districts or towns where you have continuity, [it] might be in the executive groups ... It's continuity at the level of the officers which I think generally underpins the work.

Reflecting on this last quotation, we can see an implied distinction between an objective scientific approach to management - which might suggest the search for tools and techniques, rules and procedures - and the social exchange, interaction and personal experience aspects of managing and knowing, which are seen as an art form. In the context of learning and continuity of knowledge creation and dissemination, we can see the emergent story or theorising of how knowledge is preserved and built upon in one organisation or cultural setting and not in another. It is this kind of illumination, which can help the researcher to look again at described events and actions in the light of the analysis or interpretation offered.

Exploring ideas "in public" – for example, sending drafts of proposals for conference papers (and then subsequent papers and journal articles) to research participants, taking account of responses from conference presentations and framing ideas for publication also shaped or re-shaped subsequent enquiry or confirmed observations, for example:

It's great for chief officers to get together, sharing ideas, but also getting something back for themselves, which is an issue about chief officers...who supports them – the point you made in your paper really. So we've shifted our training programme ... (FILSL)

As part of spending time with chief executives, I was also asked to explain my research and activities to various individuals, bodies and network groups. This was useful in clarifying research aims and objectives and providing a basic accountability to stakeholders and others through explaining, answering questions and taking on board comments and observations. From these interactions, I discussed with some chief executives the possibility of feeding back research outcomes to wider voluntary sector networks in which they were involved. I had wanted to formalise focus groups or a "critical reference group" (Wadsworth, 1998: 7) to present or submit ideas and findings as part of the analysis and concluding phases of the research (something that was not included in the original research proposal), but moving away from living and working in the UK has prevented this. In line with participatory action research, however, it would also have been *more* participatory to have included this mechanism from the outset of the research.

By being clear about my personal experiences as well as why I have been interested in involving particular research participants also leads to greater understanding of the practical and ethical implications of appropriate research design and interventions. It also suggests, in line with characteristics of interpretive research "a strong sense of connection between the researcher and the subjects" (McNabb, 2002: 91). Rather than seeing participants as "subjects", I have viewed these relationships much more as an active engagement of experts in their fields and this has had an effect on how I have shaped and designed the research methods.

In this sense, I have found it important to not only include and inform participants about the process, but, as Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2001: 39) point out, to have some kind of "exchange" relationship:

There is no one-way street between the researcher and the object of study; rather, the two affect each other mutually and continually in the course of the research process.

As will be shown in the following sections, this influenced the design of the second phase of research methods. Also, the personal credibility and interesting "outsider/insider" persona, as mentioned earlier, together with the set up and structure of the subsequent first round of interviews, allowed participants to range in their exploration of questions, which created both "swift trust" (Meyerson *et al*, 1996) and "active empathy" (Von Krogh *et al*, 2000) between researcher and participants.

As mentioned earlier, although there are a number of infrastructure organisations, there is also a close network and involvement in political and community relations. Whereas in action research one might offer research participants full involvement, publicise and credit this in publications for example, in this instance the level of "visibility" of participants was an important consideration. In order that participants would feel comfortable in disclosing information and offering interpretations and assessments, one of the stipulations of the contact with each participant was that individual identities would not be revealed. All knew that I would be using verbatim quotes and examples, but I also explained that these responses would remain anonymous. While interested in personal stories, I explained that these would be used in a composite way to provide patterns and themes that might emerge from the research as a whole, rather than "reveal" individuals as specific cases. In this sense, there was an aspect of illuminative evaluation in order to, as Hart (2000: 46), describes:

...make the key behaviours and attitudes in a given context visible for contemplation... in order that those behaviours can be understood and attended to in a more appropriate way.

In addition, there would be attempts to "describe the ways in which people make the sense they do in and through ways they communicate" (ibid 2000: 47). This expectation of anonymity has been important for some

participants in, the often sensitive, information they have presented, for others this has been less of an issue:

But I don't want – I mean this is confidential obviously... (FIKLB, who then proceeded to disclose)

Can I just tell you an example and I wouldn't want this quoted... (FILSL)

I'm quite...I shoot my mouth off and I don't really mind who knows about it really! You know, I don't think I've said anything that I'm ashamed of, so... (FICY)

Even for those who were not concerned about presentation of personal information, there was surprise and delight, at the care given to include individual CEO voices in published materials while at the same time keeping those specific individuals invisible to the reader. For example, after sending a copy of a published article to one of the research participants who found that she was not able specifically to identify herself from the quotes included in the piece, she then used this example later when I requested to record a sensitive external meeting. She gave an assurance to the meeting of what she described as my skill and integrity in using information. As a result, permission for the recording was given.

In addition, participants may have been more circumspect about their language and level of detail offered if both anonymity and confidentiality had not been assured and expected. The following are offered as examples:

This was proposed by the then quite mad head of {} who was completely off her head (SILSL)

I can remember {} you know the first director, said "well I used to run a women's playgroup" or something - no, not a women's playgroup, a playgroup or something and "I've done a management course and I'd like to do this", you know. And I thought, by heck that's a huge amount of experience -! ...and the one now, who's very pleasant ... But all those {} officers, I mean one of them we turned down for a job here and that's not being nasty it's just ...well, no way. (FICC)

This expectation obviously has implications for the role of the researcher in relation to the research participant and collecting and using materials. On occasion, this has felt equivalent to a coaching and counselling role: the

role of confidante, an experience acknowledged by Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 155) who suggest that an interview –

...may well fulfil therapeutic functions. The (good) interviewer is, in many respects, similar to the non-directive therapist: she or he asks few, open questions, is patient, empathetic, client-centred, has time at his or her disposal, and promises anonymity.

It is interesting also that I use the word "disclose" above, as this also has resonance with a counselling relationship. Some information following such proclamations or caveats (around confidentiality) did give one a feeling of disclosure – that the information may well be known to other key individuals but reflecting on, and admitting to in some cases, particular feelings surrounding certain events was an intimate and exposing act on behalf of the research participant. Even where participants joked about the relationship with the researcher, there was some seriousness behind these statements. For example:

[W]ell I'm worried because {...} and there's not much more I can do about that... It's giving me poor sleep and my wife poor sleep and it rebounds on my kids and it's bad sort of stress... and I don't see how I can do anything about that...yeah, and I just work my way through it, share it with people like you! (SICY)

Often then, the "exchange" between researcher and research participants has not only been about giving people the safety and comfort of an hour or more away from the "day job" , but also the acknowledgement that often they have little scope to discuss openly some of the issues they raise within the confines of the interview. For the person quoted above there is some support from the chair of the board of trustees, for the time being:

I talk...I have a chair who's very sympathetic who I'm losing which is another source of stress. I was thinking about it at 5 in bed that perhaps I could keep a kind of supervision relationship with her. She doesn't provide supervision as a chair but she might if she wasn't the chair...and I think she would do that (SICY)

For others this key relationship between executive and board members and especially between executive and chairperson, can be limited or non-existent. In some cases it is not seen as an appropriate avenue for open and frank discussion:

...officially [I get support from] from my Chair who disappeared a year ago...on a placement somewhere. I've seen her once since and during an ordinary supervision session she would spend at least half the time talking about her own problems. So, that's kind of limited support. (FICC)

I get some peer support from somebody, my chair of the board is great but not really in a position to give me my line management support so the Board agreed for me to buy in that support and I talk about issues with her. (FIJB)

I mean the management committee were there but were not – I couldn't honestly say they were very supportive. (FIJGM).

And I think it's when you feel you can't go to anybody that you start to run into problems. As I say I think my predecessor took on too much and it made him ill (FIKLB)

Oh dear God! I have – this is one of my bugbears at the moment. I've got my – an appraisal coming up shortly and I should be telling our chair this - (FIND)

In addition, by giving chief executives time-out to discuss and reflect, the richness of the information collected gives depth and breadth to the biographical and experiential detail available for subsequent analysis. Assurance of ethical use of materials is also important in this context and for securing access again after the initial contact.

The one-to-one interviews showed that this dedicated time was something valued and a relatively rarity for many of the chief executives involved in the research – allowing respondents to rehearse ideas, reflect on trying and upsetting events and to test new thoughts and ideas:

So, it's kind of, it's quite a good, a dual - I've never realised this - it's a dual approach consulting the sector but interpreting their responses against our values (FICC)

...I never thought I'd hear the day when I said that! That I miss {} but I do! (FIJRN)

In the following example, a difficult, recent event surfaced during an interview. When the participant became very upset and broke down, it seemed obvious to offer and actually to turn off the tape recorder. Although this action allowed the participant to become more composed and able to carry on, it also meant the loss of verbatim material and, as

with the confidential disclosures mentioned earlier, I am unable to use this information in any form. However, I was privileged to have someone share this information with me and "it is clearly better to listen to such accounts about sensitive materials within such constraints than to be ignorant of them altogether" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000: 196).

Time was a critical factor in engaging CEOs. Although I outlined the commitment and the estimated times involved, I was also led by CEOs themselves in terms of how much they felt they could commit to the project. In all cases, CEOs were very generous with their time and input and I tried not to take advantage of this by prolonging any involvement longer than agreed. Similarly, if CEOs felt that they could not continue their involvement then this was accommodated. For example, when approached to arrange a second interview, one CEO felt he could not offer the time. Events were such that he felt overwhelmed with staffing and other internal issues that taking time out to contribute to the research was something he could ill afford. Although he offered to answer any e-mail queries, it was agreed that I would withdraw him from the study.

A second CEO who had taken part in both the first and second phases of the research and had agreed to be one of the three CEOs to be shadowed had some particularly bad family news at the time we were scheduled to meet. It would affect his life considerably over the coming months and although he was willing to continue if I could work flexibly around him, I took the decision, with him, not to involve him in this part of the research. It was, I felt, appropriate behaviour (as with turning off the tape recorder during an interview) not to put any additional stress on an individual as a result of taking part in a non-compulsory research exercise; an act which Saunders *et al* (2000: 130) would describe as "ethics" in "the context of research".

Another aspect of appropriate behaviour in the context of research is familiarity with materials. This not only shows an interest in what individuals have to say and therefore encourages further input from participants and trust in the researcher, but it also means time is well used by not repeating inquiries from one set of interviews to another. In this way, time can be spent in developing and searching new aspects of

previously told stories. Take for example, this extract from a second phase interview:

JM: You were very interested in ADHD?

SICY: Was I?...One of the things I've done today is have some very harsh words with the chap who set me off on that track...

{

JM: You had just appointed a new worker...We were talking about this in relation to gut feelings about people. You said she didn't have the background knowledge but you felt she would be a skilled member of the team?

SICY: That's exactly what's happened she's a very good team member...and I really do view her as a manager and I let her get on with it...a very good team player

{

JM: You'd recently been on a leadership course – is your plastic bag still in your office at home in the same place?

SICY: Yes! Yes, it is actually, yes! How the hell did you know that? It is still there – I have used it – but it is still there.

There are further examples, from both this interview and others, but this serves to show a basic familiarity with collected information, arrived at through multiple engagements with the materials in their various formats: tapes, digital recordings, hard copy transcripts and computer based transcripts and reports.

First Phase: in conversation with CEOs

As described earlier, the first set of interviews was semi-structured and lasted on average ninety minutes each. A number of questions and themes related to the overall research aims was devised to shape the first contact:

- personal biography: *linked to sensemaking processes; leadership and managerial behaviours; image and identity; involvement in sector*
- critical events: *linked to sensemaking; rules of thumb; personal constructs and theories*
- view of self and sector(s): *linked to identity; image; personal theories; "world view"; "sector view"*
- view of role and status of sector and self in relation to colleagues from other sectors: *linked to leadership and managerial behaviours; identity; learning*

- informal and formal learning opportunities and take-up: *linked to development and enhancement of practice*

As suggested earlier, the focus of the research is exploratory and explanatory. It seeks to describe, contextualise and understand and considers the individual in social contexts. Attempting this involves what Alvesson (2002: 73 and 88) refers to as discursive pragmatism: putting emphasis on listening and speculating (through interviews with core participants and significant others), interacting (through interviews and identifying personal constructs) and observing (during interviews and through focused shadowing opportunities).

Rather than a question-and-answer session, the questions, probes, reflections, critical events and clarification points arise from the conversation itself. This reflects a phenomenological approach, which Thompson et al, cited by Cope and Watts (2000: 111) describe as one of the most "powerful means for obtaining an in-depth understanding of another person's experiences". In doing so, it is important to ensure "that the discussion was driven by what the respondent felt was important, in order to stay as close as possible to their lived experiences" (ibid, 2000: 111). As such, the interviews could be flexible, but were bounded by broad themes as outlined above.

Second Phase: concepts and constructs

By the time of the second interviews, two people had changed jobs twice and had moved to live and work in different geographical locations and a further four had moved jobs and location once. This led to some logistical issues and impact on interviewing schedules. In all, eighteen interviews were completed in this second phase. As highlighted above one person withdrew because of work overload. A second CEO, who had moved jobs and locations, had been hard to track down. Added to which, there were further logistical difficulties (for example, holidays, business trips abroad) so further plans for inclusion were discontinued.

On reviewing the initial interviews, a number of themes had started to emerge, particularly around identity and characteristics of CEOs in this type of employment. Having listened to the tape recordings, read and re-

read the transcriptions, I started to use QSR N5 - computer software - to interact with the written words. While quite a sophisticated software programme allowing for detailed discourse analysis and even theory building, my use has been to store and retrieve materials, search texts and as "conceptual bins" for emerging themes and patterns. This has meant using the coding functions of the programme initially in a free node aspect - "in vivo" coding using the participants' own words to start to identify trends and patterns, which were then used as part of the second round of interviews. Following this, the coding has been refined and has become more focused as the research has progressed and with greater familiarisation with the texts. Primary nodes have been used to record significant and recurring or significant and stand-alone themes with texts. These can then be considered as specific themes or linked with other emerging concepts. An example summary of coded themes assigned to a partial transcription is shown in Appendix H.

As mentioned, the in vivo coding, that is the actual words and phrases used by research participants, was used as part of the second phase to build and incorporate a research instrument modified from Kelly's (1955) repertory grid technique. Kelly (1995: 99 and 135) discusses gaining access to personal constructs through several different lines of enquiry including a focus on career and/or life-role success, descriptions of self and others and analysis of vocational experience. The latter is interesting in reviewing the context of non-profit chief executives as, even where individuals identify their entry in to the sector as accidental, it is often linked to a prior sense of vocation (through volunteer work, through radical church activities, through a significant life event). Often this is talked about in terms of wanting to or needing to make a difference, to contribute, to redress disenchantment or enact changes:

In actual fact the work that I was doing was an outreach of my faith. Erm, you know that was, that was going to be my mission if you like; my vocation - erm - and that there wasn't a separation between the two (FIPG)

I was always aware that I wanted to do something else and it was mainly sort of through the church and the church youth club then I suppose, er - and it - the sort of journey started there (FIMB)

Er - I mean I - for me this is sort of living out my political ambition since I was sixteen. I've always known since I was sixteen that I'd end

up doing something like this, you know, it's like a vocation I suppose you'd call it (FICY)

This brings organisational and work life much more into the personal realm of commitment, values and approach to life, per se. Kelly suggests that this provides not only a "system of ready-made constructs and... validators" but also helps to show how this "vocational choice exercises a selective effect upon...experience" while warning that "one should always take account of the compromise between adventure and security the vocation represents" for the individual (Kelly, 1955: 135 and 136). This interplay between the individual and their social realm links also with social construction of identities and realities, perceptions and actions and a pragmatic frame of connecting life with work. Moreover, if we consider, as Weick (1995) does, that perceptions are a joint product of both structural properties (that is the organisational or social environment and processes) and an individual's dispositions (beliefs, values, constructs and validators) then we can go some way to recognising individual agency in action. Perhaps this is what Kelly points to in considering both the freedoms and choices of adventure while being wary of the constraints and confines of security and context. Indeed, Warren (2004: 40) suggests, as mentioned previously in Chapter 2, that Kelly clearly signalled, "the individual's constructs would find a significant origin in that individual's micro and macro social contexts".

Having considered both individual and organisational contexts, it seemed useful to employ a version of Kelly's personal construct theory (PCT) or personal construct psychology (PCP) in my follow up contact with chief executives. Shortly before the second round of meetings, I e-mailed participants asking them to identify five people that had had an effect on them (both positive and negative) in terms of their leadership. In addition to a short follow-up interview lasting between 30 and 45 minutes, two main tasks were carried out and, where time permitted, a third exercise was undertaken.

The first task acted as a re-framing exercise to move participants from being 'interviewees' to having a more active role and interacting with some of the research materials. From the initial transcripts and QSR software records a number of words and phrases were given to each participant (see Appendix I) who were asked to identify those they positively and negatively associated with LDA chief executives' roles.

The second more structured task was to ask each participant to identify ten "ideal" elements that they associated with effective leadership and to give explanations, where possible, of their choices. This was followed by a similar task to identify opposing (less than ideal) elements. Having achieved this, participants were invited to rate themselves and their five identified individuals on a scale of 0 to 5 where zero was closest to the ideal pole and five closest to the opposite pole. This result of this exercise will be discussed in more detail later (Chapter 7) and a copy of a completed form is given in Appendix J.

The people chosen by participants were not necessarily disclosed to me – I asked that they ascribe an identifier (initials, first name, nickname) to labels S, A,B,C,D and E and use these letters/labels in the grid tables (with S equal to self). The only personal detail I asked about each person chosen was his or her gender. This was in relation to an associated interest and so does not form part of the analysis for these research purposes.

The third task followed more traditional Kelly-like construct identification via triad elicitation. Here, participants were asked to consider themselves and one from their group of five compared to another from their group of five – the similarities of the two compared to the difference of the one. For some these proved relatively quick and easy tasks while for others it was more difficult. Sometimes this was due, in part, to the nature of the task itself - asking for some critical reflection - and sometimes because of the individuals participants had chosen. In total, sixteen participants completed all three tasks, with fifteen constructs sheets fully rated.

Often repertory grid software is used to identify clusters and statistical referencing (for example, frequency counts). I have opted for a qualitative approach to examine and understand meaning and to provide a context for discussion and exploration, rather than measuring personal attitudes and psychological profiles. Excel spreadsheet software has been used to provide some statistical analysis and graphics to look at specific dimensions of leadership identified.

The overall result, in line with the research aims, was not to produce a list of constructs, which could be turned into specific competencies for non-

profit executives (for examples see Easterby-Smith *et al*, 1995). The aim was to uncover how LDA CEOs construct an image of leadership for the sector together with the personal criteria used, for example, in anticipating events, enacting events, (pre)judging, discriminating and decision-making that could be highlighted by their use of certain descriptors and definitions. In this way, the purpose was to become more aware of the personal beliefs and values about leadership and effective executive managers in non-profit (development agency) settings. This is similar to Hopper's (1999, para 3) research into "the meaning of effective teaching in physical education" and the questions he asks in relation to his case study of one pre-service teacher:

The purpose of the study was to interpret how pre-service teachers reflectively evolve their personal beliefs and values about teaching...how does one pre-service teacher (Ted) articulate his sense of becoming a teacher? In other words how did Ted learn, and know he had learned, how to teach? The answer provided insights into how 'thinking like a teacher' evolved for one pre-service teacher.

As the name PCP suggests, these constructs and grids are *personal* and as such will hold differences and similarities across individuals - they will also change over time and with experience as personal constructs and theories are reaffirmed (kept and developed) or disconfirmed (abandoned). Working around current concepts and constructs may also prove useful in looking at theories-in-use and theories-in-action - linking theory with practice (Argyris, 1999). Part of the task, then, was also to ask participants to expand on the meaning of particular choices of words or phrases. This, as Hopper (1999) describes, is a useful way to examine constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955) that is, the different and various meanings attributed by people to the same phenomenon. This is explored more fully in Chapter 7.

Third Phase: in the shadow of CEOs

As mentioned earlier, my intention had been to spend a significant but focused amount of time with three chief executives - "watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms "(Kirk and Miller as cited by Baumard, 1999:101). Three was significant because it allowed access to one chief executive from a long-term voluntary sector background, one from a representative/public sector

background and the third from private sector employment background. Having lost one of my participants due to family circumstances, I decided to carry on with two: one male, one female; one voluntary sector, one local government. In considering how CEOs make sense of their external relationships and priorities with regard to their own organisations, it proved useful to observe two CEOs who were not only active in partnership arrangements and strategic alliances, but had different experiences and background knowledge relating to the two key sectors in partnership working i.e. statutory and non-statutory.

Showing an interest in the meanings CEOs attribute to, for example, effective leadership in the non-profit/LDA context, and how they interpret or understand others' meanings across sectors also suggests "an interest in what meaning they ascribe to the practices they, and others, deploy... And, in terms of any serious interest...includes an attempt to figure out how they make sense of what they are doing..." (Alvesson, 2002: 71). As such, it was appropriate to spend time with CEOs as they went about their daily business in different situations; to consider context, actions and interactions, purposes and meanings as well as how the principal actors "do things". This is similar to what Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 201) describe as a situational approach or partial ethnography, although they are keen to stress the differences:

...it [situational focus] covers far less empirical ground [than ethnography]...the purpose is to explore and learn from a situation and not an entire cultural system. The knowledge gained during a shorter time of informal talk and observation is used primarily in order to identify a good situation and achieve background knowledge - it is thus not, as in ethnography, used mainly for detailed analysis and description (ibid: 2000: 201 and 204)

Spending an overall total of over 30 hours with each participant - gave ample opportunity for observation of LDA CEOs in situ. For example:

- o Breakfast meetings
- o Briefing meetings between voluntary sector representatives and regional government policy officers
- o Meetings with senior staff
- o Formal and informal chats with trustees and board members
- o Consultation meeting with national government representatives
- o Pre-meeting informal preambles

- Corridor and stairwell conversations
- Formal partnership meetings and sub-groups

Investing in a digital recording device meant that most of these situations could be recorded and then transferred directly to computer sound data files.

Supplementing the Core

Miles and Huberman (1994) provide a number of useful tips and guidelines including one, which helps to support and justify additional pieces of work to supplement existing information. One might ask, given that the methods employed and the time given over to field work has produced and is continuing to produce much varied and rich information, why do more? Miles and Huberman (1994: 34) aptly state that:

...it is also important to work at the peripheries – to talk with people who are not central to the phenomenon but are neighbours to it...There are rewards for peripheral sampling. First, you may learn a lot. Second, you will obtain contrasting and comparative information that may help you to understand the phenomenon at hand by "de-centering" you from a particular way of viewing your other cases.

There were two occasions when it seemed appropriate to work at the periphery of the core group of participants. One thing that had been of interest in my master's research was the sampling and use of traditional management tools and techniques and the importation of scanning and strategic practices into the non-profit sector. This was a continued theme within my doctoral research in terms of the image of professionalism in the sector and in learning across sectors. To supplement the information from core participants and to look particularly at strategic planning activities a short, open style e-mail questionnaire was devised and mailed to a small number of key respondents across the voluntary sector in the UK and abroad. Fifteen were distributed in total out of which seven full e-mail replies were returned.

The other area of interest was in partnership arrangements and inter-organisational learning. In this instance, it seemed appropriate to interview key respondents working specifically in partnership arrangements to supplement CEO experience. It also made sense to

confine this to a geographical area of which I was particularly familiar. As such, I carried out semi-structured hour-long interviews with key respondents from health (with a focus on learning), quasi-local government (a strategic partnership) and voluntary sector (user involvement and representation). This also helped to provide a context when shadowing CEOs in other partnership environments.

From interpretation to sensemaking

In the next chapter, I will set a contextual scene of the non-profit sector and specifically local development agencies. Before moving to that, it is worth revisiting the meaning of sensemaking in the context of the methods used.

Weick (1995) speaks of sensemaking as something more than interpretation: an activity that most of us do everyday in our daily lives. We notice things, we put things aside for a rainy day (concepts, ideas, and perceived avenues of opportunities). We consciously ignore things and we act both in noticing and in accordance with what we notice. In a qualitative research exercise involving an interpretive approach, we might expect a more rigorous and deliberate process of noticing, accounting for, and reporting of that noticing. Yet while interpretive study and sensemaking have much in common, Weick (1995) suggests that sensemaking goes deeper beneath the surface of cues and clues to consider how we might set the boundaries to what we notice and pay attention to.

Furthermore, it implies, Weick (1995) suggests, a higher level of engagement by individuals: how we might look back in the midst of this experience to alter, make more explicit and/or give coherence to the consequences of our interpretation and action. Moreover, how we think forward from this to select the things (issues, problems, activities) that we will attend to and direct future action. In addition, as is typified in my own approach to sensemaking via writing this thesis, there is a strong attention to process and, as discussed in Chapter 2, attempts to elide subjectivity and objectivity in order to "construct, filter, frame, create facticity" (Weick, 1995:14). As the term suggests, in order to make sense there must be something to sense yet at the same time we also make (i.e. construct) sense.

What is important for me in the context of the research is that sensemaking is also about an emotional and personal connection. We can see this in terms of how the CEOs in this study look at their professional and personal lives as somewhat an extension of each other; their personal values and commitments keep them doing what they are doing and the dissonance that many feel in dealing with what they see as "social injustice" is contingent to sensemaking. It appears to be more than personal theory, it is more that just their practice, it is the sense of vocation, the self, life and world in connectivity – their "being" and "acting" in the world. Indeed, Weick clearly demonstrates this when he states:

Sensemaking matters. A failure in sensemaking is consequential as well as existential. It throws in to question the nature of self and the world. (ibid, 1995: 14)

The concerns of the research that now echo with sensemaking as defined by Weick (1995) include: attention to the sense of self and (multiple) identities of CEOs in non-profit organisations and in interaction with others; the creation of meaning through CEOs' lived experience; CEOs' ability to act in/on and enact (bring forth) situations. Additionally, via critical reflexivity, there is assessment of reasonableness or plausibility of these actions in congruence with emotional commitment and investment.

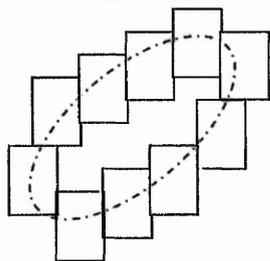
Reflecting and moving on

The research methods are consistent with keeping the research participants in full focus – through interviews to capture their words and personal theories; through observation to capture their theories in action and through critical reflection to explore the ways in which they construct and explain managing and learning in the context of their practice.

Care has been taken to respect and appreciate participants in terms of the frequency and types of contact with individuals over the life-time of the research and in the ethical use of the materials and information provided. The richness and depth of the information gathered and the enthusiastic involvement of LDA CEOs demonstrates the robustness of the methods utilised and the congruence between the broad philosophy and research

methodology in the appropriate linking of theory and action and the methods used to explain and explore CEOs' lived experience.

This will be returned to in Chapter 10. However, in line with Tietze et al's (2003:14) observation that considering "worlds of meaning and how they are constituted is likely to entail some reflection in their historical and socio-political contingencies as well as situational expediencies", I would like to turn attention to Chapter 4, where the some of the contingencies and expediencies surrounding the non-profit sector are discussed.



4. Exploring the Sector

The “lost continent”: home of “a loose and baggy monster”

(Salamon *et al*, 1999; Kendall and Knapp, 1995)

The twentieth century has been a time of immense social innovation. Paradoxically, however, one of the social innovations for which the twentieth century may deserve to be best known is still largely hidden from view, obscured by a set of concepts that deny its existence and by statistical systems that consequently fail to take it into account. That innovation is the nonprofit sector...

(Salamon and Anheier, 1996)

The terms ‘voluntary sector and ‘non-profit sector’ present a two-part conundrum. The first is that while much of the sector is made up of small organisations and community-based groups, many managed and operated by volunteers, there is a growing proportion of paid and professional workers at all levels of the sector – from locally based projects to large international service providers. The second is that although voluntary organisations do not set out to make a profit and are not driven by profit-motive, their finances do need to be well-managed if they are to survive year on year. Any ‘surplus’ (as opposed to ‘profit’) accumulated at the end of the year is often directly invested into continuing, improving or changing core work as opposed to profit sharing among staff or contributing to shareholder dividends and executive bonus schemes.

It is a common misconception that if you tell someone you *work* in the voluntary sector, then the chances are that they will first think of you as volunteering your services and expertise. This is interesting in that within the realms of, for example, the sociology of work, there are continuing debates to provide consistent approaches to understanding the nature of work, employment and the wider context of informal and unpaid labour. Yet, in traditional accounts and in everyday usage, we generally denote “work” as meaning paid employment (Grint, 1998). For example, Watson (2003: 1) defines work as

The carrying out of tasks, which enable people to make a living within the social and economic context in which they are located.

In this definition, we can see work as being economically needs driven in order for us to "make a living". This is the definition of work used for the purposes of this research. However, when one asks, "What do you do for a living?" we are usually assuming that the answer will tell us something about not only a person's paid employment, but also about the person themselves and from which we might infer some kind of status or position (wealthy, "blue collar", professional, well-educated, good prospects).

As such, work has often been taken as symbolic of personal value in that, with regard to its more positive aspects, it "provides status, economic reward, ... and a means to realise self-potential" (Grint, 1998:1). Moreover, involvement in work-based activities brings both extrinsic rewards (salary and status) and intrinsic rewards, where the "work people do becomes closely bound up with their perception of self" (Watson, 2003:2).

Furthermore, the perception of significance and value of a particular occupation (and consequently the associated individual) may shift over time and in different contexts. As such, Grint (1998:2) suggests work "is itself socially constructed and reconstructed" and that what is important in explaining the world of work is "not what that world is, but what those involved in it take it to be" (ibid, 1998:3). From this he concludes, "we should consider the past and present definitions of work as symbols of cultures and especially as mirrors of power" (ibid, 1998:7).

In this respect, it is useful to consider what is excluded from dominant discourse as much as what is included. Moreover, unlike Grint's (1998) assertion, the world in the context of a changing voluntary sector is important to individual and organisational identity and how work is defined.

Taking the conventional standard of work as paid employment, there has been much debate over recent years on the tensions between "work" and "paid employment". Some debate, for example, has been raised by feminist commentators (for example, Oakley, 1974), on the lack of inclusion in conventional definitions of women's economic contribution of the domestic sphere of non-waged labour. In a similar vein, this historic lack of inclusion of the nonprofit sector in terms of

economic contribution has also helped to sustain its position as "the 'lost continent' on the social landscape of modern society, invisible to most policymakers, business leaders, and the press, and even to many people within the sector itself". (Salamon *et al*, 1999: 5).

This is changing as non-profit research has focused on the size, scope and contribution of the sector, most notably with the production of various country profiles as part of the Comparative Nonprofit Studies Project commenced in 1990 under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore (CNP, 2000). Often included, and a necessary foundation for comparative studies, are descriptions and definitions of the sector – another contested area - and it is this to which we first turn.

So how can a paid body of people be seen to be voluntary?

All voluntary sector organisations have management committees, trustee boards or boards of directors (depending on the legal constitution of the organisation) who, in the main, do not receive any remuneration and therefore are volunteers. Similarly, many organisations may not be able to fulfil their aims and objectives without consistent and valued input from volunteers on a daily basis (Lynn, 1997; NCVO, 2000; Zemmick, 1998). Yet, even the nature of volunteering is a debated area. For example, whether the focus of volunteering is for self-development and personal gain (or even mutual support if we consider self-help groups and mutual aid organisations) or whether volunteering has, or needs to have, an altruistic focus. As Lukka and Locke (2000, para 30) suggest, citing Wolfe's (1998) argument, "altruism and egoism are not mutually exclusive" and, as it is a difficult line to tread, many individuals may not persevere with their volunteering activities if there was no element of personal gain: be that entry into the job market, making new friends or a sense of "giving something back" to their communities.

Furthermore, when we look at individuals' involvement in their local communities, those individuals may not consider the notion of volunteering or define themselves as volunteers. Indeed this was found in looking at the experience of African-Caribbean and minority ethnic communities (Leigh, 2000) and is reflected in chief executive

experience of their sector and in reflecting on their own arrival in the sector:

...most of the groups in our areas say 'no I'm not part of the voluntary sector we just run this luncheon club'. They don't conceptualise being part of the voluntary sector (FICC)

The whole idea that there was this entire sector, which was made up of people, you know, a lot of people getting paid for work, all the voluntary sector was a completely new concept to me. (FIAB)

This lack of identification with a sector makes assessment of contribution difficult, especially where community based and religious groups are becoming more involved in social welfare provision.

Even with a growing waged labour force, there is a sense of 'voluntarism' – a movement to work in a sector that reflects personal values, political and ideological motivations to work for a non-profit agency and a sense of reciprocity in "giving something back" to society and "making a difference". These intrinsic rewards might be seen as compensation for relatively low wages in some areas of work compared to similar job opportunities in other sectors. Conversely, traditionally low paid areas in for-profit organisations may be better compensated in the nonprofit sector. For example, in recent comparative studies of low pay across all three sectors, it was found that the voluntary sector "has the highest proportion of *highly qualified* workers on low pay (...less than £4.50 an hour)" (van Doorn and Hems, 1998: 12). However, overall, it occupies a middle ground between the private sector with relatively high concentrations of low pay and the public sector, which has low concentrations (Almond and Kendall, 2001).

Furthermore, the NCVO/NOP workforce Survey (NCVO Survey of Job Roles and Salaries in the Voluntary Sector 1997/98), cited by van Doorn and Hems (1998), also showed that over seventy-five percent of voluntary organisations reported that some paid staff worked hours in addition to their contracted hours on an unpaid "voluntary" basis. Additionally, a small but significant number of organisations reported that some of their staff take a lower salary than the post is graded i.e. a "salary sacrifice"... [and therefore provide] a gift of some time to the organisation" (ibid, 1998:13).

As "people in the voluntary sector are usually motivated by something other than simply money and status...[and this] explains why people are prepared to work for salaries below the market rate for their level of expertise" (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 82), this raises associated issues of and concerns about professionalism and career development opportunities in the sector. Often low pay is linked with low status, semi- or low-skilled jobs, small-scale operations and "amateurism". Take for example, the comments of a chief executive officer (CEO) in a top (and aspiring) managers meeting (Kallifatides, 2001: 53):

This is not a sports club or anything like that. It's not a voluntary organisation, we have an assignment, and we are not here just to have fun. This is serious...

However, Almond and Kendall (2001: 53) point out, "the scale argument ... as an aspect of amateurism can often work in reverse". For example, when considering non-profit provision and private enterprise in the field of residential and social care for older people, "third sector organisations can be large, multi-field organisations, while the private sector alongside which it is operating is comprised of single purpose small business" (ibid, 2001: 53). Nevertheless, this kind of judgement on the seriousness and quality of non-profit organisations, and their staff, impacts not only on personalised views of themselves as managers but also chief executives' relations with others and how they see their current and future prospects:

I've been thinking about [my] influence on others, and how I'm viewed by the public and private sector partners that I work with, and I think there is an element that however good [FIDND] is, you know, in his job, he still works in the voluntary sector. And it's still, - it's always qualified with that. [FIDND], yes, for a voluntary sector manager he's brilliant, you know. And it's like well, no! Why qualify it? (FIDND)

It's a very, very significant impediment in terms of my pay. My pay is just reaching thirty thousand pounds now, after a long struggle to get to that level. And you know, arguably strategically - in terms of strategic thought, equivalent jobs are at least assistant director level within local authority, and that's forty five thousand. So you know, for anyone looking at my application, well, it's such a huge jump, you know, so yes, I think it is a serious impediment. But then, you know, you can also say well nobody works in the voluntary sector for the money because if they did they're mad! So you know, it's for the other things (FIKL)

And I know there are people for example in local authority; they haven't got a tenth of my responsibility on huge amounts of money! And that can be a little bit frustrating, but I mean you're not in it for the money but nonetheless that would still be an issue. (FIAB)

Historically, those who "wanted to make their lives outside the hierarchies of traditional welfare state and outside the individualism of business" (6 and Leat 1997: 43) have populated voluntary organisations. They shaped, and were shaped by, areas of work, which, in the 1960s and 1970s, focussed "on styles and principles of social action" (ibid, 1997:33). These characteristics have not disappeared (and in some respects are alive and well in the minds of many LDA CEOs), but the rise of "a more professional entrepreneurial group of managers" has had an impact on what 6 and Leat (1997: 42) refer to as the "invented sector". 6 and Leat (1997) argue further that this invention was a defensive act in that it not only helped to give economic weight to an identifiable sector, but enabled "a fragile alliance between pressure group world and an ageing charity establishment" (ibid, 1997: 43) and the more 'professional' and professionally qualified incomers.

The character and culture of this "invention" has continued to change as the "respectability" of the sector has succeeded in attracting more people from other sectors – many into senior management and leadership positions (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996; Gormley, 2000). While some people still seek work in the nonprofit sector in line with career and personal aspirations, yet others see working in the sector as appropriate for their career *at that point in time* "rather than from any political vocation" (6 and Leat, 1997: 43).

This, together with the rise of increased managerialism and professionalism within the sector, is seen to have led to "real convergence with the culture and behaviour of other organisations" (ibid, 1997: 43). This is amplified by other sectors' expectations of nonprofit organisations. Rather than perhaps valuing the "cultural mosaic" offered by a vibrant voluntary sector, there is a continuing push to reform organisations in the image of 'more efficient' private sector and 'more accountable' public sector. There remains a double-edged sword in trying to incorporate "efficiency and expertise from the business world with public interest, accountability and broader planning from government"

(Etzioni, 1973: 314). On the one hand it can be seen as combining the "best of both worlds" (ibid, 1973: 314) and, on the other, can be seen to be tantamount to "capitulation" or "surrender" in order to be able to attract funds, contracts and service agreements (Hellyer 2001:ix).

There is, then, a discernable tension between whether to be similar to or different from other sector organisations. In reference to this, Lewis (2001a:32) cites Turner and Hulme's (1997) phrase of the "Janus-like quality" of language that organisations may use "which can combine the rhetoric of Freirean transformative ideology for radical supporters at one moment, and the market rhetoric of enterprise culture for government, business and donors, the next". These issues are discussed more fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

So, what's in a name?

The search for identity has included discussions about the labelling of the sector; how the voluntary sector is defined (or not) by its name. There have been numerous attempts to provide clear definitions by revising and refining "old" labels or to find a "new" label. For example, the splitting of *voluntary sector* to become *voluntary* and *community* sectors; the use of *non-profit sector* and *not-for-profit organisations*; *charities* and *charity sector*; *social sector* (Hesselbein, 1997) and *third sector* - all of which attempt to bring together the similarities between organisations inhabiting "the" sector while also giving opportunities for slight variations to the theme. What is clear, even from this short list, is that it remains "unsatisfactory, because it never says what the sector *is*, as against what it is *not*" (Marshall, 1996:45).

Even the seemingly more definite and positively phrased "third" sector raises issues of doubt. There are echoes here of 'first world/third world' - a developing sector in need of aid and support from more developed (private and public) sectors; or the primary and secondary market sectors with a residual, complementary and supplementary third sector - the Pollyanna and "Polyfilla" (Marshall, 1996: 46) for market failures and state service gaps.

The picture becomes even more complicated when we start to look closely at sub-sectors and what individual voluntary organisations do:

entering into contracts with statutory organisations; providing goods and services for fees; owning property and other assets. Or, indeed, when we begin to include organisations that may be considered as hybrid organisations or even "masquerading" as nonprofit organisations: those semi-independent agencies commonly referred to as "quangos" or "GONGOs"-- government organised NGOs (Korten, 1990 cited by Lewis, 2001a: 35) that "are creations of government and serve primarily as the instruments of government" (ibid 2001a: 35).

This is not to argue that the private sector is any less complicated. When we look at the similarities and differences between parts of the private sector: the self-employed artist; the small family business; the large corporate enterprise and the multinational conglomerate, we can see a whole range of organisational forms, structures and ways of working. Similarly, there is no suggestion that the public sector is homogeneous in its organisational forms, delineation of services, activities, cultures and associated professional languages. Nor, that the voluntary sector is any more virtuous or philanthropic in promoting social inclusion, community participation or, for that matter, any better in including people who use their services in the management, shaping and delivery of those services. Chief executives committed to and working in the sector seem equally aware and wary of sector claims to "uniqueness":

And the other thing is that, you know, we've got this holier than thou attitude in our sector, it just drives me crazy, you know? We think we're the only ones who care about social inclusion or about poverty or about homelessness and that's patent rubbish, you know? (FIDND)

I think people tend to think that the voluntary sector has a lot in common, a lot more in common with the public sector than it does with the private sector and I don't agree with that at all. I actually think that voluntary organisations are essentially small and medium sized organisations - there are some larger ones but mainly small and medium sized organisations - and their rationale for existing may be different from private sector organisations but in terms of the dynamics that operate within them as organisations, there's a lot that is similar. And my conviction about that comes very much from having worked within and been a volunteer in organisations of different shapes and sizes. (FIJB)

I don't think the voluntary sector on its own is particularly good at doing what people keep trying to get it to do. So, all this rubbish about it being close to the community, I mean, is it? I mean...? (FICC)

We often say that we're much more co-operative, that we're much more in touch with the grass roots; that we're much more flexible and innovative, you know. And I think well, you know, there are good examples of where voluntary organisations are all those things. But there are a whole lot of examples where the private sector is much better at that, and also where the public sector is much better at that (FIDND).

Indeed, in their argument about the invention of the British voluntary sector, 6 and Leat (1997:38) suggest that the postulation of the sector as equipped with "altruistic intentions" as well as being flexible, innovative responsive and spontaneous are "mostly without evidence" and that "something was lost when we decided to divide up the world by sectors defined by their organisation form. Prior to the invention, people focussed much more ... upon industries" (6 and Leat, 1997: 33). Yet any formal categorisation by industry type may well exclude smaller, more informal voluntary organisations that make up the majority of the sector.

Is it sector or size that matters?

Charities range in scope and size from the international Save the Children Fund to organisations like St Tiggywinkles, where they look after poorly hedgehogs and concussed deer

(Chief Charity Commissioner, Charity Choice, 4th Edition, 1991 cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 14)

Classification by industry does give room to explore the similarities and differences across sectors. For example, if we think about the notion of an industry base for "health", then we can conceive of a variety of services provided by a range of organisations some of which would be privately owned and managed, some would be state run and others would be part of a non-profit sector. Indeed, there are organisations operating today that would easily fit into one of these categories.

The numbers and concentration of organisations in one or more categories is affected by trends in government involvement in welfare state activity, the extent of market economies and privatisation of

health and social services. Accordingly, non-profit sectors would look quite different and have quite different stories about their historical development in different economic environments (Myers and Sacks, 2001). Furthermore and "[g]enerally speaking the size of a country's non-profit sector is proportional to the country's overall level of development" (CNP, 2000:2). In this respect, Western Europe "emerges as the region with the most highly developed voluntary and nonprofit sector. It therefore outdistances the United States, long regarded as the seedbed of nonprofit activity, when measured as a share of the total employment" (ibid, 2000: 2).

What remains significant is that despite the growing interest and attention being given to non-profit organisations in policy arenas, especially in the light of growing "dissatisfaction with the inadequacies of both the market and the state in their ability to cope with complex social, economic and environmental problems...still little is known about them worldwide" (ibid, 2000:1). While in the United States, "the operation of voluntary and nonprofit enterprises has attracted serious attention from major thinkers (Kanter, 1972; Kotter, 1975; Drucker, 1990) and begun to make an acknowledged contribution to the general theory and practice of organisation and management", in the UK at least, they have received "scant consideration" (Batsleer, 1995: 225). In this way, we might see that identification as a coherent sector is important in finding a "voice" for non-profit organisations in their relationships with government, public sector agencies and the private sector locally, nationally and internationally where the "prevailing two-sector model of "market" and "state"...has long dominated our images of modern society" [Salamon and Anheier, 1996:12)

This might be even more pertinent given the current developing discourse or recapturing of interest in social capital and where the range and levels of voluntary, community and citizen participation are key markers in building community cohesion and social inclusion inherent in civil society. In searching for new ways to work across sectors and the "process of convergence" (Deakin, 2001: 21) to provide a mixed economy of care and social services, governments are looking for a middle way – in the UK this is encapsulated by Prime Minister Blair's government as the "third way" (Giddens, 1999) or, for example in Germany, the "new middle" (Salamon *et al*, 1999: 5). While this has been processed through devolved services and structures and an

emphasis on partnership working and active alliances across sectors, it has also given further attention to the importance of fostering small, community level organisations.

The Wolfenden Committee Report in the UK, produced in 1978 (Harris and Rochester, 2001), and in the US, the Filer Commission (6 and Leat, 1997; Salamon *et al*, 1999), promoted the idea and benefits of a voluntary, nonprofit sector. This, as Harris and Rochester (2001) suggest, has provided both a new field of academic (and practitioner) research and a shared (if contested) identity and image. However, in the UK, the language of "New Labour" has been to utilise the term '*voluntary and community sector*'. The UK government, for example, has an "Active Community Unit" and the 1996 Deakin Commission, cited by Rochester and Billings (2000: 1, para 3), notes the myriad groups "which are sometimes described as making up the 'community sector'". The unity and bringing together of a vibrant and active voluntary *and* community sector is seen to be key to involving communities and increasing social participation and where "effective voluntary *and* community action is at the heart of an inclusive and tolerant society" (VSNTO, 2003: 12, my italics). Yet the language used to identify this combined sector also emphasises difference, which has taken up considerable energy and debate:

A big split has occurred in the voluntary sector development agenda between voluntary sector development and community sector development. (FIPH)

Yes, I used to think that was an artificial split, but I believe in it now. I think the community sector is quintessentially different (FICC)

I don't myself see two bits of the sector. I think it's all the voluntary sector; some are volunteers, some are paid. I don't think in terms of sector per se there isn't a divide and I don't accept that divide. I think that's manifested in different ways but I think it's a spectrum and there's a huge grey area in between, and you can often see people moving from being a volunteer and they're in community. (FIJGM)

While Rochester and Billings (2000, para 4) suggest that community sector is a "convenient" or "useful slogan for a range of interests" it means that size, too, has been seen as a distinction on which to compare and

contrast voluntary organisations and, by extension, voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations: a simple dichotomy between large and small. Perhaps also a difference for voluntary sector organisations between 'formal' (large) and 'informal' (small): those with paid employees and formal structures and those which operate on an unpaid, volunteer basis and may as a result have limited financial resources and assets.

In taking more formal voluntary organisations and size into consideration, we can see why it might be argued that a small-medium enterprise (SME) offering computer training and services may have more in common with a nonprofit computer training agency (a SMVE: A small-medium voluntary enterprise?) than with a larger provider such as IBM (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996). Similarly, large transnational nonprofits might find common ground with multi-national companies and thus the oft-vaunted differences between management in other sectors, particularly the commercial sector, are seen as less clear-cut on a day-to-day basis (Myers and Sacks, 2003).

There may be an apparent growth in similarities between sectors. However, when we consider industry and size, there may also be inherent tensions in assuming that management tools and techniques, for example, can be easily transferred from one to another. This may be particularly so if those tools and techniques and the accompanying management discourse is primarily taken from and geared towards "big (private sector) business", and this is considered more fully in Chapter 5.

As Rochester (1999:3) notes, "[s]mall organisations have a value of their own, distinct characteristics and a contribution to make in their own right; in other words they are not simply large agencies built on a smaller scale". Moreover, they are "important and distinctive organisations that require management approaches and methods that take account of the differences" (ibid, 1999: 3). This might also apply equally to small and micro private sector organisations as well as to the voluntary and community-based organisations to which Rochester is referring.

Another key element linked to size is organisational governance and board characteristics: involvement in more hands-on management, leadership, and performance may vary with the size of the organisation (Cornforth, 2002; Elsdon, 1998). Here, again, there is a significant lack in mainstream literature of issues and perceptions of governance. It is seen to be an area that is "relatively under-theorised" (Cornforth, 2003:6). Where debate is shaped by market considerations, then it "is culturally specific, economics driven and thus impoverished" (Collier and Esteban, 1999: 174). Yet, Cornforth (2003:6) points to "boundaries between the sectors [becoming] blurred" as the UK "government reforms...the public sector" and with "the growing introduction of management practices from business into the public and private sectors" – important issues when considering fostering good practice and appropriate working practices across sectors and in partnership arrangements. Where we can link governance to ethical and moral practices, then learning to manage around these issues becomes an interesting one and where the skills involved are "likely to be basic social, political, cultural and rhetorical skills" (Watson, 2001a: 222). As we can see from this outline discussion of size and definition, the nonprofit stage appears to be of somewhat complex and political nature.

Even though, as most commentators agree, nonprofit sectors are "not a single thing", and are shaped by historical, cultural, economic, political and legal elements, they do "take definable shapes where circumstances are similar" (Salamon *et al*, 1999: 24). In this respect the monster may be "loose" and "baggy" but we can still define it as a "monster".

These – "size" and sector "industry" debates – are themes that underpin thinking about management learning and development issues in the sector. They are, as we can see, significant factors in identifying the scope and identity of the non-profit sector. Yet, it may not be sector per se, or size alone that helps in asserting identity and legitimacy, but also awareness of context, environment and in assessing the issue of added-value by widening the concept of the "prevailing two-sector model" (Salamon and Anheier, 1996:12) to include the voluntary and community sector.

Valuing the voluntary and community sector.

Here, then we can trace the shift to establishing the economic place and input of the sector in relation to other sectors: its "worth". The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR), for example, gives a multitude of facts and figures on the contribution of volunteering to UK society. With over twenty-two million adults involved in formal volunteering each year and ninety million hours per week of formal voluntary work taking place, formal volunteering is "worth in the region of £40 billion per year" (figures taken from the National Survey of Volunteering, National Centre for Volunteering, 1998 cited in IVR, 1998). To "employ" one of these volunteers would cost an organisation an hourly rate of £9.13 (IVR 1998) and IVR estimate for every £1 spent on a volunteer there is a fourteen-fold return.

More concentrated research on the economic impact of the voluntary sector has been on the increase. One of the key umbrella organisations in the UK, the National Council of Voluntary Organisation's Research Team is involved in various aspects of research to raise the profile of the sector and has carried out a range of analyses of the voluntary sector economy at national, regional and local level (for example, Wilding, 2000; Wilding *et al* , 2006). To supplement this national overview, and to signify the potential and actual contribution of the sector in regional and local partnerships around social inclusion, inequalities and social and economic regeneration, a number of umbrella voluntary organisations and fora have undertaken their own surveys of voluntary sector size and contribution (for example, Dowson and Irving, 2000; Lewis, 2001b).

Many voluntary organisations, particularly service providers, are funded through contracts and service level agreements by local government departments, although latest figures show that this accounts for only thirty-eight per cent of total income (Wilding *et al*, 2006). Many also are funded through independent means for example, through income generation, and/or through charitable foundations and individual donations, and through national and European funding arrangements. This leverage to bring in funds to a locality, which would be absent without the presence and activities of voluntary

organisations in the region, is increasingly being recognised. For example in one of the local development agency (LDA) areas, around £6.7 million has been brought into the sector over a four-year period (SHJB).

As mentioned earlier, one of the largest international surveys taking place under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies is the Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project. In looking at the diversity of a wide range of "social institutions that operate outside the confines of the market or the state", Salamon *et al*, (1999: 3-4) identify several common features (shown in Table 4.1).

Organisations	They have an institutional presence and structure
Private	They are institutionally separate from the state
Non-profit distributing	They do not return profits to their managers or to a set of "owners"
Self-Governing	They are fundamentally in control of their own affairs
Voluntary	Membership in them is not legally required and they attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money.

Source: Salamon *et al* (1999: 3-4)

The Comparative Non-profit Sector Project surveyed a range of organisations undertaking different sets of activities - part of the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO) - in twenty-two countries (Salamon *et al*, 1999) and described the sector as a \$1.1 trillion industry employing around 19 million full-time equivalent workers. They suggest that a more technically precise comparison would be in terms of nonprofit contribution to "value-added" and gross domestic product (GDP):

"in economic terms ["value-added"] essentially equals the sum of wages and the imputed value of volunteer time. On this basis, the nonprofit sector...accounts for \$840 billion in value-added, which represents, on average, 3.5 percent of the gross domestic product" (ibid, 39).

To set this in context, they provide some useful comparators, for examples see Figure 4.1, below. This wide-ranging research also

Element of Comparison	Contribution/"value"
Nonprofit expenditures	Average 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product
Nonprofit employment	Nearly 5 percent of all non-agricultural employment 10 percent of all service employment 27 percent of all public sector employment
Comparing nonprofit employment to the combined employment in the largest private business	Outdistances in each country by a factor of six 19.0 million nonprofit employees vs. 3.3 million combined employees in the largest private enterprise in each of these 22 countries
Nonprofit sector as a separate national economy	Eighth largest economy in the world - ahead of Brazil, Russia, Canada, and Spain

Figure 4.1 Survey of non-profit contribution to economies in 22 countries

Source: Salamon *et al*, 1999: 6

brings to the fore the concepts of the "broad non-profit sector" (BNS) and the "broad voluntary sector" (BVS) and an organisational framework or baseline from which to start more detailed discussion and comparison (Kendall and Almond, 1999: 180). The BNS would include all social institutions or entities that would have the common characteristics outlined in Table 4.1, above. These would include, for example, schools, universities, community centres, playgroups, sports associations, professionals associations and many more.

The BVS would include all of these except religious congregations and political parties. Refining this even further, we have the Narrow Voluntary Sector (NVS), which is more identifiable as the norm in the UK. Organisations making up the NVS would be all those in the BVS with the exception of universities, schools, sports and social clubs, trade unions and business associations.

On the one hand, then, we start to have a framework for defining and describing the breadth and narrowness of the voluntary sector - perhaps one of the few to be tried and tested to measure the shape and influence of the sector. On the one hand, there is still no consensus on the discourse surrounding the sector per se. Even with

this comparative research, the sector still has difficulty in "conveying a coherent image to the public or to policy makers" (Saxon-Harrold and Kendall, 1995: 4). As Lewis (2001a: 340) points out this is "more than a semantic problem because labelling has important resource and policy implications". In this way, naming and valuing the sector continue to be important concerns for the sector.

The UK non-profit context

[T]hose voluntary organisations that plan for change and find ways to lead the debate will do more to serve their cause than those that simply bury their heads in the sand...In planning for the future it is vital to take account of trends – both national and international – affecting the environment in which voluntary organisations operate
(Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 163)

In trying to understand the development of the voluntary sector, Salamon and Anheier (1997:24) suggest a *social origins* approach in that the "nonprofit sector is deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political dynamics of different societies" where "the emergence of nonprofit institutions is rooted in the broader structure of class and social groupings in a society". Compared to European neighbours, the UK has significantly less provision of health and social services in the non-profit sector (reflecting the dominance of the welfare state: National Health Service and state provision of services and also the response of the private sector in meeting the need for community based social care provision).

Charitable organisations in Britain have a long and rich history, which at different times mirrors philanthropic ideals, civil unrest and communitarianism. Yet, traditionally charity law "emphasises Christian, sometimes paternalistic values" (Lewis, 2001a: 34). Although any "systematic empirical study of nonprofit law is still in its infancy", (Salamon and Toepler, n.d.), as with many things under a "New Labour" UK government, systems, structures, processes and ways of working are under (re)view. In the UK, a recent shift for the sector is in increased political, social and economic significance is underpinned by a Treasury Review (2002, instigated by Gordon Brown, MP) to consider the infrastructure needs of the sector. It is also echoed in other government departments and reviews in the language of modernisation and accountability (for example, consultation documents

published by the UK Department of Health, 2003; Home Office Strategy Unit 2002, Home Office Civil Renewal Unit, 2003).

NCVO's research and enquiry into the impact of social, economic and political factors on the sector is part of their Third Sector Foresight – running since 1996. The context in which they see the sector operating at the start of the twenty-first century echoes key factors of the last twenty years. These include:

...individualism and globalisation of market forces; diversity of family structures; downsizing and reform of the universal welfare state; emphasis on enterprise and self help; and flexibility in labour markets and organisations (Passey, 1999: 2).

NCVO's current chief executive, Stuart Etherington, in an interview with Harris (2000: 323), outlined medium term issues for the sector as devolution and regionalisation and in the longer-term, the future direction of local government and the pursuit of independent funding. In an earlier analysis, Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996) identified a number of challenges for the sector, which included contract/provider relationships, a shift from core to project funding and the fragmentation of government and Hodgkinson (1999) suggested a global trend of decentralisation of government and welfare provision with continued privatisation of social services.

As outlined in Chapter 1, key respondents were approached via e-mail and asked a range of questions about the key challenges they saw facing the sector. The issues identified by seven senior staff and chief executives who responded included: core funding for the sector, developing sponsorship and partnerships with the private sector, restructuring of public sector organisations, European and British legislative changes, greater accountability, identifying standards, and assessing the impact of NGOs. A Russian chief executive also identified "governmentalisation" of the sector, which might parallel what Anheier (2000: 4) refers to as the "quango-isation" of the sector by turning non-profits into quasi-public institutions. This corresponds with the UK preoccupation of maintaining independence and autonomy, as funding becomes more projects based and specifically tied to the objectives of central and local government and where the boundaries between the two can become blurred. As one chief executive explained:

... funding core activities, services and management capacity is and will continue to be a constant problem for the sector . . . diverting energy, expertise and time away from the more productive activities related to the work of the organisation. [This results in] continual loss of expertise and knowledge out of the organisation as short-term funding and employment contracts come to an end (EQAN)

This diversion brings in to focus differences around what is seen to be legitimate areas of work for non-profit organisations. Moving away from any kind of direct service provision, even to consider managing and training, could be construed as non-core activity (both by the organisational members and by external funders). This is reflected in how non-profits spend their money, with only seven percent of total expenditure in the UK being spent on management and administration, which includes training and development (Wilding *et al*, 2006).

The complexity of managing and responding to a variety of stakeholders is also exposed, particularly in relation to the myriad funding streams that managers may have to juggle:

It's meant an enormous amount of financial work: casting things in calendar years, financial years and even grant years. Like the lottery ran from November to December for some reason. It wasn't even in quarters and I have fought this year to get everything into the financial year [March to April], but the European one still runs July to June. So there's enormous investment in administrative and accountancy time, which mops up a lot of my time...So, as long as you recognise that in project funding you need to always have to put in loads of admin time to monitor that particular sort of funding, yeah? And do all the returns (FICC)

In turn, this raises a range of issues around accountability of the sector, both in terms of justifying its existence and its work and also its perceived difference and its value. This will be considered in relation to take up of management tools and techniques and in terms of professionalism in Chapter 5. However, as it has dominated some of the development and identity issues for the sector, it is useful to consider some of the broader issues here.

Managing accountability

In looking at whether UK voluntary organisations should learn from their U.S. counterparts, Harris (2001, para 6) states that "there are high

expectations on third sector organisations to delivery policy options as well as health, education, welfare and cultural services" while at the same time noting the constant pressure to be like other organisations. This, as identified earlier – is to be more business-like, to be more accountable like public-sector organisations and to be more coherent in terms of putting forward a single united voice for the sector on policy matters. This latter complaint has manifested itself in issues around consultation and participation at both local and national levels. While governmental policy makers may want and seek a single representative voice, those organisations that are regarded as providing such a resource, steadfastly maintain that the voluntary sector is diverse and that as "intermediary organisations" (FIJGM), their role is to "broker voluntary sector involvement" (FIJB) to provide a multitude of voices.

The search for coherence also impacts on the area of service provision and delivery, particularly in discussions with funders. In this instance, issues of duplication of services are raised together with the accompanying argument around mergers. As a participant and presenter at one of the national conferences for voluntary sector research commented, "in the private sector sphere this would be seen as consumer choice and vibrant private enterprise, in the voluntary sector it's duplication" (Wilding, 2003 conference presentation, JM research notes, 2003). For the general public too, there are concerns of trust and accountability. This is not only specific to the non-profit sector (witness consumer pressure in relation to SHELL Oil, the Nolan Committee recommendations on public office holders' behaviour, and supermarket responses to the growing concern around genetically modified foods), however, it is particularly relevant to the gift relationship between the general public and charitable organisations (Myers and Sacks, 2003).

Accountability has had a tendency to mean financial accountability and there is no doubt that organisations who wish to continue to attract both public funding and corporate and individual donations, need to account for their actions in a public arena and require "some sets of performance, fundraising and public accountability practices" (Echenberg, 1996). However, there are also different interpretations and judgments in how for-profit organisations manage their investments and expenditure and how non-profit organisations account for their

fiduciary activities. Take for example, the marketing campaign for the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). When the NSPCC was criticised, (Guardian Leader, 2000 cited in Myers and Sacks, 2003:294), for spending large sums of money on its Full Stop Campaign, the response from the charity was to point out that the campaign had advertising costs of £18 million and had raised £80 million, with further pledges of £100 million, a return on investment of almost four to one. In a commercial environment, this 'return' might be lauded by shareholders, but for the NSPCC and similar organisations there is an accountability to a public that holds very different beliefs about the purpose of a charity (Myers and Sacks, 2003).

The perceived push to become more professional and business-like "appears to accept uncritically the notion that non-profit organisations are fundamentally flawed institutions, inferior in most important respects to market-driven, for profit firms" (Palmer Smith, 1999: 5). Yet, as we can see from the NSPCC example, walking and talking private sector management techniques can push the organisation towards greater scrutiny in the public arena. Furthermore, it highlights the difficulties non-profit organisations may experience in juggling and balancing the complicated and divergent needs of income generation and marketing with the opinions and expectations of a wide range of stakeholders (Hill, 2000).

Assessing impact and evaluation may be complex for a number of voluntary organisations because of the long-term outcomes of their work. This is particularly so with development work, which may be values-led and "based on a general sense of 'organisational direction' rather than on clearly defined, achievable goals" (Lewis, 2001a: 163). Furthermore, as we can see from the example above, "setting goals becomes highly politicised by a range of external stakeholder pressures, leading to a frequent confusion between means and ends" (ibid, 2001a:162). This is especially so since the language of efficiency and effectiveness making its way "from the world of business via government agencies to the voluntary sector" (Rochester, 1999:5) emphasises that good non-profit management practice will, again, in most cases mean sound financial management (Anheier, 2000). This is emphasised by what Passey (1999: 3) refers to as an "emerging measurement culture, as illustrated by

the extension of league tables for the police, local authorities, social services and public services" which he states seems "to be indicative of a naming and shaming approach to public services". Moreover, this reflects and emphasises a deficit focus both on the public sector and on the nonprofit sector.

Even though public (and governmental) scrutiny is not a new thing for the voluntary sector (Kearns, 1994), increased vigilance of all sectors has been emerging. In the private sector, this has meant focus on issues such as corporate governance, social responsibility and business ethics (Kearns, 1994), all of which are familiar territory for nonprofits. Familiar territory though it may be, research, systems and processes are relatively recent developments and there continues to be gaps in information (Gerrard, 1983; Kearns, 1994). As "many major firms now are producing social impact reports and statements as part of their response to the pressures for greater accountability and transparency", (Grayson, 2000, *Accountability, transparency & stakeholder management*, para 5) also expects continued pressure and "more challenges to the *automatic legitimacy* for NGOs..." (Grayson, 2000 *Accountability, transparency & stakeholder management*, para 22). This "automatic legitimacy" – the justification that charitable work is somehow by definition good and therefore should not be held up to account is something that has been questioned:

I wouldn't say that this organisation is by any means perfect - we've got to put a lot in place to make it more effective, more responsive, [and] more accountable and I think we need to strive to do that... I mean a few years ago, there was enormous upset really that the voluntary sector was going to be tied to contract and tied to certain outputs and outcomes and I think, why not? You know we are getting money for this, if we don't do that then not only are we not being accountable but we're probably not providing the service we're supposed to be doing - you know, we are accountable to the people we work with. (FIIR)

I think one of my big priorities when I came was you know, how do we measure what we're doing? You know, one of my mantras to the staff is how do you know when you go home at the end of the day that you've had a good day? (FIKL)

In some respects, then, accountability relates to organisational performance. This may mean, as Ospina *et al* (2002: 8) contend that

"traditional definitions of accountability – focused on financial health, internal controls and regulatory compliance – do not fully capture an organisation's performance" and suggest instead, following Kearn's (1996) argument, the concept of "negotiated accountability". In this way, nonprofit managers justify and explain organisation and programme outcomes, where the context for negotiation lies in the strategic relationships and alliances with, for example on the one hand, trustee boards, key funders and government (an "upward pull"), and on the other hand for example, partner organisations, staff and volunteers, and service users ("downward pulls"). Thus, "balancing, prioritising and negotiating these upwards and downward "pulls" is a critical managerial responsibility" (Ospina *et al* 2002: 9).

Perhaps at this point, it is worth taking stock of the emerging picture and the implications for this research.

Reflecting and moving on

It appears that in order to become a 'found' continent and to give visibility to non-profit activity as profitable industry, there has been a reliance on numbers. Counting how many organisations exist, counting how many people work, volunteer and who are otherwise active contributors in voluntary organisations, measuring through different counting and accounting techniques the contribution to economic development of different countries. In order to be able to count, we also need to have some way of categorising what we count – contributions to a social welfare agenda, types of establishments and size of organisations. In this way, much time and energy has been spent in defining and classifying the sector as a whole and the range of sub-sectors as part of that whole. As a result, there is a substantial amount of information and continuing survey and research activity associated with producing and revising these indicators.

The literature that traces the development of the sector (for example, 6 and Leat, 1997), shows the changing characteristics of the people who have occupied the sector, which in some respects has also contributed to its image as supplementary and alternative. This is changing with an influx of new types of workers and there are

increased employment opportunities in the sector (albeit, according to VSNT0 (2004) seventy per cent of them are on fixed term contracts and therefore offer limited job security). Allied to this has been a resurgence and interest in the sector as a litmus test for measuring (counting again) levels of social capital and regeneration of communities.

How proficiently LDA CEOs, in their own terms, make sense of and handle these changes and the accompanying complexity and ambiguity in their "real world practice" (Weick, 1995: 9) is less well documented. Does seeing oneself as "old" voluntary sector or new, professional voluntary sector make a difference to practice and leadership in the sector? Might having to justify and account for "existence" affect self and sector identities and image? Do LDA CEOs really "punch above their weight" (FINNY) from a position on the edge of mainstream economic activity and service provision to achieve sector aims and objectives, and what does this mean in terms of individual performance, leadership and learning in the sector? Some of the answers to these questions, of what it means to be a voluntary sector manager, are significant gaps in management discourse and knowledge. Moreover, as we can see from the discussion above, neither are they necessarily a priority for non-profit discourse.

As such, the research gives focus to voices from the sector to consider the emergent and experiential nature of managing and learning in the sector. Part II looks more specifically at the tensions and challenges of management practice – professionalism, accountability, tools and techniques; individual and organisational identities and leadership in the sector. As such, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 provide access to the core empirical information from the research fieldwork.

Part II

Voices from the Sector

The little girl had the making of a poet in her who, being told to be sure of her meaning before she spoke, said: 'How can I know what I think till I see what I say?' (Wallas, 1926: 106, cited by Weick, 1995: 12)

I think with my gob (FIMD, 2001)

Let not your tongue cut your throat
(Proverb – source unknown)

Who, then, are some of the people who populate this, if not lost, then relatively unexplored, "continent" to which Salamon et al (1999, see page 72) referred? What will we find if we start to study particular individuals in the sector in more depth? What experience do they have that they feel helps them to address the situations they face in their working lives? What kinds of characteristics do they associate with being 'successful' or 'high performers' in their sector contexts and organisational settings?

If their personal identities and sense of vocation are connected with their work, how do the CEO research participants juggle their sense of who they are with the commitment to organisational and sector goals? How do they balance their own and organisational needs with a changing and pressured agenda from partner organisations? How do they keep, sustain and develop their own sense of identity and the identity of their organisations? In their messy and ambiguous worlds of managing, how do they mesh their beliefs, thoughts and actions to make sense of what it is to be a non-profit manager, to act as a non-profit leader, to learn to manage and enhance their practice and sense of self in a marginalised setting?

The following chapters set out to identify and present, through the voices of chief executives and key respondents, some of the issues, concerns and challenges for voluntary sector CEOs. However, before we start to look more in-depth at what CEOs of LDAs have to say about living, learning, leading, managing and being, there are a number of patterns and themes in the discussion so far that would be useful to review. There are 'old' issues surfacing in new contexts and what appears to be emerging is a

series of seeming contradictions; we might even describe these as dialogic tensions (Fisher, 2001), or at the very least puzzles.

Chapter 4, *Exploring the Sector*, set a context for an image of a sector (and individuals within the sector) that prides itself in difference, in its uniqueness and a resistance to uniformity, often expressed in terms of why people came into the sector or stay in the sector. There is sense of individual freedom and sense of autonomy associated with individuals' roles, which has resonance with personal ideals. Yet at the same time, there is a tension in balancing the perception of individual freedoms with pressures and constraints on organisations to deliver a particular set of outputs and/or outcomes, often derived from relations with other agencies and sectors.

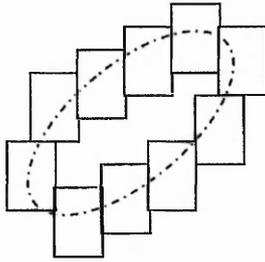
Furthermore, there are feelings and expressions of both loss and satisfaction in the progression of the sector from what "it used to be" to "what it is becoming". This appears tied to both a growing "professionalism" - often interpreted with dissatisfaction by some sector workers as growing *managerialism* - and a blurring of boundaries between the sectors in terms of identity and of fields of activity. Others take a broader view of professionalism as a positive push towards tightening and reinforcing good practice and conduct, along with general accountability improvements in all sectors.

The sector is becoming an acceptable place to work and build a career (or indeed complete a career). This change in image, along with a growth and spread of new workers "discovering" the sector, has impacts on organisational and sector identity and on "long-serving" individuals in the sector. However, this transfer from public sector and private sector to non-profit employment is evidenced more predominantly in service providing organisations than in LDAs. The former may have similar jobs and similar pay and conditions, for example in private and non-profit care homes, counselling services and childcare services. These issues will be looked at more closely in Chapter 5, *Voluntary ≠ Amateur*, which also considers the take-up of business management tools and techniques in non-profit organisations.

Throughout the chapters thus far, much of the language used to describe LDA CEO experience has included words and phrases such as juggle, balance, push, pull, and tensions - all of which mirror ambiguity, complexity and the often contradictory nature of organisational life for these CEOs. Some of the struggles in overcoming ambiguity in these circumstances lie in a sense of self - in similarity to others and by individuality and separate sense of 'place' in being different from others. While for some, this may involve a search for a stable identity, for others - such as Kondo (cited in Collinson, 2003: 534) - identities are "open, negotiable, shifting and ambiguous" giving rise to "multiple selves" - "crafted selves" - that "are shot through with contradictions and creative tensions". If we are always in the process of crafting ourselves then we must have an impression of ourselves that we want to pursue, change or promote. Further, we may want or need to provide some kind of coherence and consistency - a strategic back-fit or "retrospective sensemaking" - as we understand and reflect on our behaviours and actions overtime or anticipate our future actions and behaviour - "future perfect thinking" (Weick, 1995).

Given that LDA CEOs are regularly faced with uncertainty, it is worth considering how they craft their identities and how this relates, if at all, to their practice. These issues will be pursued in Chapter 6, *In Search of Selves*.

Some of the arguments surrounding the professional nature of the sector, images and identities as well as the competence and confidence to deal with many daily paradoxical situations in non-profit management bring in to focus the issue of leadership deficit in the sector. It is pertinent to ask how LDA CEOs construe leadership and identify leadership qualities they deem appropriate for non-profit sector organisations. Building on the second phase of fieldwork interviews, which included using an instrument developed from Kelly's (1955) personal constructs and repertory grid techniques, Chapter 7 - *Constructing Leadership* - provides a commentary and suggests a framework for considering leadership in the sector. This extends traditional concepts of leadership to include discussion of social entrepreneurship before moving on to the Part III, which looks at how managers respond to challenges of leadership and managing and how they might continue to learn and develop their practice.



5. Voluntary ≠ Amateur

In those earlier days, the equality of relationship with government was also seen to include professionalism in administration. Voluntary organizations were regarded as highly professional [shown by] Beveridge's report where he quoted approvingly from Bourdillon's *Voluntary Social Services* (1945): "Nowadays many of the most active voluntary organisations are staffed entirely by highly trained and fairly well-paid professional workers (Beveridge, 1948, p8)"
Billis and Harris (1996: 4)

The title of this chapter, in simple terms, could suggest a way out of the conundrum offered in Chapter 4, between non-paid volunteers and paid workers. For example, if we use the amateur/professional split as applied to sports, we can see that where voluntary = non-paid, then we might describe the sector and the workers as lay or amateur, whereas paid voluntary sector employees, would move from amateur to professional status. However, for many voluntary sector inhabitants the phrase "amateur" is often seen to be used in its more pejorative sense and as such has come to "be synonymous with those of limited abilities" (Irvine, 2004: 1). As a result, the "voluntary but not amateur" by-line has been an oft-repeated rejoinder for voluntary organisations to point out good working practices that exist in the sector, as well as a counter to the confusion between non-paid volunteers and paid workers. The phrase was also popularised as a title of a handbook for voluntary sector organisations and now in its seventh edition (Reason and Hayes, 2004). This chapter explores the issues of professionalism for the sector, appropriation of for-profit management tools and the vexed question of accountability.

As Billis and Harris (1996:4) point out (above) the voluntary sector in its various guises has a long history of professionalism and accounting for itself to a range of stakeholders. However, the sector still comes in to the line of fire for being "less" professional and "less" business-like than other sectors, yet what standards of professionalism and what type of business are not specified. As such, the phrase voluntary not amateur also represents a resistance to the push for standardisation of

institutionalised practices and "prevailing rationalised concepts of organisational work" (Burgoyne and Jackson, 1997: 55); a process which Hyde *et al* (2002: 71) present as a long time concern for non-profits in countering the "conservatisation of the social change effort". Indeed, Korten (1987: 152) made the observation that many non-government organisations (NGOs) asserted the existence of good practice in the sector and resisted external pressure to respond to the need for development and professionalisation, because they feared that "they would become more like the conventional bureaucracies of government that they commonly believed to be ineffective".

The concern parallels some of the discussions in the 1980s on the state of management in the UK (viz "The Handy Report", Handy, 1988), which led to renewed interest in management development, management competencies and training for private and public sectors. Indeed, in 1981, Handy chaired a committee and produced a subsequent report on improving effectiveness in voluntary organisations, which accompanied the establishment of a Management Development Unit at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (Handy/NCVO 1981).

Resistance to standardised business competencies associated with, for example, the Management Charter Initiative (MCI), was associated with an anticipated move away from people-centred development approaches to a control-orientation. Standardised competencies based on for-profit measures were seen as having potential to stifle creativity and innovation – a working environment that many workers had actively avoided by choosing to work in the non-profit sector (Korten, 1987). However, some leading proponents in the sector such as Bruce and Leat of VOLPROF (City University Business School, London) did favour a MCI initiative for the sector (cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 94). Others such as Hudson (also cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 94) promoted a more organic approach to developing voluntary sector programmes focussing on chief executives.

Following from discussion in Chapter 4 about size, contribution and identity and in line with Anheier's (2000:1) proposition, it might still be seen that "the management of non-profit organisations is often ill-understood

because we proceed from the wrong assumptions about how these organisations operate". This is tied with tendencies to look to other sectors for good practice guides and assessment criteria. Those criteria appropriate to for-profit concerns, for example bottom-line, profit margins, the strategic tools employed (or not), the ability to contribute financially to problem solving, may be inappropriate benchmarks and markers for organisational effectiveness and success in the non-profit sector.

As we can see from the opening quote to this chapter, the non-profit sector is often compared to government both in administration and in service provision. At different times and in different domains, public services and non-profits alike have been contending with favourable and less favourable comparison with private sector operations, but more recently, in the UK, there has been a new twist to these debates accelerated by the push to modernise public services. In linking the *private* and voluntary sectors together in its 1989 White Paper, *Caring for People* (cited by G and Leat, 1997: 36), the UK government hoped that the public sector might learn from this "*independent sector*" (my italics). Namely, "efficiency and dynamism" from the former and the characteristics of being a "caring and value-driven organisation" from the latter (ibid, 1997:36).

With this "newly-defined" dependent/independent sector split, there are new boundaries and relationships to be negotiated. One of the areas where this is most apparent is in strategic partnerships (to which I will return later in the chapter). Another is the area of learning across sectors. On one hand, this may imply an inclusive approach to learning and developing that values all sectors' strengths. On the other, it may also promote a synthesizing of approaches to accommodate a continuing blurring of boundaries between sectors. While the rhetoric suggests the former, this is countered by professionalism and accountability continuing to be seen through the adoption and modification of business methods and transfer of techniques into both public and non-profit sectors. As such, this chapter will consider some of the approaches taken by non-profits in negotiating the use of sector-appropriate tools.

As we can see from Chapter 4, there is a well documented perception of the increased profile of the sector, particularly government interest not just in the UK but in the US and Europe, which is further linked to governmental aims to increase social capital and improve local communities (Lewis, 2001a; Osborne, 1996). There is acknowledgement of the "natural" space occupied by an active voluntary and community sector in civil society – allowing for new approaches to (re) generating economic, political and social activities – the "middle way" (Salamon *et al*, 1999: 5). This broadening of the natural space for the sector, as both a lever and an indicator of civil society, is echoed in comments such as those by Shirley Williams, Baroness Williams of Crosby, a member of the UK Liberal Democratic Party (BBC, Radio 4 June 2003). She suggests that more people – especially younger people and women – are expressing their political awareness and ambition through social movements and non-government organisations such as environmental (non-profit) organisations and community action rather than joining political parties and voting.

This trend raises issues of democratic deficit for government officers and elected members and tensions around the inclusion of non-elected representatives at strategic levels of policy and decision-making. This is accompanied by an attention to increased participatory democracy, which provides a useful positioning space for LDAs. This echoes Fischer's (1990) comments cited in Alvesson and Wilmott (1996: 22-23) that,

social movements...are the principle agents in the contemporary struggle for participatory democracy. The emergence of these movements – ecological or "Green" movements, feminist movements, progressive trade union movements, neighbourhood control movements, consumer cooperatives and worker ownership movements, and so on – represent an uncompromising call in contemporary participation and self-management.

This is a view equally supported by one of the research participants, observed in a conversation with a government policy officer:

One of the things we want to do, and I personally want to do, is to write something about community engagement, I want to get it on the agenda for {} because I don't think {} knows what it means by 'community'. It would be good just to have that on the table and

that there is a place for participatory democracy and the voluntary sector does have a role in that because we are a place where people come together and participate in all sorts of ways and that's the voice - you know? We're not trying to usurp the role of elected politicians quite the reverse we're trying to complement it and given the crisis of democratic structures, you know, [see] how can we work together. (SHJB)

However, the tensions around this position and the ensuing relationships between government and non-government organisations, has, on the one hand, resulted in a high level of scrutiny and questioning of LDA roles and responsibility in "representing" the sector. On the other hand, it has also led to a need to include voluntary and community sector individuals, groups and organisations in order to fulfil criteria for UK government funding and development initiatives.

The role of "representation" of the sector is a vexed question between those seeking to consult (public services/government offices/quangos) and those trying to develop what they consider to be meaningful consultation and involvement methods (LDAs and other infrastructure bodies). For those wanting easy access to what seems an "amorphous" sector, LDAs provide a convenient route in. Often, consulting bodies do not want to venture into the hinterland of small, diverse groups and organisations preferring to stop at a local infrastructure outpost - it is convenient, it is easier to access and to understand, and LDAs have a network of other organisations under their umbrella. The view from the voluntary sector and the LDAs - repeated on numerous occasions, is quite clear:

There's a confusion in some of the strategic partnerships now about [representation], you know? We're about organisations and we can always get organisations in the room to discuss things. But there's a big difference between that and being part of the democratic deficit and that is the threat - that I think is a threat where people think we can get where the politicians can't. And actually, it isn't our job to do that. (FIMB)

I've never seen our role as representative. Our role is to gather intelligence from the field, through our fieldworkers, our forums and networks and to analyse and interpret it in the context of what we know is going on in the city, what we know is going on in government, what's going on in the wider world. And to use all of that knowledge to bring a perspective from the voluntary sector to

those strategic tables, which is a much more comfortable role than thinking we're somehow there as a representative. In thinking that role through more clearly that also made us realise that we have to be more systematic about gathering the intelligence and doing things with it, feeding it up and feeding it back and challenging the sector as well as challenging - it's part of our leadership role. (SHJB)

Moreover and more succinctly voiced by the same CEO later, in relation to a conversation with a government minister:

{Minister} now understands that every time I open my mouth that I'm not a representative. I bring a perspective, I'm not *the* voice of the voluntary sector, I'm *a* voice of the sector (SHJB)

However, there are times when this clarity of purpose becomes more difficult to maintain. For LDA CEOs sitting at strategic planning tables at a local, regional or national level, the requirement to be part of the overall process for representational input, short timescales and quick wins can clash with the time and resources needed for sector consultation and wider participation and involvement:

It's a real tension between accountability and effective decision making. The amount of time for feedback to be accountable is hugely time consuming and nobody is funding that time. So, you're expected to do that and expected to be an effective decision maker in these meetings and often it's one or the other you don't often get both. You get people who are hugely accountable who don't actually do anything or you get people – chief officers – who are very good at making decisions but who aren't as accountable as they should be. (SILSL)

This can lead to questioning of role and input from voluntary sector colleagues (lack of feedback and involvement in strategic processes or too close identification with others' agenda – as seen later in *A Question of Balance*) and from statutory and private sectors partners (lack of decision-making ability, procrastination):

There's still a lurching between "oh get on with it and we want some quick wins" to "we want that community engagement and we recognise it's going to take twenty years" ... At one level it's there, it's said, but on another level it's but we want it now. There's bits of schizophrenia that goes on quite a lot... Its kind of hard to reconcile ... What I think is also quite interesting, is the community and voluntary sector I think, here, does try to model good ways of working in terms of having mechanisms of going back to their sector - having some accountability, having some - not necessarily

perfect - ways of challenging, holding people to account... Oddly, also...it's interesting how the voluntary and community sector is often perceived by other partners as being a kind of slowing down mechanism (PIMN)

The flip-side to this scrutiny and questioning, that causes problems for government and voluntary sector alike, is government funding of organisations deemed to "fit" an appropriate number of targets (both for service delivery and inclusion of partners) without consideration of the capacity of the voluntary organisation to deliver. This can occasionally lead to the sector being seen as 'good' in its own right, with no need to question the quality, range and relevance of its services, actions and activities – a sector beyond scrutiny until, that is, things go wrong. Several of CEOs had struggled or were continuing to struggle with the fall-out of some of these decisions:

This [project] was proposed by the then quite mad head of the {}, who was completely off her head. She had a number of individual meetings with people and also had a formal consultation meeting and we all said – despite our differences – we all said do *not* do this. This is a complete and utter waste of money, it will not work ... Do not set up a separate organisation, do not do it. We could not have been clearer everybody across the board. {} set it up and three years later it is evaluated and proved to be a complete disaster...and they said this hasn't worked; we need to learn the lessons as to why it didn't work! ... (SILSL)

I have a bit of a split with the community reps [individually selected by governing body of a partnership arrangement]...they talk about the community and they haven't got anything behind them, it's a paper tiger - at least we've got 1500 organisations that we meet every few months and we have done since 1917, you know?! (SHJB)

One of the problems with recent years has been the plethora of initiatives and the funding that's gone in to them without any long term thought ... I bet the analysis in 5 or 10 years will actually say it was damaging because I think it could be – the things that were set up and died. And I'm absolutely - - - pissed off, with only being able to fund new and innovative projects whereas something that works and is dammed good, nobody wants to fund. You know, things like that, it's stupid. (SIKLB)

The second quote above resonates with Skocpol's (1999) analysis of experience, in the United States, of moves towards shared citizenship and democratic leverage compromised by what was seen as "a gaggle of professionally dominated advocacy groups and non-profit institutions rarely

attached to memberships worthy of the name" (cited in Hyde *et al*, 2002: 58). In the UK, the system is seen as being compromised as new partnerships and government initiated projects seek to involve individual citizens or set up new networks and fora while ignoring the infrastructural expertise of LDAs. Different LDAs have responded to this in different ways and this will be looked at again later in the chapter.

The third quote, above, brings to the fore another issue for voluntary sector organisations working to "new" (government) agenda and funding arrangements: the pressure to provide new and innovative projects for funding rather than a developed and long-term approach to service and delivery development that recognises the proven abilities and achievements of sector organisations. This also brings with it short-term, instrumental target-driven approaches to work. A further consequence is that voluntary organisations can become more closely aligned with other agency agenda and objectives and reliance is not so much on relationship building and networking across agencies and sectors but sustaining healthy, bi-lateral relationships with significant funders:

We want to satisfy the end user but you could be using a brilliant service for the end user and the funder is not interested and then it won't continue (FINNY)

And, we all pretend they are all exciting, innovative, new projects in order to attract funding...I know it's a game... (FICC)

It's not always the same keeping funders and the government happy and keeping the members happy and you've got to be always on a tightrope and sometimes you go one side or the other and you've got to pull yourself back...it's that balance. (SILSL)

I'm pretty sure we wouldn't have got as much [funding] or as easily or at all sometimes, if I hadn't have been in a cosy relationship with so and so. And you know, and there are pros and cons in that as well, you know, but on the other hand, you know, the cosy relationship means that you don't challenge and that you get taken for granted (FIDND)

This "cosiness" may bring with it short-sightedness in relation to the organisation's own aims and objectives, which is further exacerbated by dependency on time-limited contracts and project funding. While

some organisations are looking to break the dependency of funding through income generation (for example, supply of fee-based services and goods for sale), this has occasionally led to direct conflict with private sector enterprises. For example, the UK Government's response to the Joint Committee on the Draft Charities Bill (Home Office, 2004: Section 9, para 337) is clear on charity trading:

Conducting trading activities within the tax-exempt structure of charities would offend the principle of a level playing field with private sector businesses (Charities and Not-for-Profits: A Modern Legal Framework, para 3.34)

In addition, there is a need to juggle and balance the complicated and divergent needs of income generation and marketing with opinions and expectations of stakeholders (Hill, 2000; Bennett & Sivani, 2003). The image of voluntary sector organisations and the response from multiple stakeholders to voluntary sector activities can reinforce fear of distraction from direct service provision to management processes (witness public and media responses to NSPCC's marketing campaigns, discussed in Chapter 4). Here, stakeholder opinion exerts pressure to resist more professional and systematic business approaches to marketing and fundraising and consequent spending on administration of the charities concerned, in favour of more paternalist hand-outs of public monies and donations used specifically for direct services.

These concerns are not new, as Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1995: 224-225) point out:

...there has been a pervasive worry that management would be a Trojan horse, infiltrating alien systems and practices, undermining the perceived autonomy, cherished values, core identities and distinctive working methods of individual organisations and the sector as a whole... Moreover, suspicions of management have been compounded by a fear that devoting more energy to organisational processes would be a distraction from the 'real' business of working with clients and communities.

Adding to the complexity of organisational models in the sector and confusing the relationship between charity and business are "hybrid" organisations. These charitable companies and more recently social enterprises straddle the charitable and business sectors and, for them, knowing where their primary objectives and focus lie can be difficult.

While this is a growing phenomenon in the voluntary sector, many for-profit companies have a long history of philanthropic activity.

Old wine, new bottles

In many ways, the business-charity relationship is easier for private sector organisations as, in its simplest form, it can be seen as the redistribution of profit for public good. With non-profits the relationship needs to be carefully managed not only to avoid public wrath, but also to avoid contravening charity law. Moreover, a for-profit company "knows" that it is for-profit, whereas a charitable hybrid can send out mixed messages to internal and external stakeholders alike about its "non-profit" status. Difficult too, is knowing how best to manage, provide accountability and adhere to organisational values while promoting a blend of for-profit and non-profit activity. This is a complex arena and one that can provoke criticism from voluntary sector colleagues, as shown by the following example:

I used to be very involved with an organisation - I was on the board of it. They couldn't quite - it was a community organisation and they had a turnover of three million pounds. And they said to me they were very confused about whether they were a business - because they were a limited company as well as a registered charity - whether they were a business that vaguely had a charitable bent, or whether in fact they were a community organisation that needed to be run relatively business-like. And I think there is a difference with that. Er - the - and I think they got it the wrong way round. I think they were trying to be a business that vaguely had a charitable bit, and actually, their roots should have been the other way round. But because they had these vast projects and huge environment projects, they sort of side stepped it and so they got away with it. But I wasn't happy with that personally. Er - and if we simply try to be what other people are, you know, whether it's public authorities or whatever, then surely we will lose our place. (FIMB)

On one level, this movement to mixed approaches is seen as an "unholy alliance" for some while on another level it is the route to freedom for others: freedom from funding dictates, freedom to operate legitimately and effectively outside of government. It is seen as preferable, by some, as an alternative to diversified funding streams, which can result in increased differentiation or fragmentation of services. With multiple funding and income streams (for example

National Lottery, Single Regeneration Budget, European Funding, government and public sector contracts and private sector sponsorship) also comes the need to be accountable to more bodies together with the attendant frustrations of different evaluation systems, measures and different financial accounting periods:

What can be problematic is that people [measure] on a different spatial basis or different social group basis, it would be handy if there was some kind of agreement... (PIMN)

I had a form through the post to complete for monitoring then we had a phone call from the {} to say we want to monitor how you're spending the money – before we'd even had the money! (PIJM)

Adding to this frustration is that much management and administrative time is often not allowable in such funding applications leading to "financial skulduggery" (FICC) as we can see explained further:

Some of the Foundations will cover core costs. Yeah. The {} - and we're on our second {} project. In the first project we did put a management fee in and we were up front and we called it supervision ... it was effectively my time going in to supervise the management adviser because that's the most senior post other than me and they need a lot of support in terms of quite hairy cases they might be dealing with. So, it was quite legitimate, I was quite genuinely spending my time - I did a 3-month sample and I did genuinely spend that amount of time but the {} wouldn't accept a straight management fee but because it went in as supervision, I don't think they noticed. They seem to be absolutely obsessed with it. But they [the offending funding body] are out to consultation. So, we've said this is just bloody stupid because a lot of other funders, like, I think {} and {} will allow a certain reapportionment as long as you can demonstrate spending that time - and it's staff time, but none of them will allow a straight management fee. So I think all this debate about how to get core funding is a bit, I find it very boring because I don't think anyone is going to give it us. I don't think any government - Labour or whatever - are going to fund LDAs, it'll be too expensive. And local authorities are going to do what they like, so I just think it's easier to go into this packaging. (FICC)

Here we can see the repackaging of services and activities. In the instance quoted above, the old wine is "management fee" in the new bottle of "staff supervision". Moreover, "core" services are turned into one or more projects in order to attract funding year on year. Finding a source of income independent of grant-aid or

service level agreements, then, can be a key activity of LDA executives in alleviating some of these frustrations.

From the above and following quotes, we can see some alleviations in terms of: "packaging" or bundling services, which can be costed out to projects, and finding larger-scale income streams (a move from, say, charging for photocopying to providing full-scale conference services, sub-letting or consultancy). Others include increasing assets (mainly through building acquisition) and specialist posts such as (business) development and fund managers:

There's an issue of balance ... but I think that we do need to have some long-term stability which is through our own income and our own assets (FIKL)

Ideally, I'd like to see us a lot more independent financially. Last year for the first time the conference and catering contributed about £20,000 to our income and we're something like 90-95% booked in November of last year and we've been 75% occupied even during August. So, we've got a really viable income generation. (FIJB)

We have a development manager now in the organisation, whose primary responsibility is to co-ordinate strategic planning and income generation in the organisation. Not a fundraiser in the sense that he doesn't do all the fund raising, but his job is to actually co-ordinate all that and make it all happen. Make sure we seize the right opportunities, meet the deadlines, put together the best possible business plans and proposals that we can when we have to do them, at the right time, all that (FINS)

We have a print unit, which is a trading company we set up separately. The conference side of the building is a trading company as well. And if they make any surplus we cover that into the charity. (FIJGM)

In this way, LDA CEOs have to maintain a sense of long-term vision and links with overall goals while negotiating small projects and short-term funding necessities. This strategic development needs to be done in the context of funding vagaries from government and other resource allocating institutions. Attention also needs to be given to opportunities and constraints with which LDA CEOs are confronted as both the context and the internal arrangements of their organisations change over time. A situation that adds to the increasing complexities of

managing in the sector, but one with which LDA CEOs have had significant practice:

We had three or four projects running last year. I think only one of them with one person in it stayed the course; everybody towards the end left, got another job. So you've got some outputs to deliver at the end of the project, but you haven't got anybody there. So you end up recruiting freelancers to deliver those outputs really. So that has an impact on managing and on, I think, how you recruit. I think it has an impact on the core staff and how they relate to all those changes, and it means managing, holding all that together, is fairly complicated. So you end up needing a lot more finance and admin staff to manage something which would mean less managing if there was more sensible income streams. (FIJGM)

But I think the voluntary sector is always slated or slates itself around evaluation and monitoring. In my experience the voluntary sector, okay there's room for improvement, always is, but in terms of where we are at this point, it has had far more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the services it's provided because it's always had to account to funders in various shapes and forms. And it's always strived to do evaluation on the whole to say well what difference are we making? Are we making any difference? Rather, than that number crunching - I think at this point, the voluntary sector hasn't much to learn from the public sector in terms of things like this, I think they've been appalling at it. At actually measuring what they're doing. And part of that is inherent isn't it - it's isn't about their jobs or even need for a service. They don't even know what a service costs. Whereas we are doing because we have to go to funders, we have to itemise it down to the very last penny basically (FIEWH)

The voluntary sector may be well rehearsed in monitoring and evaluation, but as stated earlier, there is an overall movement towards accountability and corporate and social governance at all levels in all sectors, which is continuing to drive this agenda. In relation to public sector and now non-profit sector, this is connected to the push to adopt for-profit language, management tools and business practices. This agenda encompasses concerns around leadership deficits perceived in all sectors and leadership and management development. In an attempt to broach this issue, the National Council for Voluntary Organisation's (NCVO) first Management Development Bulletin in 1983, asked the question, "should the salt of the earth be managed?" (Batsleer, 1995: 224). If there is indeed agreement of a need to account more consistently and systematically for the value, worth and economic

contribution of the sector and there appears to be so, then the question posed perhaps needs to be extended. Concerns about management, managing/leading and professionalism in the sector need to be included, but also whether the tools used to assess for-profit efficiency are appropriate in determining the effectiveness of voluntary sector activity and the sector's contribution to their own and government agenda.

A Question of Balance?

There may be growing similarities between sectors, yet there may also be inherent tensions in using tools within small-medium non-profit organisations, which were designed for 'big business'. As Giddens (1999:7) points out in examining the relationship between private and government sectors, "the appropriate response is not to introduce market mechanisms or quasi-markets" such as those seen in the UK National Health Service (for example purchaser/provider splits and fund-holding), "but it should also mean reasserting the effectiveness of government in the face of markets". Similarly, it can be argued that the voluntary sector needs to be aware of its own context and environment and assert its own identity and successes in the face of adopting market-based tools and techniques.

Batsleer (1995: 226-227) offers a framework that identifies three approaches that affect the ways in which voluntary organisations engage with management tools and techniques: a social policy and administration approach; an organisational management and theory approach; and a community development or 'alternative organisations' perspective. It is worth considering the first two approaches in relation to LDA/CEO identified approaches.

The social policy approach "has sought to steer voluntary organisations along their own unique road, keeping clear of dangerous highways of state bureaucracy or market opportunism" (Batsleer, 1995: 226). Here strategic approaches to management are centred on effectiveness in making a difference to service provision and responding to unmet needs where a key priority is to maintain 'the independence and integrity and plurality of values of an essentially welfare-oriented voluntary sector' (ibid, 1995: 226).

This has "involved the elaboration of distinctive organisational cultures and processes" (ibid, 1995: 226), and where the *professionalisation* of the sector (in terms of distinct managerial approaches to organisation design and processes) is marginal or even non-existent. Where there is some aspect of cross-fertilisation with other sectors, this can be seen as abandonment of sector allegiance and a particular problem for some LDAS:

That's one of the interesting things about working in the LDA really. You have to have developed that understanding, if you like, of where people like the regional development agency or the DETR are coming from ... and where someone in a local tenant's group is coming from ... Quite often er - you get your head shot off by both sides, it has to be said. ... It often means you're distrusted by both sides ... And there's still this, I think, rather outdated image that there's the community and voluntary sector and there's the public sector particularly, and they're the kind of enemy. And because we, of necessity, have to culture good working relationships with people in the public sector ... we're often perceived - by voluntary community organisations - as being on their side somehow; part of the conspiracy, which is out to get them. (FINS)

In contrast, the organisational management and theory approach suggests there are fewer differences between voluntary and private sector organisations than one might first imagine. In line with this thinking, the appropriation and transfer of management tools deemed successful in the private sector, is viewed as non-problematic. Some research participants echo this view:

The voluntary sector needs to be efficient and effective and I think needs to use whatever methods it needs to from wherever to achieve that. I have no problem with that at all. If mechanisms that are being developed in local authority or private sector will help us to do that, then great let's do that. (FIIR)

I think what the private sector can teach the voluntary sector is how to manage to focus, I think that's really important and I don't think we're that good at doing that. It's harder to do in our sector because it's more difficult to get a focus because you're not producing widgets and you don't have a bottom line, blah blah...but nevertheless you can benefit from more of it. (FIMD)

I don't actually think we're that different from many SMEs, erm - in that you're having to deal with a whole range of issues in an environment that's changing. (FINNY)

In the final quote above, we can see a qualifying statement in terms of relevance of tools in relation to size of organisation, rather than sector, per se. In fact, Rochester (1999) suggests that many of the texts and guides on managing in the sector opt for an *ideal* voluntary sector agency and then provide the appropriate recipes, often appropriated from those manuals aimed at larger organisations, to bring any organisation up to maximum performance rather than recognising the diversity and range of non-profit organisations. The implication of this might be that if the management tools from larger (for-profit) organisations can be adapted and made to reflect organisational size, organisational purpose and the context of the voluntary/statutory interface, those tools may then be useful in helping to bolster the sector's unique contribution via more sophisticated and/or generalised methods of evaluation and promotion. Furthermore, a secondary benefit may well be the opportunity to establish commonality between sectors. For example, CEOs comment on the need for reciprocity between sectors:

FIKL commenting on voluntary and private sectors: Too many people still think that marketing is producing leaflets and posters and marketing is about design of services, and understanding your audiences and your potential customers, and making sure that your service is differentiated to deliver what they need. I think that part of the difficulty that the private sector has with marketing in the voluntary sector context is that we're not simple in terms of our customers and services. It's that it's actually so easy to market a television or a car. When you say "well, actually what I want to do is market an advice service on an estate with fifteen different nationalities in it", it blows their minds. They can't get their heads round the complexities and intricacies of it. If they could, it would make them far better marketers back in the private sector. I mean I think what we lack is the skills and the understanding of the technique - marketing techniques er - and that we need to learn that from the private sector. Er - but what we then need to do is to develop those marketing techniques to suit the fact that they're now operating in a more complex environment. (FIKL)

And FIKL in relation to voluntary and public sectors: I mean I think there's some real skills to be learned from the public sector ... I mean you only have to look at - you know, the public sector could learn a lot from the voluntary sector. Er - you look at competitive bidding rounds where public sector and voluntary sector are up against each other - the quality of voluntary sector bids are, you know, far and away better than the public sector bids because people are just not used to having to sell themselves. They're used

to just having the grant settlement every year from government, and we carry on regardless. (FIKL)

Maybe there does need to be more joint use of training facilities between sectors to actually make best use of whatever's going on – methods, mechanisms, systems that are in place. (FIIR)

What is demonstrated here is recognition of the need for learning across sectors and some means of exchange, but the emphasis in this approach is often on means rather than on outcomes. This echoes a useful critique offered by Cummings (1983) who differentiates between tools and techniques associated with management-by-information (means-end) and management-by-ideology (outcomes based - Cummings also comments on the different leadership styles associated with each, a subject to which I will return later, in Chapter 7). For example, Cummings (1983:532) suggests:

Management by information places a major emphasis upon the instrumental function of managerial action and of organisational roles in society. The basic causal mechanisms operating in such management systems are assumed to be linear; they are assumed to be concrete; and they are assumed to be logical in the sense of fulfilling a priori assumptions and pursuing clearly specified goals.

This puts emphasis on technology, structures and processes for implementation of decisions and provides rationalisation for organisational actions where "organisational efficiency, profitability and productivity become necessary minimal conditions for organisational survival" (ibid, 1983; 536). This may fit with the organisational management and theory approach to implementing for-profit tools, techniques and methods of evaluation, and gives a particular focus on bottom line activities – return on investment, value for money and outputs.

Commonality of methods of evaluation, may also give some commonality in the use of the language associated with those methods. 'Business-speak' is common practice in LDAs – participants talk of strategic planning cycles, business plans, performance indicators, targets, soft data and benchmarking:

Formal planning processes within the organisation identify the external context and environment we are operating in, the issues impacting on the wider voluntary sector we work with and support and we consider our internal needs and issues. We have a rolling

strategic plan with annual priorities, SMART objectives, which are translated into team tasks and targets. We will for example, look at policy issues current and on the horizon – i.e. statutory agencies' priorities - and consider the impact, opportunities and threats these pose for us and the groups we support. We also identify the "bottom agenda" of local groups by formal and informal feedback and through our networking activities. We then look at what we need to do to respond to these and what capacity building, resources, organisational development etc is needed internally to enable us to do so. (EQJR)

However, we can see from earlier comments (for example, the image of the Trojan horse) the concerns about moving full throttle towards a total business approach. Perceived negative aspects are expressed in terms of distraction, limiting creativity, diverting energy, expertise and time and in the instance, below, a stagnation of ideas:

There's this obsession, which is not about ideas, it's about agendas and so often that just holds people in ... What you rarely see are sessions about ideas. There hasn't been a new idea arriving, worth talking about, that I've read about anyway, for about at least the last five years. I mean somebody somewhere's got to - It's still somewhere out there, grounded in - in language [of] committees, agendas, agreements, all that sort of stuff. (FIMB)

The identified need for ideas, creativity and outcome measures would fit more with what Cummings (1983: 532-3) describes as management by ideology:

It emphasises the ephemeral of management and managing and aims to design management processes and organisational systems to serve the expressive functions of organisations in society... In management by ideology, innovation is sought...

In this type of organization, Cummings (1983) suggests that cohesiveness is not provided by the more logical and rational processes, which may demonstrate efficiency and profitability (which Cummings maintains are not necessarily the main goals of effective organisations), but by shared beliefs, goals and values. Organisations are thus seen as one of many resources we have for pursuing individual goals and purposes.

Cummings further suggests a historical progression (for for-profit organisations at least) in moving from ideological (or more

paternalistic) approaches to managing to more scientific, information approaches. This parallels the development of business education and, in part, may account for the divergence of for-profit practice and theory from non-profit and public sector experience.

The industry of academic and popular theory built up around management-by-information approaches, calculability and commerce also serve to highlight the centrality of one approach – the “business model” and “operative dimension” (Anheier, 2000: 14 and 9) and thus the marginalisation of others. In addition, a common problem in outcomes measurement and in assessing effectiveness over time (especially in relation to large-scale community development initiatives) is the difficulty in determining accurate assessment. As such, it becomes easier to account for short-term gains through adopting more traditional and more widely accepted efficiency and financial measures (Albert and Whetton, 1985/2004) associated with a business model.

However, Cummings (1983:633) gives hope for the “ideologues” in non-profit organisations, as he sees a return to - or at least a re-emergence of - management by ideology due to “turbulence in environments, because of rapid change, because of the increased sophistication of the receiver of facts, and...because distortion and intentional untruths are a common daily fare for many organizational participants”. This not only brings back to the fore, some of the skills and knowledge of public sector and non-profits in governance, stakeholder involvement and values-led management, but also part of this is recognition of the changing landscape for private sector organisations in terms of corporate responsibility, the move from shareholder to stakeholder concerns and cross-boundary and partnership working.

Incorporating aspects of both approaches identified by Cummings (1983) gives the opportunity perhaps for more contextualised implementation of tools and techniques borrowed from other sectors and transfer of learning between sectors, moving away from traditions of ‘one best way’. It also brings together the rational and emotional sides of professional management:

I don't see anything negative about being professional. I think that as an organisation we've got a responsibility to the users to delivery a quality service in a professional way, that's reliable. I think we've also got the same responsibility to our funders to actually be accountable for what we're doing but there's another issue there about agreeing what the expectations are so it needs to be a joint partnership. And the responsibility to staff to ensure that it's a professional organisation. Don't see anything wrong with that. I think what I'm saying is you can be professional, you can also be, er, emotive sometimes, you can sometimes have that passion, you can sometimes be outspoken. It's not being un-professional, in my view, it's...it's...yeah, it's actually being in touch with your own emotions, I think and allowing those to sometimes drive what we do. (FIIR)

Indeed, working to combine the caring and values driven approach of non-profits with the efficient and dynamic processes of private-sector organisations and adding the service and accountability of public sector organisations could provide a useful foundation to consider issues of success and high performance and may well help to bring non-profits in from the cold:

I think what it would do, it would get us all a new set of tools. Sitting down trying to plan a strategy or piece of work, we've got new tools that we can use to actually move that forward. We're beginning to talk in language that we each of us can understand, we each have a better understanding of what the priorities are in industry, in local authorities...we could give them a better understanding of where we're coming from, how we tick. So, I think we could all gain. (FIIR)

Searching for tools and techniques

As mentioned above, tensions arise between the push for short-term gains (outputs and "quick wins" required by funders) and the longer-term outcomes of community development approaches such as those undertaken by LDAs:

With almost all these issues quantitative data is hard to gather e.g. how do you determine how much influence the voluntary sector has achieved ... [It's] hard to measure because the impact is not always visible. It's not necessarily what gets incorporated into planning documents that matters. It could be a change in a way of thinking amongst movers and shakers, which could have an impact across a whole range of future decisions and actions they take. (EQJR)

Balancing between qualitative and quantitative, short-term and long-term may be about contextualising the tools for performance measurement preferred by government and statutory organisations. Alternatively, through dialogue, it may be about creating new tools to meet both sectors' requirements.

Voluntary sector managers are undoubtedly money-conscious in terms of their economic contribution and in terms of income generation and funding of core costs, but they are not necessarily driven by the 'bottom-line'. As Drucker (1994 : 39) points out in relation to American non-profits, "they start with the environment, the community, the "customers" to be; they do not, as American businesses tend to do, start with the inside, that is, with the organisation or with financial returns". Furthermore, "successful and performing nonprofits have learned to define clearly what changes outside the organisation constitute "results" and to focus on them" (ibid, 1994: 40). The direction or focus of management practice in terms of inner-directed (operational and internal arrangements) and outer-directed (strategic development and networks) seems to be of significance here. In this respect, it may be necessary to move beyond the "economic impact/output models" as "these often do not provide the qualitative or in-depth analysis that will be needed to...understand the true potential of the sector's contribution" (Grogan, 2002 : 5)

A further issue to be considered is the increase in the perceived speed in the uptake and use of private sector management tools and techniques, part of which may be attributable to changing recruitment patterns. Many voluntary organisations have recruited for high-level posts from outside the sector in order to transfer learning from the successes of the commercial sector. For example, Gormley (2000, para 1) commenting on the profile of chief executives of humanitarian aid agencies suggests, "an increasing number are likely to arrive from outside the humanitarian sector". This is a trend identified earlier by Johnson, the then director of Charity Recruitment, who was reported, in Third Sector magazine, as saying:

Two or three years ago, of the applicants at the chief executive or executive level half would be from people in the voluntary sector and half from people outside. Now it's more like 75% from outside (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 87).

This recruitment pattern may be more apparent in large service providing organisations and national and international non-governmental organisations. At local LDA level, the research participants are broadly speaking 'grown' in the sector, which may reflect the campaigning and advocacy nature of the work, rather than involvement in more "mainstream" service provision. Despite Butler and Wilson's (1990: 172) warning that unqualified importation of commercial sector professionalism can "bring about an almost inevitable clash...[that] may result in a fundamental redefinition of the core values and ideology of the organisation", there does appear to be some cautious optimism:

I think it [the voluntary sector] is bringing in different people, people with different skills; perhaps more management skills or local authority experience. The fact that they need to work more closely with local authorities, they have a larger agenda, larger organisations, they have to operate differently and so they want to be seen as being these very professional, very respectable outfits. Whereas, in the past, somehow there were a lot of rebels out there, erm and, it wasn't always very helpful and things sometimes didn't always get done, but it's like we've swung from one extreme to another. So I think - it's that kind of move towards the - yeah - moving almost away from the voluntary sector much more towards statutory provision almost private-style of delivery...and it's trying to get that mix right...we are encouraging different people with lots of skills and nothing wrong with that - very efficient...(FIIR)

As we can see, public perception of image, the nature of professionalism and the diversity of people inhabiting the sector all have considerable impact on managing in the sector. The challenge, then, both in terms of practice and in developing theory of management in non-profits is in balancing multiple constituents and recognising "the diversity of orientations within and outside the organisation, and the complexity of demands upon it" (Gomez and Zimmerman, cited in Anheier, 2000: 8). Indeed, Anheier (2000: 8) suggests that non-profits need to be seen as "multiple organisations and as complex, internal federations or coalitions" which require a "multi-faceted and flexible approach" to management which cannot be achieved through the "use of ready-made management models carried over from the business world or public management". Part of this challenge, as evidenced by the above quote, is in defining what it means to be responding to the challenge of

change through operating differently and promoting a professional and respectable image.

Pushing professionalism

It is useful at this point to consider what research participants mean and understand by the term “professionalism” and the push for “professionalisation” of the sector. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, there is much more implied in the phrase “voluntary, not amateur” than simply a pay packet, although this does have an impact of how sector workers feel they are perceived by those they are working alongside, for example:

You know being at power meetings and partnership ones – [they] say “well they [LDA members] only earn half of what this post is, therefore they can’t really be that up to it”... (FINNY)

It’s a very, very significant impediment in terms of [career development] ... in terms of strategic thought, equivalent jobs are at least assistant director level within local authority, and that’s forty five thousand. So you know, for anyone looking at my application, well, it’s such a huge jump [from current salary]. Er - you know, so yes, I think it is a serious impediment. (FIKL)

The complaints LDA CEOs have in relation to salary are not necessarily wanting to acquire more for their choice of job or sector, but the feeling of lack of respect and voice in the strategic circles they inhabit:

The hardest people I found to deal with were some of the health bureaucrats, who were extremely patronising sometimes towards us. And, I’ve never been an arrogant person, or wanted to say don’t you do that, you know, you don’t know anything about me. But, I felt like doing that frequently with them because they were assuming somehow that you were “non-professional” because you were in the voluntary sector. There was a group of four of us ... which was really empowering because ... we worked together quite a bit. And they were like that with all four of us. And, actually all four of us had come from either social services or, I don’t know, had done all kinds of different things - teaching or whatever. So, er, it was just quite bizarre ... They didn’t know how to label us or to place us. We were kind of like this nebulous entity that was sort of wandering around in the voluntary sector. That’s right, that’s very true. And that really, really irked me. (FISM)

I think generally, I think there are still people in the public sector who don't have a sophisticated understanding of the voluntary sector and therefore don't see the voluntary sector as professional in the good sense of the word, and they are quite surprised when we clearly are. ... I don't think it's a particular issue nationally. But then, almost by definition you're only going to be functioning in circles where people do accept you as a professional, or you/they wouldn't be there. So I think the battle in those circles is already won. Certainly the {government department} basically understands the sector so it's different from a ministry like {} who still think you're all volunteers working for nothing in your spare time because you've nothing better to do. But I think it's probably more of an issue locally. I think there's probably more variation locally with [LDA] chief officers. It depends very much on the culture of the area they are in, the understanding of the public sector of the role of the voluntary sector and whether they do see it as synonymous with volunteering and doing good or whether they see it as a - another if you like as a third sector, as a professional third sector. I think that's much more varied locally. (FILSL)

Even though, as FILSL explains, the situation is changing and is not universal, there is still a considerable force of opinion from multiple directions for the sector to, if not *become* more professional, to at least *demonstrate* more adequately its professional components:

...most voluntary organizations would agree that they will have to confront a whole range of issues in the coming years... The starting point must be to improve and professionalise the way the voluntary sector is managed (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996)

More generally, nonprofit organizations must take steps to improve their managerial effectiveness ... As nonprofit organizations move more into the center of societal problem-solving, the pressures on them to become more effective and more "professional" will increase (Salamon and Anheier, 1996)

We tend to see ourselves as critics, able to point to bad practice in the public or private sectors, seeing our own organisations as immune from criticism. This is now untenable ... To survive in the current climate and to secure the best possible services for beneficiaries we need to be both professional and entrepreneurial. (Etherington, 2001).

Some see this inability to demonstrate effectiveness as being without profession – that is, not being part of a profession in the "traditional" sense of the word, not being allied to another profession (for example as with medicine) and/or the lack of a professional body and professional qualifications:

For the most part, the arrival of paid managers who have opted for a career in the voluntary sector has not been accompanied by the trappings of 'career management'. The absence of a professional body has already been noted (Batsleer, 1995: 233).

There is no professional qualification, there is nothing that endows us with the kind of respect that we should have, if we are working well ... in a world of pieces of paper and litigation and ignorance then I think possibly that would be helpful (FISM)

I think quite a lot of things that call themselves professions are not. I have quite a traditional view of what is a profession... I mean it's not a profession when you have a contract to work 35 hours a week or whatever that's not my view... I see myself as a professional but that's different from saying I see the voluntary sector as a profession. That's a different use of the word. I definitely see myself as professional, I think I am very professional; I'm very committed to professional values and doing things properly – absolutely. But it's in the old sense of profession – it doesn't mean anything anymore, it's meaningless. For me it means operating in a certain way – you know which is about being consistent being clear...(FILSL)

JM: So would you classify yourself as a professional?

FIEWH: Yes

JM: Do you think other people would classify you as a professional?

FIEWH: No, because professional usually means allied to a profession

In many respects, this links back to earlier discussion on management skills and training in the sector. The development of the Management Charter Initiative also instigated an accompanying move that led to the Institute of Managers receiving its royal charter in 2002 (CIM, 2004). Despite some of the quotes above that suggest conventional definitions of professions such as medicine and law, Watson (2003:170) suggests, "there is no clearly definable category of occupations which can be recognised by their possession of a series of traits or elements of professionalism". However, he does qualify this in relation to autonomy of professions suggesting that:

many occupations by their very nature can never approach the level of autonomy traditionally associated with lawyers and physicians [but that] does not prevent occupations as varied as industrial managers, estate agents and embalmers getting together and pursuing some elements of the professionalisation strategy (Watson, 2003: 171).

Part of a professionalisation strategy for Watson (2003) would include setting up a professional body, which for UK managers and the

Chartered Management Institute means that "management is recognised as a valued profession in its own right" (CMI, 2004, Impact of Chartered Status). There is much continued debate in the literature about the nature, status and structure of professions (viz Watson, 2003). Accompanying discourse concerns differences identified between profession and profession-*a*/. Again, not a new distinction and the latter includes a wide interpretation of good, "professional" practice encompassing expertise (FIEWH), planning, thinking, explaining, questioning (FIKLB), and simply of doing things properly (FILSL). Watson's discussion on occupations and society is useful here too, particularly in suggesting that:

the notions of 'profession' and 'professionalism' are likely to be powerful *discursive resources* that spokespersons of almost any knowledge-related occupation are likely to deploy to protect and advance their shared interests, even if this means deploying a degree of 'discursive ingenuity' to bend them to particular occupational purposes [and] claiming to be members of professions. (Watson, 2003: 172, italics in original)

LDA CEOs may not claim to be part of a profession, so in this respect may not be seen to be in a position to advance their occupational interests, which may account for interest in pursuing such a route. However, as we have seen above they do claim and suggest they exhibit professional practice. Knowing that management tools and techniques have a perceived value in demonstrating professionalism and effectiveness of organisations may well encourage their take up and use by the sector. However, a concern here is that non-profit organisations can adopt management techniques long after experts in the for-profit sector have raised their doubts as to their widespread use as good practice tools, a point made by Tom Jennings (IBM course director for voluntary sector managers), who suggests:

I think voluntary organisations are destined to repeat the mistakes that businesses have made in recent years...At IBM, for example, a lot of effort went in to performance appraisal. It seemed to work well and be motivating staff, but after a while, it was clear that mistakes had been made. I think some voluntary organisations are in danger of making those mistakes. (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 93)

To try to understand some voluntary sector approaches to the take up and use of management tools and techniques, it might be useful to look at four simple stances – see Fig 5.1, see page 125

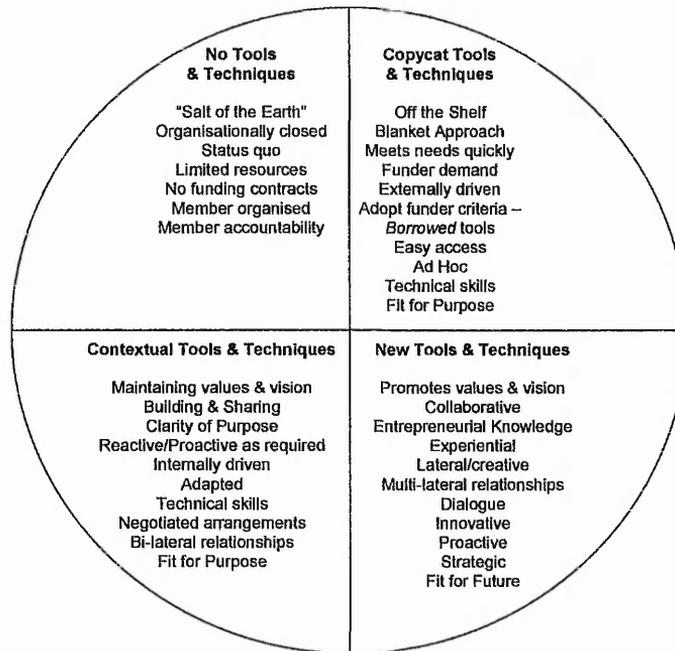


Fig. 5.1 Organisational Stances to Management Tools & Techniques

Source: adapted from Myers and Sacks, 2003: 293

Each stance identifies not just an attitude or approach, but also presents an expression of organisational history, culture, values and image. Like any typology there may be 'pure' types although there will be a blurring between the types by dint of individual and organisational complexity.

Earlier in this chapter, the question was raised as to whether the salt of the earth (i.e. non-profit charitable organisations) should be managed. This can be used to identify a particular stance where management tools and techniques appear to be largely absent. This might be that organisations may be small and informal and require few formal policies and procedures or it may be a more deliberate option. In this category are small user-led groups and micro organisations (less than the equivalent of four full-time workers) where operational management and governance of the organisation blur, with members of the governing body working alongside paid staff members. In this latter instance, "staff are not usually expected to produce detailed work plans or have their activities monitored or their performance appraised" (Rochester, 1999: 24).

However, even in relation to small, informal groups there is a developing framework of practice development tools, which attempts to bring formality and systematic processes to such groups: examples of this include PQASSO – a Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations – developed by the Charities Evaluation Service and “health checks” on management and governance issues. When and if these organisations grow, there may be a need to rethink structures, work design and processes as managing becomes more complex and more formalised.

Resistance to or slow take up of new tools and techniques can be associated with inexperience and unfamiliarity. However where resistance is combined with a rationale that charitable work is by definition ‘good’ and not open to question, more anachronistic and paternalistic approaches to service provision may well be ignored (or denied). This apparent acceptance of inherent goodness (and perhaps underlying perception of harmlessness) and lack of assessment of fitness to provide services has also been, in the past, a trap for public sector funding providers who, as mentioned earlier, often fund organisations on an historical “we’ve always done it” basis rather than on any needs, output or outcome assessment.

Perhaps this perception of ‘harmlessness’ is also an expression of the marginality of some voluntary organisations to mainstream (public sector) services. Where more formal arrangements exist between the two sectors, there have been monitoring and evaluation techniques in existence both to attract and maintain mainstream funding and, later, contracts and service level agreements. As Johnson and Scholes (1988: 18) observe:

The influence of funding bodies is likely to be high; indeed the organisation may well develop strategies as much to do with and influenced by its funding bodies as by clients. Moreover, since they are heavily dependent on funds, which do not emanate from clients but from sponsors, a danger is that the organisation becomes more concerned with resource efficiency than service effectiveness.

However, as well as external pressures from funders to provide evidence of voluntary sector activity meeting local or central government targets, voluntary organisations also recognise they need models and ways of understanding their environment both internally

and externally. Here, an issue that CEOs identified, was a continuous struggle to maintain strategic independence in determining goals and outcomes, rather than becoming what one CEO described as “the third arm of the state” (EQJR). In some cases, this leads to the ad-hoc adoption of off-the shelf remedies (often provided through outside consultants to the organisation) and copycat tools and techniques.

Copycat tools

The tension around strategy and tools is mainly played out in inter-relationships between voluntary and public sectors. With increasing privatisation of public sector services and pressure to modernise, we also find the interpretation of business enhancing tools for use in public sector organisations being passed to voluntary sector organisations. As, demonstrated earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 4, as the number of funding and sponsorship relationships increases so too does the variety and number of tools and techniques that fit funders’ needs for accountability rather than voluntary organisations’ needs. The pressure to account for funding means it can be much easier to *borrow* tools provided by funders than to adopt organisation-specific measures. By default, this can also mean a slow isomorphic tendency as statutory objectives become absorbed by contracted non-profits.

For local development agencies, this positioning between being inside contributors and/or outside of public policy debates is a delicate balancing act. One ex-director of an LDA (Myers, 1996) stated that intermediary agencies such as LDAs, had become a permanent feature of government life and that this semi-voluntary and semi-statutory status gives local development agencies a stronger role. In this way, it could make strategic sense to pursue closer integration and accountability measures if the organisation is indeed ‘semi-statutory’. Drivers may include more alignment and identification with statutory ‘partners’, becoming an integral and, presumably indispensable part of central and local government life and thus enhancing organisational survival. Yet, what can happen – as evidenced by the above ex-director’s own organisation – is that this strategy can be a predominantly one-sided, haphazard alignment that may not be wholeheartedly embraced by the relevant local authority (Myers,

1996). For the voluntary organisation that might regard this arrangement as a 'safe bet', such a strategy consistently focuses on external validation of goals and services and in this particular case, there was a loss of confidence from the internal stakeholders in the aims and direction of the organisation.

In this way, the copycat approach or blanket appropriation of other sectors' tools and techniques (for goal setting, monitoring, evaluation and end-user involvement) may give an impression of "blundering into formulaic approaches to strategic planning" without taking in to account the role, purpose and value of the sector (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 171). Underlying this too, is the negation of the value of 'home-grown' resources in favour of external examples of "good practice".

Even if it is accepted that management processes and tools may be similar across organisations from different sectors, it may not be in voluntary organisation's interests to exploit them in exactly the same ways (Newham and Wallender, 1978; Gerrard, 1983). For example, Butler and Wilson (1990: 164) suggest that employees in the voluntary sector "expect a great deal of personal space, autonomy and personal say in how an organisation is run and over what should be its strategic goals". Being able to anticipate potential areas of conflict, difference and ways in which to use management tools appropriately may point to a more successful move from copycat application to contextualisation based on organisational vision, purpose, needs and activities.

Contextual tools

Some organisations use a combination of copycat tools and context-related tools. Other organisations are developing tools that enable them to have an awareness of the specific environment and situational variables in and with which they are working; to become more proactive about shaping ways of working with other agencies that reflect their aims, values and goals:

In trying to decide specifically what issues or developments to pursue and take action on or prioritise in our plan, we have a checklist of questions... Lively and healthy debate usually happens at {} management team and Boards ... However, we are generally

working to service level agreements and similar documents, which have targets or indicators attached to them and these are monitored and recorded. We also try to get soft data where we can feed back from users/participants/partners. (EQMD)

Our core funding never ever matches our core expenditure. A persistent problem, and the way we've dealt with that in the past is to create a situation where we would attract project funding to support core work. Unfortunately, the project work tends to take over ... We've now got some project bids in place – we have heard on the QT that we have at least got one of those. It's new work but it fits in with our overall strategy. I was keen to have a clear development strategy and any project work we took on was designed to contribute towards that strategy and that we weren't just grabbing at anything that came along and actually what we did, we clearly thought out why we were doing it and how we were able to take it forward... (SIIR)

This, in part, reflects a shift away from more reactive processes, which can often be the result of time- and funding-limited contracts. Often contract-led projects managed by part-time, fixed term contracted staff lead to high turnover and loss of expertise within the organisation. On other occasions, it can be a way of keeping trained and skilled staff by moving (even promoting on occasion) them to different projects through a mix of internal and open recruitments. Workers are also recruited from other sectors (or seconded in) reflecting the input of particular skills rather than sector-wide knowledge. This contributes to many LDAs struggling to build an organisational-wide identity while having fragmented and fluctuating staffing levels who are responding to specific targets and often more in tune with their own project needs rather than overall organisational goals:

It wasn't an organisation. It was a lot of separate projects and er - it was bizarre. I mean people were saying I don't work for LDA, I work for the {} team (FIDND)

Yet there can be positive outcomes to working with smaller team-based approaches and on emerging agenda through projects and time-limited work. Taking on these shifts in work patterns, operational priorities and general lack of security can lead to "a tolerance for ambiguity and disagreement that is very foreign to most businesses" (Austin, 1998: 50). In this way, even though the context in which LDA CEOs work may have "the hallmarks of casual labour [rather] than a classic

professionalism", there can be seen a "conscientious attempt to create flexible, responsive and entrepreneurial patterns of work" (Batsleer, 1995: 235). This implications of this will be explored in Chapter 9.

This emphasises a need to contextualise business tools to help assess the effectiveness and sustainability of voluntary organisations and account for difference in management practices. However, the process of developing and adapting tools and techniques from other sectors may well lead to new approaches in implementation (viz Business Excellence Model for voluntary organisations) and new roles for LDAs:

One of the things I have done is I've now got the Board understanding that there is a strategic role for [the organisation] to play, which isn't about running after every bit of project funding. And that's actually informing - helping the rest of the sector to have a clearer idea of what is happening in public sector and how it can be interpreted for the sector. [It] is a gap that is legitimate for an LDA to fill. (SIJB)

But as Hudson (1995:95) points out:

Given that it took from 5 years to 10 years for similarly complex business to give their managers skills and experience to manage strategically, it is hardly surprising that the third sector is finding this a challenge.

The adaptation of old tools and the development of new management tools may well point to creative ways in which LDAs and their managers have coped with the ambiguity of their status and position. This situation remains in flux as new working arrangements come in to play with the development of local management of services and partnership arrangements.

New Tools and Techniques

New tools may evolve through entrepreneurial partnerships and coalitions, even mergers, and can be developed through collaboration, active alliances, networking and sharing and creating knowledge. This might give some recognition and acknowledgement of qualitative ways of working, which can be lost in more instrumental and operative approaches to measuring, assessing and evaluating effectiveness and efficiency. A related issue mentioned briefly above is the concept of

leadership deficit in the sector, and tied to this, perhaps more appropriately in relation to LDA CEOs, is the growing concept of social entrepreneurship. These issues will be returned to in considering leadership and entrepreneurship (Chapter 7) and managing to learn and partnering for learning (Chapter 9).

Furthermore, new tools and techniques may reflect or make explicit the ways in which LDAs have coped with diversity, funding constraints and evolving and promoting enabling frameworks both within and external to their organisations. The research participants vary in their tenure from one year to over twenty years so it will be interesting to consider the strategic skills, abilities and techniques they have built up over this time. This will be considered in more depth when looking at how CEOs *learn to manage* (Chapter 8) and *manage to learn* (chapter 9), not necessarily in terms of producing and adapting tools or recipes for action but the ways in which they pay attention to "social and organisational reality" (Schofield, 2000:9) of managing in the third sector.

All LDAs involved in this research had a range of tools and techniques associated with measuring, monitoring and managing. Examples of these are detailed in the table below, Table 5.1, page 132.

Part of both contextualising and creating new tools is about recognising the difference of the sector. In considering sustainable systems development in the context of NGOs, Korten (1987: 149) provides some useful parallels pertinent to the changing role of local development agencies. In particular, the move from involvement at a local grassroots level to more interaction with a range of public and private organisations in relation to reallocation of resources and public policy.

LDAs do carry out grassroots work via the projects although much of this is about facilitation of member organisations rather than direct service provision. In this way, the organisation acts as a catalyst for change both downward looking (to smaller, community based organisations) and upward looking to policy makers and in bridging and making links between the two as necessary. This correlates with

Organisational Stance	Tools and Techniques
No Tools	May be imposed if external funding is sought
Copy Cat Tools	Investors in People ISO and other quality standards Strategic planning tools – SWOT, PESTLE, McKinsey 7-s Tools & techniques gained through management training & development and NVQs Funders criteria Financial statements/accounting procedures Pay and Conditions
Contextual Tools	Excellence Model (for voluntary sector) PQASSO Negotiated contracts Financial statements and annual reviews including intangibles Accounting procedures (Charity SORP) Pay and Conditions Risk assessments
New Tools	Small groups health checks and process assessment tools Tendered projects & new initiatives Outcomes measures – equal opportunities and diversity, social capital, community-wide initiatives and community development Narrative approaches Pay and Conditions Campaigning, advocacy, critical reflection Facilitation and user involvement methods People-centred approaches Local self-reliance and sustainable systems development Strategic management Sector specific research and (micro) policy reform Discussion groups and action learning

Table 5.1 Range of Tools used by LDAs
Source: Author

Dowson and Irving’s (2000, key facts abstract) observation that:

The voluntary sector appears to have come to the point at which ‘top down’ meets ‘bottom up’. It is trying to satisfy local needs and remain in touch with local communities, but at the same time is expected to become more ‘professional’ and to adopt an infrastructure which facilitates its participation in partnerships more readily.

In many respects, this depends on:

...skilfully positioning the NGO’s resources in relation to the target system... in such a way as to facilitate accelerated learning by the organisations that comprise that system. To do so ... will need in-depth knowledge of the actors and organisations, which define and regulate the systems being addressed. High levels of both technical and strategic competence will be required. (Korten, 1987: 149)

The measure of strategic competence in these instances will be the level of influence gained by LDAs/LDA CEOs in achieving their objectives for change. This requires sophisticated understanding of social, political and developmental processes as well as strong communication networks internal (and external) to the organisation. This reflects concerns of managers in research reported by Butler and Wilson (1990: 164) in balancing the “professionalising and management process and organising the process of change without negating the strong cultural overlay of altruism and voluntarism”.

The combination of need for respect (and self-respect), autonomy, efficiency and flexibility connects to perception of confidence and strength of character of the sector and LDA CEOs. This brings to the fore the concept of identity, a topic that is given more attention in the following chapter.

Reflecting and moving on

The picture being assembled is that although many voluntary organisations have been in existence for many years – some LDAs since 1917 and earlier - and have a long history of working across sectors, they are still perceived as lacking in their internal organisation. A connected perception is that while LDA CEOs may exhibit capacity for strategic thinking, this is marginal to wider policy agenda. Part of this, as we saw in Chapter 4, may be about size and economic weight of the sector and, in this chapter, we see issues around status and professionalism.

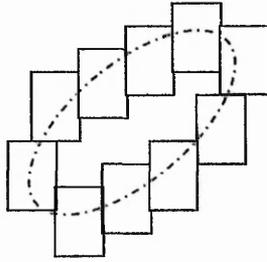
Yet, other voices (such as Anheier, 2000; Batsleer, 1995) suggest that the world of the voluntary organisation is a complex one, where managers face ambiguity and uncertainty that gives an entrepreneurial aspect to their work. This will be looked at more closely in Chapter 7.

In considering tools and techniques, we can see there is potential for new ways of working and of cross-sector learning. However, even where voluntary sector organisations have contextualised ways of working, or have their own tools and techniques, they have also learned to be conversant in dominant discourses around accountability

and models of (business) practice. This might demonstrate, as Zemmick (1998) suggests, that the voluntary sector seems to be receiving (from public sector and private sector) more than giving in terms of strategy and practice development. Yet, we have to question whether this is because of lack of knowledge and competency on behalf of the voluntary sector, or more structural and historical issues of power and influence within what has been described earlier as a two-sector model of society (Salamon and Anheier, 1996).

In many respects, there appears to be a persistent need for the sector and LDA CEOs to "prove" themselves in relation to their internal stakeholders, in wider networks and the public sphere. This may be a spur to learning and development for LDA CEOs. It can also negatively impact on capacity to learn. If LDA CEOs are occupied in negotiating others' perceptions of the sector and of using other sector tools, aligning agenda and defining the sector and themselves in terms of what they are not, how, then, do they have a sense of who they are? This has implications for personal theories as well as LDA CEOs' explanations of their managerial and leadership behaviours.

To return to sensemaking, if as Weick (2001: 69) suggests, when people transform "knowledge and abilities into action, this transformation is mediated by thoughts about themselves and their capabilities", then it is pertinent to consider LDA CEOs' sense of self and identity and how they perceive their capabilities as managers and leaders. These two considerations - exploring identity construction and describing and explaining LDA CEOs' accounts of their managerial and leadership behaviours - form the focus for the following two chapters.



6. In search of selves

Individual & organisational identities

People take pictures of each other, just to prove that they really existed

(Davies, 1968: lyrics, no page)

Central to all philosophies are the questions of "Who am I?" "How did this universe come in to being?", and "What is my relationship to it?" The answers or beliefs we have about these questions affect the way we structure and control work, our views of ownership and profit, our leadership style and the way we deal with each other in the workplace.

(Cacioppe, 1997: 340)

Echoing Cacioppe's statement above, Albert (1998: 10) suggests that:

The concept of identity, whether at the individual or organisational level, is germane to questions of action and performance. Predictions about the road taken may be less a matter of assessing the comparative incentives of each path than of understanding the identity of the person or organisation making the choice. How one acts may depend more on who one is, who others think one is, and who one aspires to be than on any objective assessment of the opportunities and costs associated with a given direction.

Moreover, if, as Hosking and Morley (1991: 147) point out, "actors differ in their relations with their contexts such that they differ in their understandings and commitments" then it is useful to consider the interaction between context, understanding and commitment to try to explore the cognitive maps CEOs have of their personal and professional identities, and their roles. As we have seen in previous chapters, the history of the sector and the perceived status of those who work within it will also influence understanding, commitment and identity:

The identity of {LDA} is...still a problem. Where most voluntary organisations grow organically out of a perceived caucus of campaigning activity – Shelter, CPAG, Oxfam even, where there's this drive from the centre, that defines their personality, {LDA} doesn't have that at all. Trying to actually explain to the outside world what it is and what it's for is really very difficult...Building that kind of identity is difficult (SHJB/T)

[I'm] very much a child of the sixties...I'm still a bit of a twenty-year-old anarchist... (FIKLB)

In some instances, the understanding from others only comes from being able to reach out and connect on a personal and emotional level:

I mean an interesting anecdote I suppose as well, is that my father in particular er - could not understand why I've left industry at all and didn't understand what on earth social work was about -the good Daily Telegraph reader that he is. And it was only when my grandmother er - unfortunately, you know, had a fall and had rapid onset dementia as a result of that fall, and then needed social service support, that they realised - when it touched their lives they then realised, you know, what this was all about. And then appreciated what I was doing, but it was only when it actually touched their lives in that way that they then started to understand what it was about. You know, ironically now my father's retired, he's got involved with voluntary organisations, so it took him a while but he's got there. I mean occasionally he reads The Guardian, but you can't have everything can you?! (FIKL)

In this way, significant or critical events can push us to a reappraisal or even a reinvention of ourselves, and they can change others' perceptions and value of what we are and do.

Connecting a dramaturgical framework to the concept of actors and action, Goffman (1978) usefully employs the concept of theatres and the stage to describe ways in which we present and maintain an impression of our selves as both credible and sincere while avoiding contrivance. Keeping with this visual imaging, I would like to replace "stage" with "movie set" to consider the research and participant experience as sense-making activities. The reason for this change is partly in terms of process and to consider outcomes, as such some explanation is necessary before proceeding.

My perception of a stage play, in its simplest format, is that it is linear and sequential. It builds a picture of the whole story unfolding for both the actor and the audience as the play progresses. A film or movie, by contrast, appears more fragmented and complex, can cover many more issues and plots seemingly all at once as the audience moves from scene to scene, and as we weave in and out of different story lines. For the actor, the story only fully reveals its future animated self on the screen.

During the making of a movie, an actor's performance appears disjointed and switches as the context and available resources change. There may be a requirement for on the spot improvisation as well as ability to act differently in different situations (scenes). This is interesting in thinking about the need for LDA CEOs to make sense of the context of their performances and their ability to act differently in different situations, be confident, articulate, and give a good performance on each occasion. Similarly, we can perhaps identify certain actors who are the same person/character whatever the role they are in, which may satisfy the audience, but does not necessarily enhance practice. We may be more delighted, for example, when actors *become* on screen the person we imagine in our heads. For the actor, becoming engrossed in one role gives an opportunity to "live the part". However, there is danger that with multiple roles, we – as actors – could miss opportunities and, consequently, our overall performance may suffer. In this instance, we may need to consider how best to optimise our commitment and engagement in different roles to continue learning and performing.

In combining individual and organisational goals with those of agencies external to their sector, LDA CEOs find themselves performing in alien environments. Here, they need to influence and project ability in order to be considered for competent supporting actor roles and lead players:

Well I think I could play a good role there because no-one was sure whether I was poacher or gamekeeper. There was this fella who'd run a business, who'd been a local councillor and was also trying to sort of organise the interests and the voices of the voluntary sector and could see where people came from. I've always said that for a partnership to work properly you need to understand other people's agendas, you know? (FIKLB)

Added to this, the stage itself is both fluid and emerging as new organisations come in to view and struggle to find their place in the overall plot:

It is *emerging* - things are *changing* so rapidly. You know, local authority agenda, the health agenda, it's all - sources of funding, you know, - it's trying to understand what that's going to look like in five years time. Where are we going to be in five years time? Yeah,

it's emerging and changing over time and the characters change, and you've got organisations like PCTs who haven't got a real identity themselves, they are struggling with that...(FIIR)

The world is a stage?

In these instances, our movie actor (each LDA chief executive/research participant) is faced with an outline script and a role to play, but generally, there is a great deal of improvisation required for each particular project in which they are involved. With each part, the actor takes a little bit of themselves as a foundation on which to grow and develop their new character and a number of assumptions are made regarding the personality, character type and experience that fit this developing new 'self'.

The movie film's scenes take place in a particular place and time, but not necessarily in any kind of linear or consecutive fashion. On one day of shooting, for example, the sequence of scenes in which the principal player is involved may move from scene 1 to scene 60, back to scenes 45 and 52 and finally to scene 3. In this way, the actor has no real sense of sequential movement through time. Each part is played in isolation from the others, but at the same time, the actor needs to sustain a similar mood, a look, or way of acting/being and consistency in his/her relationship with others in order to retain a sense of continuity across different and seemingly un-connecting events over time. S/he learns to change appearance and make links between previously enacted sequences of events and a current or future act, to give an appearance of seamlessness. We can see this echoed in the experience of LDA CEOs, explored in the later section, *Camouflage, chameleons and changing performances*.

While playing a part in any movie, the actor has other and varied roles, which may influence his or her interpretation of a particular part – husband/wife, sibling, friend, rival, experienced classical actor and novice improviser. This suggests that we may approach different roles in different ways and that others' expectations of how we might act also have a bearing on our performance. Even, as Cooley (1902, reprinted in Hatch and Schultz, 1994) suggests, in asserting our own identity and freedom to act, we may strenuously deny that another's

view has any real impact on us, yet we may nevertheless feel a sense of shame, pride or indignation in relation to another's reactions to us. This tension and 'internal' thermometer can be seen in the response of one research participant in confirming acceptance to use the taped interview in return for my contract to retain anonymity. The quote, included previously in Chapter 3, showed a lack of concern with anonymity and confidentiality. When looking at the statement again in the context of current discussion, the response shows an outward stance of independence and freedom to act:

I'm quite...I shoot my mouth off and I don't really mind who knows about it really! (FICY)

However, this is followed with a self-check: a quick reference to a self-assessment that can be related to anticipation of others' reactions to any materials subsequently made public:

You know, I don't think I've said anything that I'm ashamed of, so...(FICY)

This particular participant uses personal contact with and feedback from others to maintain a sense of purpose in the wider sphere of work. There are times when that sense of self and purpose needs to be reflected back from others to re-energise commitment and enthusiasm and offer justification in having chosen this line of work over others:

An example...at about 7 when I was still in the office, stupidly...and I'd just put down the phone...and talking to this bloke on the telephone ...and I thought why was I doing it at half past seven at night? It's taken 2 years to get here so one more night. And I think I did it because I wanted to talk to real human beings because that's my job and that's what I'm good at... and I got some satisfaction from that that I hadn't really got from much of the day, because I'd be dealing with one hassle after another. And I get a buzz out of that human [contact] and the bloke says well, thanks very much {} -instant hit! (SICY)

While SICY initially purports not to judge his behaviour by what others might think, nevertheless we can see another self (and internalised public) assessment of action (for example, stupidly being at work after office hours). In addition, he needs the positive feedback from another to reassert a sense of competence and ability – the rave review or the

applause that may come from the final performance of the day. We can see this struggle for acknowledgement of competence and connection with others' view of performance in different scenarios. For example, in discussing applying for a job in a different sector, FIDND explains:

I wanted to test them, to see whether they would give someone like me an interview and I didn't ever expect to get short-listed...and I might even get the job, it's very close – (FIDND)

Here the research participant has a very clear "them" to whom his performance (in this instance a letter of application) is directed and a sense of their view of him (someone like me) as being set aside from the world they inhabit. Later in the same interview, FIDND expresses his fears about being seen by others as incompetent:

I always think that I am going to be found out, you know. I'm a fraud really and one day someone's going to – the emperor's new clothes – and someone's going to say, 'hey, look!', you know?...I'm quite good at saying I don't know what I don't know and not worrying what people think of me for that. That's not the problem, you know. The problem is when you think you know the answer...or an action, thinking that that's right and then it's not right and you suddenly think, Oh God! You know people must have thought, you know, 'he did that confidently and he was wrong'. And that's what I really fear...I get excruciatingly upset when that happens (FIDND).

Here we can see that fearing ridicule is not associated with areas where knowledge is lacking (what Kirkpatrick, 1971 and others might refer to as conscious incompetence) but where there is a sense of knowing and consequently being found out not to know. FIDND also links this fear with a process of learning and maturing - a combination to which I will return in considering approaches to management development (Learning to Manage, Chapter 8). In both of these examples, there is a sense of separateness felt by both research participants – one in terms of physical isolation of being in an office alone in the evening, the other a metaphorical isolation of being "naked in public".

In both these cases, as with other research respondents, knowledge, experience and actions are described as connected with "passion",

"guts", "feelings", "drive" and "desire". In this way, the emotional and relational sides of managing and learning can be seen to contribute to, and be shaped by, our experience and understanding of a larger (external) world and the social institutions of which we are a part. For others, the separation is structural and institutionalised even when connected with self-identity:

The other thing that used to happen was that it was very man-dominated and I'd say something and then 5 minutes later a man would say the same thing (laughs) and then everyone would then go ah yes...and I'd think I'm sure that's what I just said. That doesn't tend to happen to me now, I'm not sure why, but it happened a lot then and I used to start to think I was quite invisible because even when I'd pluck up the courage to actually say something they'd just ignore it until a man said it. It was really weird. (FIJRN)

In referring back to Goffman (1987), part of the research enquiry is to look at how these CEOs manage emotions and feelings resulting from their perceptions of how others see and judge them and also how they can shape and influence the perceptions of others. Furthermore, an aspect of this emotional management is not to consider non-profit CEOs only in terms of their alienation and disconnection from other sectors (their independence) but also to consider how they create bonds and connections across professional boundaries while maintaining their sense of self (their interdependence). We also need to consider the impact of time, that is, our sense of self as being both socially constructed and dynamic. As mentioned above, the different parts of ourselves – how we construe ourselves in different contexts and locations - will change over time and with differing experiences.

To return to time and movement in film, our interpretations of events (scenes) may shift as we gain more or different interpretations, and our understanding becomes deeper as the movie progresses. Similarly, in discussing the characteristics of LDA CEOs, these may shift over time and with reference to context, as evidenced by one research participant explaining the temporal nature of her choice of key "success" factors in LDA executive performance:

Probably if you asked me tomorrow I'd come up with ten different ones (RGJB)

It is only by looking back at the finished project (in this case viewing the movie itself) can an actor see the coming together of disparate scenes and actions to make a whole. Yet, even the word 'finished' seems inappropriate, as continued reappraisals and interpretation of the unfolding story will occur as different participants view the movie and different voices re-tell the story from their own perspectives. Indeed, a principal participant's own account of the experience may change over time with re-telling and according to the audience or interlocutor with whom they are engaged. In this sense, we move further away from an initial or original experience:

I think in a way I've probably re-set what I think I thought; you know, you caricature the past I think as it gets further away don't you? (FIDND)

Listening to and interviewing CEOs, gave insight into this process. As CEOs interact with the interviewer, recount incidents and explain actions it may be that they are well rehearsed and practised in the detail of the story being told (viz. FIKL - I tell this story now...; SIDND - The joke I used in the first six months...). For others, in the act of recounting, it can appear to be the first time that some sense of cohesion and meaning takes place; a moment of spontaneous sensemaking or, perhaps, appropriate improvisation? For example,

FICC stopping mid-sentence: I've never realised this...

FIDND reframing an example: Just going back a bit and coming at it from a tangent

FIMD repeating the realisation of an evaluation: I don't think it's that simple. No, I don't think it's that simple. And also... yeah! I *don't* think it's that simple.

FIMD in reflecting upon an incident later in the interview: ...And the third thing about - I think the third thing to be honest with you and just thinking about it now - I did address ...

FIMB picking up on a question for clarification: Ohit's a good question that, actually because I - yes, I hadn't thought of it in quite those terms (FIMB)

The actor/speaker brings together a number of particular moments (scenes) in a constructed and sense-oriented narrative: organising individual non-sequential events into a logic of meaning to provide a

basis of understanding for the listener (and indeed for the speaker). What is interesting from a researcher's point of view, is not only that we catch some glimpse of 'what was' – through the research participants' reflective practice in narrating – but we are party to the here-and-now activities of revisions and re-interpretations. What might have been 'reality' at one point in time may no longer appear relevant to the current or anticipated context and so the experience and the story may be re-shaped to present new and/or emerging themes of 'old' experience. For example, below are examples of participants' accounts of changes in their knowledge from their first impressions of a voluntary sector:

Some of the things I was involved in through the church and so on, we - I would now describe as voluntary sector. But I wouldn't have known then particularly. (FIMB)

And then to realise that all those strange creatures [Board of Trustees] that interviewed me were my bosses, that was quite interesting at first. Quite strange people...All sorts of shapes and sizes, and there was about six of them, you know, when I was interviewed...and that was quite a strange concept, that you know, your boss isn't just the next person up but it's actually, you know, these volunteers. (FIAB)

I'd had experience in terms of a volunteer without any paid workers within {} organisations but I didn't have a knowledge really about the professional voluntary sector (FIEW)

And then, em, a job came up in {}. And I'd seen it, thought well that looks interesting and I'd got details, and not thought much more about it and then, this is the wonderful fate isn't it? My girlfriend's father, who I knew quite well because we'd been going out for a number of years, said oh had you seen this job - because he used to be a director of [LDA]. And just casually said had I seen this job and I thought well I had but ... so I filled it in, typically the night before the due date, sent it off and got the job. Erm - not really knowing what it was entirely, but got absolutely captivated by it. (FINNY)

Here we see reflections on growing awareness of the sector, its inhabitants and structures as well as gaining entry to the world of work in the sector. Next, we can see responses to specific questions. Following the telling of a particular incident about individual and organisation image associated with a previous incumbent in post and how this is gradually changing, the research participant was asked to

clarify. In reflecting back FIMD's concerns as I had understood them to be, he acknowledges the situation but at the same time challenges the summarising and starts a further reflective process:

Yeah, I'm sure that's right... I'm not sure it's been an issue [here].
Let's check this out...(FIMD – goes through an incident again)

In going through the incident again, FIMD brings out further evidence to show how new behaviours in the organisation are changing the organisation's reputation:

We're a million pound outfit now, 30 staff, you know which I think is unusual, I think there are only 4 or 5 in the country that are of that size. So, inevitably people look at us and say look at that lot, you know, they've got loads of cash, they've got good reserves, they've got all those staff, greedy bastards. Yes, I'm sure we get a lot of that. I think it's less than we used to get because, you know, we've recognised that in some instances we were actually - we poached work and funds that really should have gone somewhere else and so we don't do that anymore. We do try to collaborate and share things with people. (FIMD)

However, in interviewing another participant an example, using FIMD's organisation as a comparison, was given to show how FICC's organisation differed in approaches to working with voluntary groups from others in the same field. We can see that the 'old' reputation still has a strong hold and that it may be in one's own interests to retain older and more familiar identities of others in terms of enhancing or making favourable comparisons to our organisations or ourselves:

You know there's always the joke that {} will charge you to say good morning you know, because everything they do has a charge attached to it. Now that's their strategy, that's different but we haven't got a voluntary sector that has actually got that much money (FICC)

In some instances, broader generalities of work are remembered and retold, rather than specific recollections. Asking for concrete examples of approaches and techniques leads to re-telling in the present past actions and experiences and can occasion reassessment of success (or not). This example comes from FIND:

Oh, heck! There's a question. I remember thinking ... I can remember thinking that this is not - you can't just say to people

we've got to change things, and we needed some sort of plan to do that. So, I started thinking through the process of what was needed. Then, I figured it was going to be - it had to be an internal as well as an external process because people there were used to dealing with white people from their own kind of culture, from their own geographical location. And so I did some kind of - I don't think you'd call it training, but certainly we had some discussions about people from different cultures who might come in with different problems, with different kind of attitudes and might expect different kinds of help, and talking about kind of an appreciation that, you know?

So we did that and it took a couple of years, you know; and it took a lot of kind of monitoring and looking at, and er - development. The newspaper column helped a lot because - I didn't like it at the time... - and the paper actually got a commendation for including a {} column in it as well.

To provide an analytic framework to better comprehend these processes, we perhaps need to combine aspects of temporal frameworks of a here and now focus with more fluid and dynamic images over time. In this way, we can see that in the act of telling in this moment in time and space, participants link and give coherence to events and experiences and provide an account for changes over time and in differing contexts. While this may allow for individual cognition and sensemaking, it also allows for narratives and their meanings as inter-subjective and collectively negotiated. In this way, ideas can be offered about:

... how we create meaning in the narrative communalities in which we live... how we come to construct and understand our experience and selves (as managers, researchers, ordinary people), in time ... and in relation to others ... the outcomes [of which] are narratives about how we live our lives, make meaning, relate and orient ourselves to our surroundings and, in doing so, create 'realities' and 'identities'. (Cunliffe et al, 2004: 179 and 280-281).

This offers opportunities to consider seemingly shared ideas and conceptions of the non-profit sector, by the people inhabiting this space, and their collective interpretation of what others outside the sector think. As well as similarities of "in-group" non-profit members, differentiation and distinction from other sectors (and even sub-sectors of the non-profit sector) are also important parts of creating and sustaining image and identities.

An approach that was identified in the late 1980s as gaining ground in public sector organisations fearful of indiscriminate co-optation of business models of organisations, was rather than emphasise "the virtues of one particular sector... [was] to tease out the common and distinctive features of the different sectors" (Billis, 1989: 4). This can be seen in the following CEO comments:

My experience now is actually that the voluntary sector – that is the voluntary sector that I have been involved with – is far more professional and certainly much better planned and ...more efficient than my private sector experience (FIAB)

I think the voluntary sector has got an awful lot to give to the public sector. On the whole, voluntary organisations have always, and still do, work in a holistic way. And are more about, on the whole, prevention rather than crisis or acute [services] (FIEWH)

I think the other thing that strikes me [is] how much more difficult it is to get attitudes to shift at {LDA} than it has been here [government quango]. I don't know why – I think people, in a sense, people in an organisation like this expect that they have to fit in to a culture. Whereas at {LDA} people were much more aggressive about saying this is me, this is my culture and who are you to come and change it. So here, there's much more acceptance of a hierarchy – quite shockingly so... (SIDND)

In {} I had £50,000 in a 'slush fund' – it was in the budget, but it was there for me to say, "well, you put 5 in and we'll put 10 in". We couldn't afford that here, we couldn't even do that at {}. (SIKLB)

Organisations in similar fields of operation may have similar characteristics and may absorb similar environmental factors, which have an effect on their make-up, but how organisations manifest these characteristics and how key individuals interpret environmental factors may be influenced by, for example, leadership style, staff development, competence, relationships with others and flexibility to manage change. If managers construct their operating environment through defining its reality based on their own selection of significant features and their personal or cognitive dispositions, then this constructed reality becomes the basis for managerial decisions and action. By defining the similarities and differences between organisations and, in some instances, by inference the characteristics of the people who occupy the sector, we start to see glimpses of the cognitive models (or "interpretative screens" , Gioia in Bouchikhi *et al* ,

1998: 44) used to guide action and relationships with other organisations (Albert and Whetton, 1985; 2004).

As already mentioned, many of the LDA chief executives found their way in to the sector by accident and by a variety of routes, yet there is a strong affinity between a work persona and personal values and convictions. For example:

My dad has worked for {} for years on a voluntary basis ... And, he used to do quite a lot as well for the {}, so I suppose I was brought up with that kind of ethos really... I think I just had this strong sense of, without sounding really pretentious - kind of social justice, you know? Coming from where I do and having to fight through an education system and all the rest where nobody ever really did very well and went to the factory or the pit, really ... I feel there's a lot of freedom [in the sector] you have to think on your feet constantly - I like that, I like that challenge. You can reinvent yourself and what you do periodically. And, there's just such a great opportunity for change. (FISM)

I just thought this is absolutely fantastic because yes there are things you have to achieve...and it's down to you to be able to use your initiative, your creativity, your innovation to do that. And once I'd got my head around that - it was just wonderful (FIEWH)

I wasn't sure about {} - I just felt there were lots of tensions then in terms of expectations of the organisation and individuals. And I was really affected by the job in the voluntary sector because it was a very varied sort of job - it was managing a social centre and deputising for the director. It was doing all of those things and it just seemed so much more interesting and exciting. (FIIR)

The relationship between work-life and life outside work needs to be actively managed to avoid burn out, as can be seen below:

My predecessor frankly I think burnt himself out because he tried to carry much too much in his own head and he made himself ill so I'm conscious of that isolation within the organisation and ... in the sort of work that we do here (FIKLB)

I've been in the sector for nearly thirty years really, well 25 years and I'm still relatively sane and a lot of people aren't at that stage- and I have worked in some very stressful jobs and some tough jobs. I do have something like running, I mean seriously, some things like that, something outside work that actually reduces stress, physically, is quite important, you know? Because I sometimes find myself thinking here - it doesn't matter that much, it matters but not to

make yourself ill over it. So I think it is important because I think you do get burn out... (FILSL)

I was being the fulcrum for the whole organisation plus the fact that I was line managing all the major departmental managers as well as the senior management team which is all right when things are going all right but when things start to go wrong then wheels start to drop off, which is what happened last year. I was ill for some time and off for two and half months. Partly it [the need to restructure] was recognised for some time but it brought it into sharp relief by my experience last year (SHNS)

I've started working from home, I've only done it twice and it's phenomenal... they [work and home] are very separate, very much so. I've got a study, which I didn't have before and my partner understands. .. I work better in the morning. So the next time I got up at 7 and started at 8 and worked straight through till about 2 and knocked off. And I'd done so much more work...it worked really well. (SIAB)

Well, the other thing I said at half past six this morning when my wife woke up was, god, I said it was actually four o'clock when I woke up this morning and I did say to her "what am I doing with my life? I can't carry on like this". So, yeah, I'm probably going through a bit of a crisis of whether I can keep this up for another 10, 9 years. (SICY)

However, this relationship is more than striving for work-life balance. It is about creating and maintaining synergy between the two. See Fig 6.1, below.

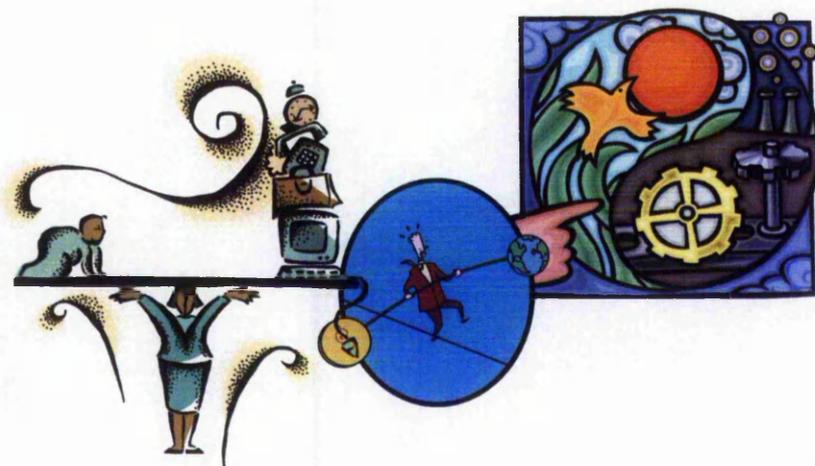


Fig 6.1 From Work-Life Balance to Life- Work Synergy

Source: author

This synergy not only helps to create "a sense of personal integrity and consistency over time" as suggested by Moran and Brightman (2001: 111) but also maintains a sense of personal and professional congruity:

We've had quite a lot of quite threatening change, I think in here, over the last, you know, in sort of the last year or so. But, erm, I enjoy sort of trying to meet that positively really. And that it is part of that side of me, I think - definitely. It definitely fulfils that. I used to have real, erm, schisms between what it was I really wanted to do, which was the other half of my life, outside work almost, and my work life. Even though I enjoyed mainly what I did, I didn't do anything that I absolutely loathed or felt compromised by at any point really, but I've never felt joined and I think I feel joined in this job. (FISM)

It would have been very easy to have gone into the City and got a job as a stockbroker ... Make money, a lot of money out of other people's monies. And a lot of my - I wouldn't say friends even, I have to say...that's what they did. And I detested them for it really because I just thought it was incredibly selfish and it was all about them and - all they could talk about was how much money they'd be earning. (FIDND)

I think one of the sort of results of being ill has been I'm not as patient as I used to be. Erm I'm a bit more impatient about things happening and about putting my energies into things that aren't going to actually bring about some kind of result. (FIJB)

The problem was some key individuals sold out and joined the board - well you've given it credibility. If you really think it's a bad idea you really have to be consistent and say I'm not having anything to do with it. (SILSL)

The status and attention afforded to the sector can also be seen to reflect or intensify the sense of self and place of the individual in their career and personal aspirations, and as part of their "political vocation" (6 and Leat, 1997: 43) and achievements:

You know, there is a limit, I think, when you're in the voluntary sector to how much people give you credibility or legitimacy... people will listen to you when you're new and when you are bringing something fresh, and some things will change because of that but it starts to trail off doesn't it? Unless you're coming up with new ideas which I think is always quite difficult. And, a few people [in the public and private sector] said to me, when are you going to go and get a proper job, you know, because they didn't perceive the job as big enough or something. But that was kind of it started to

tell me, I think rightly, that people had a perception you can't be that good if you stay in the voluntary sector and I mean that's abysmal isn't it? But I think it's real... and that does cloud people's perception. (SIDND)

I did feel that I had set myself goals of what I wanted to achieve things like getting it [the organisation] on a secure footing with funding, which I achieved; improving credibility with members and with government, which again I think I achieved. (SILSL)

I've seen [LDAs] where people took very political, almost party politicised or confrontational modes of operating. And in all cases they've taken the [LDAs] along roads which I think were ultimately self defeating! So, I think you've got to be able to manage the tensions between those different roles. And do it in such a way that you're clear what you are but you're respected by all sides, even though they might not agree with you. (FIJGM)

I mean I suppose I do have this expectation that everybody's going to be as committed to working in the [LDA] as I am. And that's just unrealistic, you know. They're not. I mean some people just do this to pay the bills. Er - they don't do it with any particular kind of value. I mean I - for me this is sort of living out the - my political ambition since I was sixteen. I've always known since I was sixteen that I'd end up doing something like this, you know, it's like a vocation. (FICY)

I don't want to be pigeon-holed as someone who's good for his sector - the sector he's in, you know? Because however hard you try and influence things in the public sector particularly because that's where a lot of our work is focussed, you're still going to be on the outer [edge] and still a bit removed from the hub of decision making. I know that I command personal respect in that group ... but when I speak up it's still {} from the voluntary sector and therefore we don't have to take him too seriously. You know that really annoys me and partly I think I should stay to try to change that but partly I think well, there's no way I can change that now in this job. And maybe if I go and do something else then I can try to change attitudes. (FIDND)

This extension of self as a representative of a sector where there is a feeling of connectedness, vocation, loyalty and a sense of personal achievement gives both a strength and fragility to CEOs' self concept. This is different from Goodall's (2002) view that people use the sector to justify their identity; rather there is an inter-connectedness between the two. What further highlights this is how critical events in participants' lives may affect their personal and professional identities. There were hints of this above in terms of how illness had affected a

sense of speed and need for tangible benefits in terms of dedication of time and decision making for one CEO; for another how physical and emotional stress had resulted in re-structuring the organisation. We can see further examples below:

I've also personally had a shock because [family member] died suddenly just a year ago completely unexpected. She just had an undetected condition and she died and that sort of thing does impact on you when you look at life and the world (SIKL)

I was diagnosed with breast cancer and that kind of makes you think... it kind of made me reappraise what I was doing (FIJB)

I have actually worked in the situation where if you make the wrong decision people die, you know? And an additional example, Well when you've had a phone call as I had on New Year's Day at 2 in the morning that one of the {} workers has been stabbed, we don't know if they're going to make it, come in. That's pressure, that's different (FILSL)

FICC, commenting on importing collective ways of working - what Batsleer, 1995: 226, would label an "alternative organisations perspective" - into a more traditional style LDA: So, I came here and said, "oh staff meetings - we can rotate chairing them" because that's what we'd always done, and they said 'all right' you know, but it was stupid, we floundered ... and then eventually someone said, "why don't YOU chair them, you're the director". OOoer, so there was a whole learning experience for me about realising that you can't import things that aren't appropriate to the structure because you just annoy people who aren't paid as much as you. "You're paid to direct, you bloody chair" and since I've accepted that it's worked out a lot better and then they talk more because I'm doing my bit and they can contribute.

In this final quote, we can see the use of current modes of working based on experience and past methods employed by the CEO. Resistance to noticing the meetings are floundering allows the CEO to be consistent with previous models of working. Only after a significant period has passed and where others have the task of bringing the problem to the CEO's attention does change occur. As Weick (1988:306) suggests, often it only in the process of acting that people can determine what "the 'appropriate action' is". Here action facilitates understanding and learning. These newly embodied conceptions of the sector may affect future actions. For example, "a map of if-then assertions in which actions are related to outcomes ... [and] expectations of what will happen in the future" (Weick, 1988: 307) may influence whether

similar out-of-context techniques may be tried again. In this instance, failure to succeed in action attempts may lead to reluctance in risk-taking for future actions. It is a learning experience that not only affects working practice, but also impacts understanding at the level of self-identity. After all, this particular CEO came into the sector because of wanting "to work in a collective" (FICC), yet here is reminded that the role is "boss" and certain actions are expected of FICC in this situation. This together with the comment that managing fills FICC "with horror", may be part of the reason, why at this point, this CEO also feels cynical about, and less than committed to, the sector.

On the other hand, where action attempts are successful, this may well confirm belief systems and provide justification for preferred ways of acting and being. Take for example, FICY, who talks about passion, gut-feeling and an intuitive self:

I do think with my guts a lot of the time, you know. And I've learned to trust my intuition, my intuitive approach – greatly. Seriously greatly you know. I mean I am rarely wrong in what my guts tell me to do. Usually where I make mistakes is when I go against my guts and use my intellect... I mean I can't back off, you know I should be ashamed of this but that's the way I feel you know. (FICY)

Here there is an expressed sense of shame about using non-rational methods to determine action. Yet, over time, FICY's experience and actions have combined into a tacit knowledge of what works well in what situations and manifests itself through cognitive and emotional linkages – gut feelings. This knowledge is used to read situations in terms of patterns and trends that tend to confirm (rather than upset) current cognitive maps and sensemaking:

I mean I'll sit in when appointing staff ... and we have equal opportunities policies and practices to go through ... but you know, sometimes you think well, we're going to appoint this person and my guts tell me that he or she's not the right person and my guts tell me this person is the wrong one, you know. And I'm nearly always right. And I think five years later when I'm embroiled in some personnel dispute or whatever it might be ... Self-fulfilling prophecy? Oh I suppose it could, yes. No, I think probably not. (FICY)

Selective attention to detail, and ordering and retaining experiences over time give primary focus to intuition over rationality in this instance. Disconfirming occurrences may well give rise to cognitive dissonance (“sometimes you feel like you’re going against what you really believe in” – FICY) which may lead to further justification of self and actions to regain a sense of balance or may indeed become an “impressionable moment [leading] to discontinuous changes in performance” (Weick, 2001: 27-28) and further sense-making occurrences. This process is show below, see Fig. 6.2.

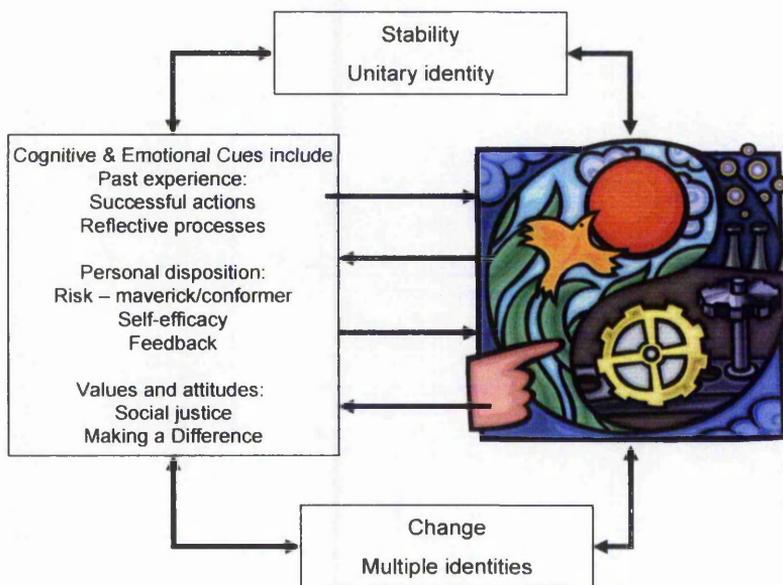


Fig. 6.2 Sense of Self: Cognitive & Emotional Cues

Source: author

This process takes us back to the earlier theatrical/drama metaphor to consider improvisation and the building and adaptation of a greater repertoire of responses to enable our actors - LDA CEOS - to transform this tacit knowledge into performances. This transference or transformation is “mediated by thoughts about themselves and their capabilities [and] concern such things as a perceived capability to mobilize motivation, to control perturbing thoughts, to persevere, to bounce back from failure, and to exert some control over the environment” (Weick, 2001: 69). For some, this may result in a seemingly fixed unitary identity (the actor who is always him or herself no matter what the role or context). For others, it may be about competence in juggling multiple identities.

These thoughts and concerns are linked to perceived tensions and challenges surrounding LDA CEOs and the environments and contexts in which they are performing. As with any theatrical performance the audience will change and as such we need to consider "the kinds of roles and identities currently available" to LDA CEOs and "the potential of the individual in assuming different identities or roles" (Albert and Whetton, 1985/2004: 97). Before considering this "external" environment, I want first to turn very briefly to an environment often ignored by those interested in organisations and their inhabitants, the environment "inside of heads rather than outside of them" (Weick, 2001: 185).

Individuals perceive and construct their realities from a variety of stimuli and cues – these are both shaped by perceptions and shape those perceptions. While this might happen on an individual basis it is done within the wider concept of the politics, history and culture of a setting – an individual's social worlds (i.e. their 'social reality'). Both individual and collective constructions of what is 'real' (or made real by collective descriptions, labels, language and concepts) is both temporal (shifting and dynamic) and open to negotiation. In this sense, there is not one reality, truth or identity but multiples (e.g. different professional paradigms, use of language/discourses). Perceptions are externalised as 'facts'; socially negotiated 'facts' are accepted/rejected, affirmed/disconfirmed. Weick (2001) makes the point that perceptions are a joint product – they consist of both structural properties – the environment, (organisational/societal) processes and an individual's dispositions – so we see what we believe.

The concept of identity can be seen similarly in that we become what we believe we are (method acting writ large). This goes some way to recognising individual agency in action. In this way, we can link perceptions with actions and the assumption of different roles and identities. For LDA CEOs, sense of self and being is linked to values and personal convictions, and actions (or rather intentions) are geared to making a difference.

What can be seen from participants' experiences is that whenever we/they perceive things to be 'wrong', 'unjust', against our/their perceptions of reality, we/they seek change/enact change. We might

do this in terms of self-fulfilment and commitment (to 'conscience', 'social justice'), as the road to (self and others') empowerment or freedom and/or to assert our sense of individual and collective identities. Through language and promotion of particular dialogues and discourse, Czarniawska-Joerges (1997/2004: 408) suggests that we "endow our action (and inaction) with meaning". In trying to understand both individuals and individuals in organisations, we need to be able to understand the processes of values and theory production - that is, "meanings ascribed to and produced by a given set of collective actions" (ibid, 1997/2004: 408).

In many respects in considering how LDA CEOs build self-concepts, we have been considering the internal environment of perceptual processes and cognitive activities that lead to action. We consider observable events – actions and behaviours - in relation to an environment external to the person. However, some of the debates around sense-making and identity involve absence of action. In choosing not to act, an individual endows that choice with some kind of meaning (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1997/2004) whether that is in explanation to others or in rationalizing to oneself. Many of the LDA CEOs taking part in this research engage in self-talk, using their perceptions and anticipation of others' reactions (self-censorship) along with their many internal selves and action templates to shape their thinking and subsequent behaviour. This critical reflection is often done alone or in association with other non-work related activities:

I mean I do think a lot... putting things in proportion really. When you've had a stressful day you can not only get rid of the stress you can actually think – well it doesn't matter that much. Or yes it does matter but it's finished and you can move on to the next thing. Or you think about strategy – well what about this, what about trying that. (FISLS – thinking and running)

I just talk to myself in the car, because I've got half an hour drive and it just gets some things out of my system and stops me saying them to people. If you haven't got anyone else to talk to, well, just hearing yourself say it, you think, "ah, that doesn't make sense, shut up", you know? (FICC)

Sitting in the garden often in the evening, quite often. Quite seriously, yes. You know, I mean often just sitting quietly. It's about the only time you really get, I think, to sort of do that [thinking].

And I like sitting in the yard. I mean even in the depths of the winter I sit in the yard! With people going in and out, and with a bottle of wine and I'm quite happy. But actually, I do - a lot of things settle then. (FIMB)

This private deliberation is often, but not always, tested out in the public arena of organisational and inter-organisational settings as part of the process of sense-making and identity preservation/promotion; as such, it is both reflective and anticipatory. See Fig 6.3

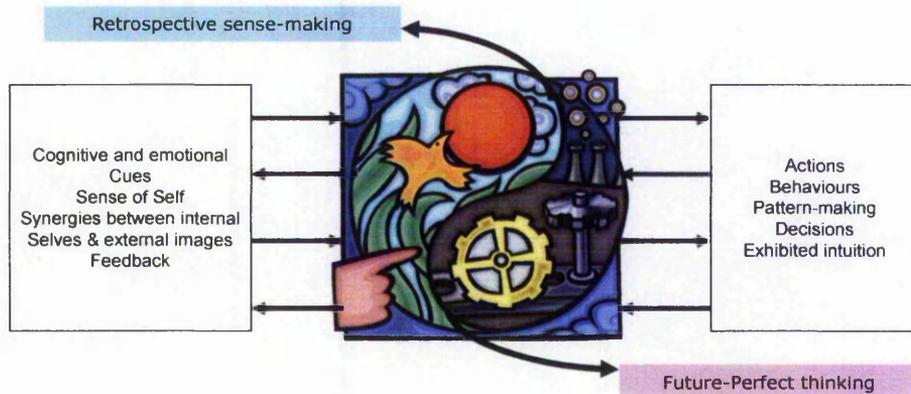


Fig. 6.3 LDA CEO Worlds: Synergy and Sensemaking
Source: author

The synergy between our internal selves and our perception of external images of ourselves leads to a broadened or “extended self” (Brewer and Gardner, 1996/2004). This may involve self-categorisation where our successful performance may correspond to the strength of self-concept and identity in being part of a particular group or category and vice versa. Where we have multiple selves and different levels of identity in different contexts, maintaining congruence between self and action - and how individual identities are constrained or given expression - becomes more complex.

Camouflage, chameleons and changing performances: shifting roles and identities

A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognise him.

(James 1917:294,cited in Gioia, 1998:20)

As we have seen, the image of the sector and LDAs – and how CEOs believe the sector and LDAs are perceived - although shifting, is still marginalised and downplayed in comparison to accounts of similar

sized organisations in the private and public sectors. This is significant if as Gioia (1998) suggests this kind of negative comparison can affect sense-making strategies, strategic decision making, action and performance.

Yet LDA chief executives maintain a positive commitment both to their sector and to their personal contributions. This could be as Alvesson and Deetz (2000:57) propose that:

Well-educated people, developing a self image as being 'autonomous' are probably not particularly easily affected by the rhetoric of those business heroes often described as charismatic in popular and scientific literature.

In this way, LDA CEOs may be making a distinction between the collective identity of belonging to "a sector" and the awareness of their own expertise, achievements and knowledge that may even allow for some of the acknowledged cognitive dissonance between values, aims and ways of working. Their sense of self in relating to a wider social movement (commitment to social justice) gives rise to language and stories that place themselves within this movement and "give sense to the author's existence" (Rorty in interview with Borradori, 2006: 43). This gives a sense of individual identity yet acknowledges the connections and influences that help to shape that identity – it is both separate from and part of a larger system of inter-relationships. In some respects, we can see this further evidenced in CEOs' connections of past, present and future in terms of making a difference (collective interpretation) and leaving a legacy (individual contribution):

I do think that will probably be one of my successes looking back – various bodies had tried {} for years and had not succeeded, we succeeded at the first attempt....That will be a legacy and I think it will work (SILSL)

CEOs also appear to make selective comparisons, for example comparing organisational structure and time taken to implement changes:

I think what's a good experience for some people in the voluntary sector is freedom from layers of bureaucracy and layers of non-decision-making, which you get in very big institutions. So, lots and

lots of people find a very fruitful playground in the voluntary sector ... I'm much more effective in the voluntary sector because I'm not constantly arguing with people who don't want to take risks, or ...you know...can't make a decision in less time span than 2 years, you know. We once tried to introduce black diaries for social workers and it took 2 years before they made a decision. Social workers wanted them, we designed them but no one could make a decision because it was too difficult to decide whether to spend the money, you know. (FICC)

Exaggerated or not, this kind of evaluation, suggested by Elsbach and Kramer's study of administrators' responses to university rankings (cited in Gioia, 1998), allows for a shift away from comparisons that downplay the relevance and contribution of the sector to produce more positive images of the sector. Once in place, these positive images and perceptions of the sector can reinforce, and be reinforced by, CEOs' relationships in inter-organisational activities.

CEOs can then deal with the tension of being similar to and yet different to the other organisations with which they work and confirm the sector as one where "they can enact...personal values" (Pratt, 1998: 183-4) in comparison to other sectors. In turn, this "may be successful in fostering identification because...individuals feel complete in a way that is more profound than denoted by affiliation or self-enhancement needs" (Pratt, 1998: 183). This can be seen in CEOs' commitment to continued working in the sector despite the lack of more traditional rewards associated with mainstream employment, such as salary levels and career development, and the reluctance to move on because of the changing complexity in the nature of the work and consequently new challenges and opportunities for learning.

The changing complexity in the nature of work is acknowledged by the assertion that not-for-profit organisations tend to be "more complex than business firms of comparable size" (Anheier, 2000, p. 7; Hill, 2000). As "public" bodies, there are a range of "interested" people and accountable bodies with which to interact. See Fig 6.4, page 159, which illustrates the constellation of multiple stakeholder & multi-organisational networks.

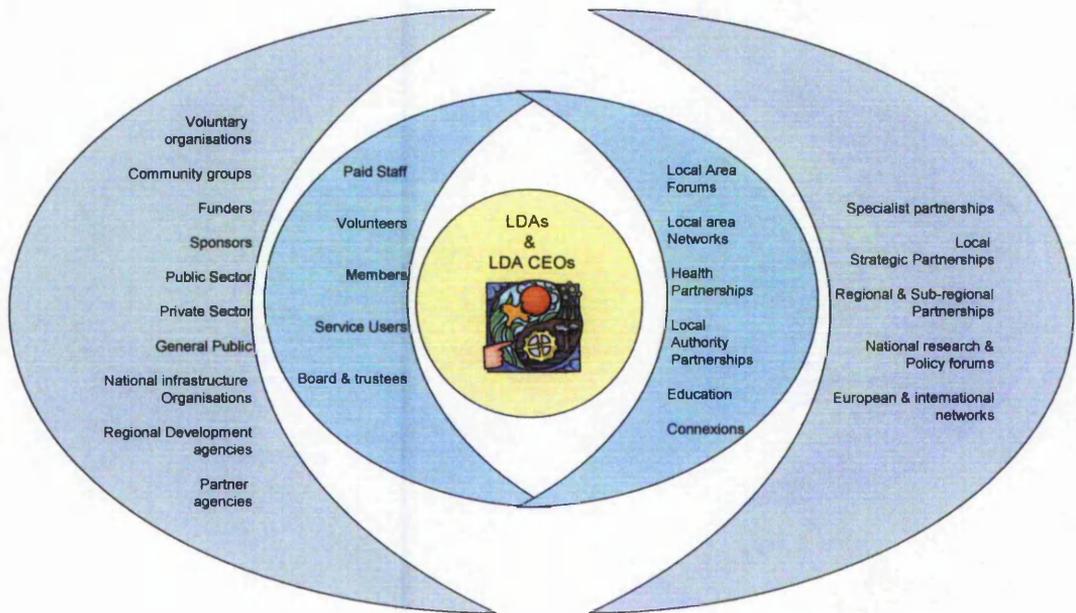


Fig 6.4 Multiple stakeholders and multi-organisational networks

Source: author

It is this context, which provides a particular challenge for chief executives in "managing tensions between internal values or aims and the external policy environment" (Scott *et al*, 2000). As chief executives, explain:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to retain a sense of the issues and needs the organisation wishes to address without them being shaped by the analysis provided by each tier of government: central government, regional development agencies, local authorities. (EQJR)

I say to anybody that comes for a job here that you have to be happy living with grey. That nothing here is black and white . . . it's sort of a known world, but you never quite know where you are going. (FIKL)

Internally, there can be a number of different contractual arrangements with employees and volunteers:

I tell this story now, that on the 30th of March, I went home on Friday night with 16 staff and came in on Monday morning with 32 staff. And so I'm in the process of having to change the way I do things (FIKL)

The need to concentrate managerial or executive effort on issues entirely within the organisation can result in CEOs losing a holistic

approach to keeping their organisations positioned in relation to other voluntary organisations, to public and private sectors and in considering ways of optimising choice and determination for the organisation. Indeed, the more internally focused processes of work design and day-to-day management responsibilities were not the key drivers for some managers:

I wouldn't want to go into an organisation just to manage it. I'd want to go in to an organisation to change its strategic direction . . . I get very frustrated with all the, you know, the organisational industrial stuff, it just drains my energy . . . I don't see myself managing a steady state organisation. (FIJB)

Where there was a focus on internal arrangements, this was often where managers had recently moved into a role, where the previous incumbent was perceived to have had "problems" or had "missed" key issues, or because of crisis or sudden growth. For example:

The organisational managerial demands on the job have risen significantly. But at the same time, I've had to do my best to develop the role, build the infrastructure within the organisation to cope with that in terms of senior line management, in terms of development, planning, co-ordination and in terms of servicing, you know, administrative, IT servicing and so on. . . . That's made big demands on my time and energy, to make sure that we have the systems within the organisation to cope with this growth . . . This is a critical issue that comes about . . . partly as a result of growth in the organisation and the HR management function is now quite substantial. I mean the overall responsibility of it falls on me, but with 40 staff heading towards 60 within a year, it's no longer sustainable for the chief executive to still be the personnel manager! (FINS)

Most of the CEOs taking part in this research would see themselves as having more of an external focus to their work. However, it is a complex relationship and one cannot divorce the more internally focused management and leadership role within the organisation from the leading and more entrepreneurial role outside the organisation, see illustrated in Fig. 6.5 Practice Environment Focus, page 161.

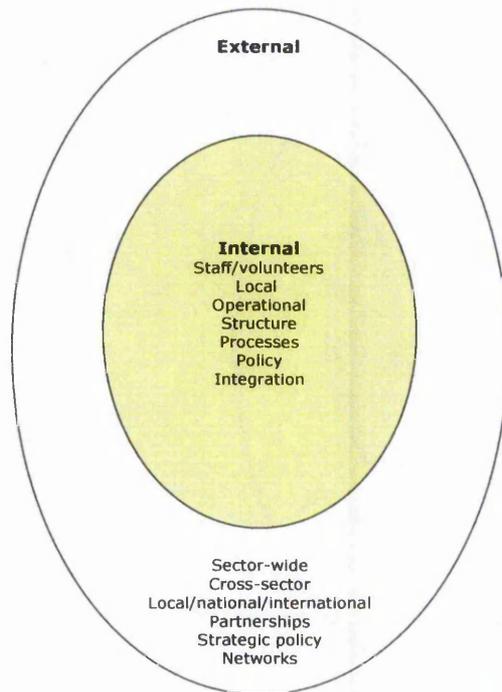


Fig. 6.5 Practice Environment Focus

Source: author

In responding to what Schön (1987, p. 36) might refer to an "indeterminate zones of practice" – and linking back to a need to become fluent in mainstream management-speak and operate in different environments, local development agency chief executives may resort to camouflage:

I can be a suit on the days we need a suit, you know – (FIKLB)

I had my tie on this morning. I've taken it off because the thing I'm going to this afternoon, you know, it wouldn't be appropriate to wear a tie at. So it's that almost change in environment ... I mean there's not just two environments – wear a tie, don't wear a tie, but crudely there's that. Well there's probably three – there's those where you have to and those where you definitely shouldn't and those where it doesn't matter, it's about your own force of personality (FINNY).

In addition, CEOs appear to develop the ability to become "quick-change artists", which can be both exhilarating and stressful:

I mean, I think you're a bit of a chameleon really (FIJGM)

I was in London and I had some spare time so I went to have a sort of semi-work, semi-catch-up lunch with another chief exec of another national organisation. Went to her office and she was

cleaning out the fridge – on her knees, cleaning out the fridge because someone spilt the milk. And, as she said – that’s the job of the chief exec and yeah, that’s actually right. I mean, you have to do everything from cleaning out the fridge to argue with government ministers, and that’s the appeal really. (FILSK)

This ability to change performances and shift roles (see Fig. 6.6) is not only exhibited by clothes and accessories, but also in the language CEOs choose to use and the ability to interpret and translate events:

It [conference] had speakers from government office, the assembly and from the development agency. I don’t think any one of those speakers, quite senior, had thought about the audience; had thought about how they translate what they do into that audience’s interest; had read the background material. Now if I went to speak to the Chamber of Trade, I would be thinking about how I can say what we do in ways that they’re going to be able to understand and I don’t think that’s true on the other side (FIJGM)

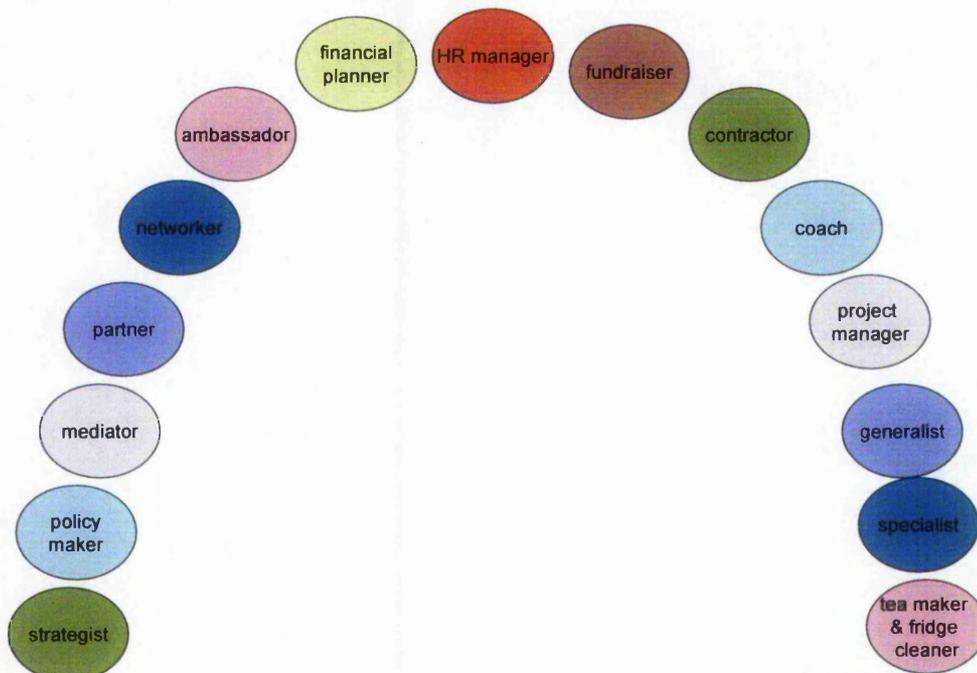


Fig. 6.6 Shifting Roles & Juggling Identities
Source: author

This ability to shift focus and cope with multifarious fields of participation, may suggest the potential for a fusion, a blurring of boundaries between what is “internal” to the organisation, and what is “external” shown in this statement by a chief executive:

And so it doesn't matter what the government throws at us in terms of a variety of different things. All of them go into that filter and I say, well, what in that government idea is about changing people's lives for the better? And if it's not about that, we just ignore it. (FIKL)

Here, we can see that while this manager is strategically open to governmental (and other) factors, these are "filtered" through a conceptual model of aims and values. If they resonate at this fundamental level – have "structural congruence" (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 95) – then they may become part of the manager's world. For example, if information gained from "outside", in this instance from government, suggests it will measure up to the criterion (rule of thumb) 'changing people's lives for the better', it may become part of internal thinking. Otherwise, events can be seen to be irrelevant to thinking and action. This helps in sustaining organisational and individual identities, and raises strategic awareness and readiness to adapt to change.

What we need to consider is how this happens, whether it is purposeful - as this example suggests, even with the benefit of retrospective sensemaking, (Weick, 1995) - or spontaneous. If strategising is about making meanings, a process of vision, then what we are attempting to do by our analysis is to construct a reality for ourselves. By doing this we determine how we act, react to, develop or ignore other realities, which impinge on our organisational systems. We need to be able to cope with diversity, to manage ambiguities and to see relationships between significant factors, which help us to become proactive and creative as individuals and as individuals in groups (organisations).

Taking this kind of processual and developmental approach, which will include the relevance of historical and contextual factors, brings back in to play the emotional and "irrational" sides of business: the effect of developing resourceful humans who can positively enhance the survival and development of the organisation. In order to do this, non-profit CEOs have to be aware of their own sector needs and be competent in determining and responding to those needs. They have to have the capacity to anticipate the "worlds" of other allied professionals: for

example, implications of national government rhetoric and priorities setting for local level activities.

The example Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 189) use to describe the experience of what they term "marginalised researcher groups", may also have some parallels here. As a "marginalised" sector, the CEOs have to "learn two paradigmatic-theoretical systems – their own and the dominant one – and dominant groups only one" (ibid, 2000: 189). The issue here as raised earlier and that will be returned to in more depth later (Chapters 8 and 9) is whether this learning enables CEOs to articulate areas of common concern while remaining separate (as opposed to marginalised) or whether it leads to a sublimation of identity and sector values:

The sector itself is voiceless...what we have to do...is to actually break the chains of constraint that exist...That if you don't talk in quasi academic language or the language of government reports or of monitoring and evaluation reports then what you've got to say is in some ways not valid...(SHJB/T)

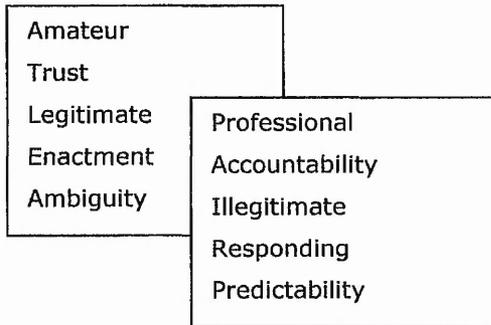
Providing space for the multiple voices of the sector, while using the linguistic and symbolic references of the dominant sector(s) means that the expert practitioner, in the context of LDA CEOs, is not only bi-lingual but also *multi-lingual*. They learn, what I have termed, the art of *modal participation*, which corresponds with what Lave and Wenger (1999: 20) describe as "the ability to play various roles in various fields of participation" where learning "implies becoming a different person" in different situations, contexts and in different sets of interrelationships. This particular aspect of learning also necessitates the construction of and negotiation between multiple identities and, in the language of dramatic performance, a "willingness to improvise" (Weick, 2001: 221).

Tensions and Tightropes

As mentioned earlier, Czarniawska-Joerges (1997/2004: 408) suggests that by "using language, people endow their action (and inaction) with meaning". By considering the language used by LDA CEOs we catch a glimpse of the worlds they inhabit. Not so much in the description of the place (for example, complex, amorphous) but in the descriptions of their actions and the relationships they encounter, for example,

juggling, balancing, walking fine lines and tightropes, and tensions. Before moving on to consider how LDA CEOs cope with and manage these tensions and tightropes it is useful to review some of the themes and patterns emerging.

Performing



As we've seen there is a tension between being seen as philanthropic amateurs (Almond and Kendall, 2001) while maintaining the spirit of voluntarism within a more

'professionalised' environment. This has to be considered within the continuing debate of the "real" sector of volunteers and the "invented" and growing sector of paid workers, where structures and processes are seen in some respects as formalising informal and spontaneous community-driven initiatives:

Well I think what's good when you get something happening in response you know you get an accident on the road and you get a group of parents demonstrating and setting up a group to bring about road calming or something. And to see those things happen very, very quickly in response to a real community need and no local authority could respond that quickly. And to see people actually doing things for themselves and working with others, you know ... I think is brilliant (FICC)

This split between community and voluntary sectors is also being played out in new partnership arrangements in determining local management of services where LDAs are being by-passed as links to a wider community, and where statutory agencies are setting up their own processes for consultation. Where LDAs have a more substantial voice in local government and public sector modernisation processes, it appears to be where there is some history of reciprocal arrangements and where trust has been built between the sectors. Here, the expertise of the sector in determining appropriate relationships and bridging gaps between statutory agencies and communities and grassroots organisations is acknowledged:

Well, I think their attitude has changed because they need us. And they cannot get things done the way government requires them to do it because they haven't got the expertise and we have. And they need us now. And they will use us because we can get the job done. Er - and meet their outputs. Not because they think it's the right way of doing it, but because they have to er - which is not entirely cynical, but I think it's fairly cynical (FIAB)

As we can see, there is a level of cynicism in how these relationships may continue to develop, but there is a workable framework, to which LDA CEOs are keen to contribute:

Last week I met with the chief executive of the PCT about a range of issues and we meet about every three months or so, have lunch and I met with assistant chief exec. at the borough and one of his senior officers. And, again, it was very, very positive. Now, some of that, I think too, is about they actually need the voluntary sector, not only do they need them but they've actually got a responsibility to involve the voluntary sector and the {LDA} has a particular role there. So, I think it's partly that too, the status has risen. Whereas you know years ago, because health wasn't the least bit interested, {LDAs} were very much the fringes...you involved them but it was tokenistic and I think now they do need to involve us and they do tend to rely on us (FIIR)

However, there is an additional tension in resisting bureaucratisation of services and activities associated with growth and professionalisation in favour of remaining "swift of foot" (FIKL); in anticipating, responding to and instigating change in reconfiguration of organisational structures but also in relationships with other agencies and organisations. There are also pull-push relationships between trust and accountability in a number of ways. One already seen (Chapter 5) is the more traditional relationship between the sector and funders through the framework of grant-aid. In this relationship funders "trust" (or at least do not necessarily question) the sector's altruism and ability in delivery of services.

With the development of contracts and service level agreements, there has been an accompanying focus away from "trust" to ability to demonstrate valued-added, best-value and value-for-money in delivering appropriate quality services. In moving to more contractual arrangements with statutory services, there are elements of trust by staff and volunteers that in adopting accountability measures, LDAs

and the CEOs, at the nexus of the relationship with partner agencies, will resist the isomorphic tendency to become more governmental in outlook, structures and processes and be strong enough to stop any assimilation processes:

...that was happening in the organisation under my predecessor. But it probably needed to go backwards a bit towards being a more traditional {LDA} in terms of, you know, how it supported and worked with the voluntary sector rather than being only issue focused or working on a regional [government] agenda (FIJRN)

So that's why I wanted that planning day, because I felt that we were sort of being driven rather than driving, and we've agreed yes, that all that partnership stuff is absolutely vital. But we've also recognized we need more on the other side too (FIAB)

It's almost as if large parts of this sector, it feels to me, including my own organisation at times, have been enticed by the promise of goodies, if we will allow ourselves to consciously help government implement this agenda. Now sometimes if you think the government is doing the right thing, yes; I'm up to it. But it's whether we've lost the boundaries as to when it's appropriate to do that and when it's not appropriate. (FIPH)

However, where accountability is linked to rational and legalistic relationships between those organisations perceived as powerful because of their command of resources, and those who need to gain access to said resources, there are tensions around how services and activities are provided and who determines this. For some voluntary organisations, this is connected to recognised skills and confidence of their chief negotiators in these relationships:

We want to embrace the health agenda so it's about how do we, what sort of structure have we got now, how do we position ourselves in order to continue to deliver services to secure the funding (FICC)

We did try not to let the sort of the magnet pull you off what you want to do because there's a pot of gold - that makes a mess of things, we'd much rather say well what are the priorities and where can we get the resources (FIKLB)

And this has been a really brilliant time because it's coincided with a redefinition on the part of government of its relationship with the voluntary sector. And that just gives you space to you know, develop an organisation like this. There are some dangers in that, you know. Dangers in how far you're positioning the organisation to

take advantage of the opportunities that are there and how far you are positioning the organisation so you can do the government's bidding. There are lots of tensions there. (FIJB)

If you take up the cudgels on behalf of a community group and - I've seen LDAs who will slag off the council left, right and centre, and then expect the next week to be negotiating their grant. Well, I don't think that works somehow. And if you become too aligned with a particular political party which sometimes happens er - and it changes -! I saw that happen in {}. You're really up the creek! (FIJGM)

More person-oriented and developmental approaches to community initiatives and interagency relationships require more than measurable outputs for effective working. There also needs to be trust and reciprocity in those relationships to foster learning and joint effort even where the processes of achieving those outcomes and the rationale behind the work may be from different organisational perspectives. This is particularly relevant to advancing a mixed approach to problem-solving incorporating private, public and voluntary sector perspectives and expertise:

I think coming together around the table in partnership like this gives the voluntary sector more of an opportunity to demonstrate, to model how they can do things, think things through, deliver things, work with other people. And to build a relationship which isn't just one which is about having a service level agreement...we can work towards some similar goals we are all actually interested in the welfare of our communities, we might have different ways of getting places sometimes those differences are necessary because you need different ways of getting there (PIMN)

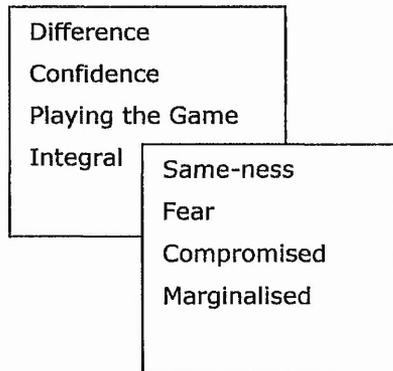
Connected to these issues is the concept of legitimacy. Legitimacy in developing good practice, which may be different from the mainstream but effective for the sector; legitimacy in defining old wine in new bottles and legitimacy in biting the hand that feeds. This is about being proactive in determining relationships with other agencies and being influential in the setting of local (and often national) priorities around development issues and user involvement initiatives.

The need to be able to anticipate the impact of changing government agenda means being familiar with that agenda at a national level not only on how it impacts voluntary sector agencies, but also the

ramifications for local government and statutory bodies. In this way, there is a pull between being able to predict events and reactions, and working confidently and creatively with emerging and changing situations and environments:

It's hard to keep a strategic focus when the scenery around you keep changing (PIMN)

Relationships



We can see elements of difference and same-ness in policy and funding relationships and in the earlier discussion on individual and organisational identities. Part of the sameness is about understanding others' agenda and looking for strategic

fit where LDAs can help others achieve their targets. The difference is in persuading the same organisations that the LDA does offer something unique to the partnership or relationship, and needs to be included in negotiations, strategic developments and, where possible, recognition of this intermediary role via consistent funding and inclusion. Where there is confidence in this identity and purpose, there is a position of strength in negotiating on behalf of both the LDA and the wider sector:

This job really, it is political, I have a relationship with the council which I think is strong - I'm more effective in my relationship with the council, because of my experience ... and I'm not frightened of them, which I think a lot of voluntary sector erm people are (FIJB)

I mean I'm going down to London tomorrow to meet the {government department} because the local authority has been told to bring a community person - you know, I'm quite pleased really; they said no, we're not bringing somebody along who's not involved. We want to bring a voluntary sector person along - who's equally as un-informed, but not as frightened about it! And so, I'm going along (FIAB)

Lack of confidence and fear of being assertive in these relationships may result in lack of power in negotiating the sector needs and a

yielding to a programme of activities set out by funders/other agencies. This accommodating of goals and objectives can lead to better relations in the short-term but may well deter LDAs from taking on a more critical role. This may dilute the initial claims of difference and expertise being offered by LDAs, leading to a gradual erosion of role:

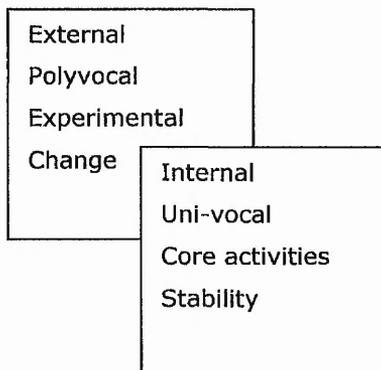
[The LDA] in this borough, and I would say it is no surprise, has a seat at most of the tables and we are able to influence, or say our piece at those tables. But it's a bit like poacher turned gamekeeper because in terms of being at that table signing up to something, it's very difficult to then challenge because we've all been there, signed it together and there are loads of examples of that where... I think [LDA] is compromised because it is at the table. And that, I think, is then how it's seen by the voluntary and community sector. And I really don't know where it goes from that, because in terms of national government LDAs are, you know ... named as one of the members and it would be difficult to say - well it wouldn't be difficult, but you know - why aren't you there? And we are being seen as an arm of the public sector so, and I think our challenging role has been reduced considerably. (FIEWH)

In playing the game, there is acknowledgement of the need to abide by the rules to a certain extent while bending them to suit the needs of the LDA - for example in re-inventing core activities as new projects specifically to fit around changing criteria for funding. The fact that many LDA CEOs (and their staff) can effectively deliver on these new funding targets may suggest that they are extremely competent at reframing existing goals and areas of work and - in keeping within the boundaries of the organisation's overall vision and *raison d'être* - have an ability for creative thinking and lateral connections across multiple agenda. Where this may work against them is where there is incongruity between the vision and the activities leading to organisational drift (losing sight of long-term strategies in favour of chasing short-term grants and fire-fighting).

There is also a sense of game playing between voluntary sector and statutory sector actors. In having a seat at the strategic table, LDA CEOs take up the mantle of respectable contributor. Yet, at the same time, they can offer critiques of policy that statutory partners may need, want or even indirectly ask for in order to affect change in their own organisations.

In this way, LDAs can become an integral part in determining policy at a local level while maintaining a strategic distance. This concept of what I've labelled *positive marginalisation* together with balance between outsider/insider allows for a critical voice, maintenance of sector identity and defines the space occupied by LDAs in these relationships. This is an interesting creative tension and one to which I want to return in looking at legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1999) and managing to learn (Chapter 9).

Focus



Keeping focus is a constant occupation for LDA CEOs. It involves a scatter-vision approach to environmental scanning both within their organisational constituencies and in the wider fields of voluntary, private and public sectors. It involves keeping watch for drift away from aims

and objectives. For some LDA CEOs, the balance between looking inside the organisation at operational matters and the external networking role is often difficult. Where most are focused on the external relationships, internal conflicts and crises may force them back inside organisational boundaries. Some CEOs have attempted to manage this balance by creating senior management teams or by developing more self-managed projects and by assessing core values:

The learning from last year stuff ... A lot of what we're doing is in response to that, isn't it? We also said we'd look at values. It would be useful to have that discussion [and] redefining my [CEO] role – that was overtaken by events because of the management crisis in the organisation - getting back to a situation where we have a clear delineation between the governance role of the Board and the strategic management function and the interface between that and the rest of the organisation. (SHNS, senior management meeting – discussing an up-coming away day)

The organisation had just been through a period where it had sacked the previous manager who had taken them to tribunal. So, there hadn't been a manager for six months. The credibility of the organisation was minus 20 or something in the public sector and in

the voluntary and community sector. Basically, because it hadn't been doing anything, it had let people down and there'd been a lot of staffing crises. So, it was a mess really...so the challenge was really to win back, or rather build its credibility and to get the organisation just at least functioning - even it was just producing a newsletter, doing what it said it would do and providing some kind of basic support to voluntary and community organisations. So very practical - get functioning... I think it's more about a kind of an atmosphere really, rather than having a blame culture, so that if things go wrong, or there's a problem it isn't "what have you done now?" It's more, "oh dear, these things happen, what can you/we do?" So, this sense of positivity I suppose - that there isn't a right or wrong way of doing things, there's just different best ways of doing stuff. So not tolerating backbiting or negativity towards each other, but understanding that everybody has their off-days ... So, a whole range of things that aren't necessarily tangible and aren't necessarily written down as a plan to change the ethos of the organisation, but things - we have to make it a very supportive environment to work in (FIEWH)

We've come up with something I think is quite good and it's flexible. And, we can keep changing it according to how we actually want it because we've always got this very clear idea of the organisation long-term. Along the lines of on one side being partnership and internal management, which I'm going to look after, and the other side being the service delivery to groups which my assistant chief officer's going to manage. (FIAB)

{CEO} spends a lot more time out of the office now where she brings her particular skills to maximum influence...I think if she was brought back in to managing that kind of dialogue and dispute it would be very difficult for her to do the job she's doing. So that notion of building that management team that is capable of that subtle debate is a task (SHJB/T discussing building up a politically aware management team that can use their learning to provide CEO with information but also building internal managerial strengths to keep CEO focus external to the organisation)

Project leaders, who are often acting both within and outside the organisation, act as intelligence-gatherers that also enhance the CEOs' roles in external relationships. Some CEOs are trying to incorporate this into staff/team meetings or separate research and policy teams:

About 10 am [we have] an internal policy forum. Since the last time, we spoke we've done an awful lot to develop that, and the structure is quite different from when you were with us last. I've now got two policy officers ... So, one of the things we've done to develop our internal thinking capacity is to develop a policy forum,

which effectively means, what one of my colleague's sometimes calls 'the chief executive's kitchen cabinet'. It's really a forum I've got - we meet every couple of weeks - and that's giving ourselves space to chew over topical issues, really. (SHJB)

And I think it's very hard, you know, to have all these overall things in your head because they [project leaders] are all mini-directors, you know. So, I need structured ways of trying to keep bringing parts back together (FICC)

To a certain extent, this is a re-framing of the problem of fragmentation in the organisation. Pressure for funding may create pockets of project-based activity, yet where this is aligned with organisational goals, it can also provide a network of information, knowledge and learning that can affect organisational policy and performance. For some LDAs, this means moving away from annual or bi-annual away days and time-out sessions for cross-organisation strategic planning, to developing more organic, sustained and embedded activities, whether in capturing learning, reflecting and specifying actions throughout the organisation (as with SHNS) or with member-led or open discussion forums within the organisation:

{CEO} is unusual because she does want to give space to learning in the organisation... What people seem to believe... is that they simply have to go and talk to someone else as if ... all knowledge is in the ether and all you need is the lightning rod to draw it down at any given moment... and there's an effort involved in learning, it's a discipline...and it takes time and its quite resource intensive. (SHJB/T)

In this way, the multiple voices and perspectives from within the organisation come in to focus. This has to be balanced, as we have seen earlier, with the interests of other stakeholders. This contributes to developing a multi-focus where engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders can off-set the pull towards over-identification with government (Brock, 2000). LDA CEOs have to juggle to provide some sense of stability, continuity and security for stakeholders while rising to the challenge to experiment with projects, structures and procedures, and adapting and transforming parts of the organisation. In this way, what we might be seeing is the relationship between a "shift towards a centering stability" for individual identity and, for organisations, a "shift towards adaptive instability" (Gioia, 1998: 21).

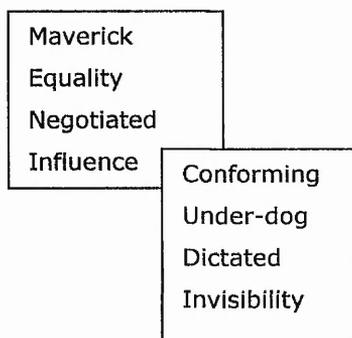
Gioia further describes this relationship between continuity and change quite succinctly by quoting Di Lampedusa:

Di Lampedusa (1960:40) *The Leopard*: "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change" (ibid, 1998: 22)

To return to the analogy of film and stage, we can use an example of "soaps" and movie sequels to consider this phenomenon. Where there is a context but no real sense of time passing - in order for the character to remain the same, the actor may have to change. In order for LDAs to maintain an independent identity based on historical roots, traditions, values and stakeholder expectations, they need to change. As previously discussed, this brings in to play confidence, power relationships, range of influence and role/task identity:

The voluntary sector is not about mainstream social service provision. It's about doing innovative things; it's about change, it's about the critique. So, I think its nature starts to be altered enormously if you begin to take on those roles (FIJGM).

Power



In considering power and influence, we need to look at both individualised power - the scope and focus of individual CEOs - and socialised power, which builds on organisational image and influence. This will be considered again in the next chapter when looking at leadership in the sector.

One of the things learned about CEOs in the LDA sub-sector, is that a generalised reason for choosing to work in this arena is very much tied to the concept of making a difference and contributing to societal change. In this sense, individuals feel a sense of ability and power to affect change through social movements and what, on the surface, appear to be marginalized communities of practice. Furthermore, this strength of purpose is justified by personal philosophies and values - concepts of fairness, equality and social justice. This is accompanied by a requirement, almost, of personal freedom and flexibility - this may

be a characteristic of all those staff and volunteers who have actively chosen to live and work in the sector, but it is exhibited most (as with many for-profit organisations) in the higher echelons of the organisation:

It's a real autonomy and I think what's a good experience for some people in the voluntary sector is freedom from layers of bureaucracy and layers of non-decision-making, which you get in very big institutions. So, lots and lots of people find a very fruitful playground in the voluntary sector (FICC)

I think I've got much more control over my work than I would have done if I was in any other sector; I mean I don't know if that's true. I mean, I suppose if I had set up my own business and was self-employed in that sense, I might have had the same kind of freedom. But I think that I've had enormous freedom to explore areas of work that I've wanted to (FIDND)

I mean, I'm always amazed how people who've worked in the voluntary sector can go back to working in local government. I mean to me it's just like an anathema. I could never do it I don't think. Well, it would have to be something very special. And then for people to move into the private sector having worked in the sector, I think it's just like a sin, you know, for me! I mean I just can't imagine how people could ever do it. But they do. (FICY)

This sense of freedom and flexibility is confirmed in the outsider relationship with other sectors, reflected in the quote at the end of the last section, which gives the sector the role of social conscience in relation to others. This ability to offer critique also places LDAs in opposition to for-profit and public sector organisations in terms of their advocacy and campaigning roles. These antagonistic relationships have been practised in various guises over a number of years. It is a position that gives extra confidence in head-to-head situations:

We've had, you know, had a very, very good campaign er - eighteen months ago by the local newspaper which prevented two million pounds worth of cuts going to the voluntary sector, completely prevented it. I mean the council just buckled, even though we'd said - we were saying to them privately, you know, make some strategic cuts if you like. You know, we know that there are organisations and you know that there are organisations that aren't delivering, so get them. But they buckled completely. Lack of moral fibre! Typical councillors! (FIKL)

Much of this confidence is about the new space for voluntary sector organisations in determining the future of services in communities, but also the personal commitment and abilities of the CEOs themselves:

Well, it makes me laugh most of the time because I know that ultimately they will have to come back and talk to us. I mean we – in this city - we have a big advantage in that we are very large as a voluntary sectorer - and thirty million pounds a year turnover in the voluntary sector. And you know, very well established so it's hard to knock us. (FIKL)

I mean I personally feel quite happy about taking on the director of social services, or the chief exec of the PCT or whoever it is, you know. And do regularly, you know, that doesn't go for all voluntary sector reps. I mean I think it is a very exposed position but you know, I've been here a long time and I know my way around. So, I'm fairly confident in those situations, but also you know, the other - we do have much more power in those relationships than we ever did before because we know and they know we know that they've got to take us on board. Because if they don't take us on board they're going to be penalised for it. (FICY)

I think it's a mix of both and I think a lot of that is to do with personal - I think at that level a lot of those relationships are to do with the personalities. I mean yes they are to do with the organisation but we all know from when you look at power, yes there is power from being the chief executive of the local authority but your ability to exercise that power is about your personal power as well as credibility on a personal level (FIJB)

As we can see there are reflections of power in relation to situational and context issues: role, authority and personal power bases in relation to credibility, respect, increased visibility and in the ability to put power into action – politicking, influencing and shaping. Furthermore, we can see earlier connections with fear and capitulation. Here, though, we also have the example of the 'under-dog' using the power of coalition to bring about the capitulation of the local authority in its proposed fund-cutting activities. In this instance, the image of the sector as influential is seen as more far-reaching than any tangible resources, which allows LDA CEOs to "punch above their weight" (RGNNY), or as one participant suggested, "we believe our own propaganda and more importantly others believe our propaganda" (FIKL). This is reflected in another CEO's assessment:

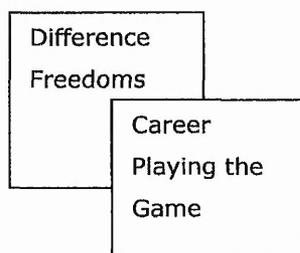
We've got very little power in the voluntary sector and limited influence, which is beefed up probably temporarily by the Government initiatives, that insist that we're consulted, but we're not able to say put 50,000 in the pot so we do have to use other ways of having influence and being politically aware and forming alliances. [Political awareness] is very important (RGAB)

The stimulus-response type antagonism has characterised the sector's relationships and it is in trying to re-negotiate these relationships where challenges lie for LDA CEOs. Again, this is being given a helping hand by UK government's review of sector relations and in formalising good practice recommendations through locally negotiated compacts between the voluntary and statutory sectors. In some instances, LDAs have been able to take a leading role in this:

Part of our local compact development and what we identified from the work with the local authority is that the local authority doesn't have a strategy for working with the voluntary sector. So we suggested a public policy review of the role of the voluntary sector and the sector and its relationship in the City ... And we're just in the process of putting forward a report from research which will hopefully lead to the development of a local compact. (SIJB)

For others, there are tensions between the level of involvement in negotiating the set up of contracts, interpretation of implementation of such agreements and the equality of the relationship between the sector and local authorities in these processes. There are some instances, too, where good practice guidelines of the compact have been perceived as difficult to implement and have been ignored by central and local government officers (FILSL; SIJRN).

Success



Success, then, is articulated in the ability to juggle and balance the paradoxes and tensions facing individual LDA CEOs. The recognition earned by CEOs for this is primarily limited to those who have an understanding of the sector.

For some the sector and LDAs in particular offer opportunities for creativity and innovation that individuals feel would be limited by working in more internally regulated environments (most often seen in public sector organisations). That the operating environment for LDAs is in constant flux helps to combat the impression of being confined to and by the sector.

The perceived marginalisation of the sector allows for freedoms and flexibilities, and has the inherent frustrations of struggling to find a place – whether in terms of personal achievement and recognition or in equalising relations with partner organisations. There is a fine line between exercising freedom and having that perceived independence usurped in trying to demonstrate respectability and centrality to government providers. Many participants talk about this in relation to competence and confidence of leadership in the sector and their own expertise in determining and influencing what goes on around them and the differences they make. This will be looked at more closely in the next chapter, *Constructing Leadership*.

An important tension that will be considered in the final part of the thesis is in relation to concepts of learning and the value given to, and potential for, different approaches to continued learning in the sector. We can see the tensions identified in Fig. 6.7 below, which reflects some of the aspects identified in the original conceptual framework (see Chapter 1), partially reproduced, and developed in Fig. 6.8, page 179.

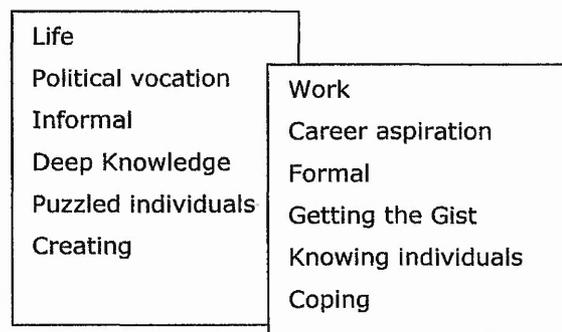


Figure 6.7 Tensions in Learning for LDA CEOs

Source: author

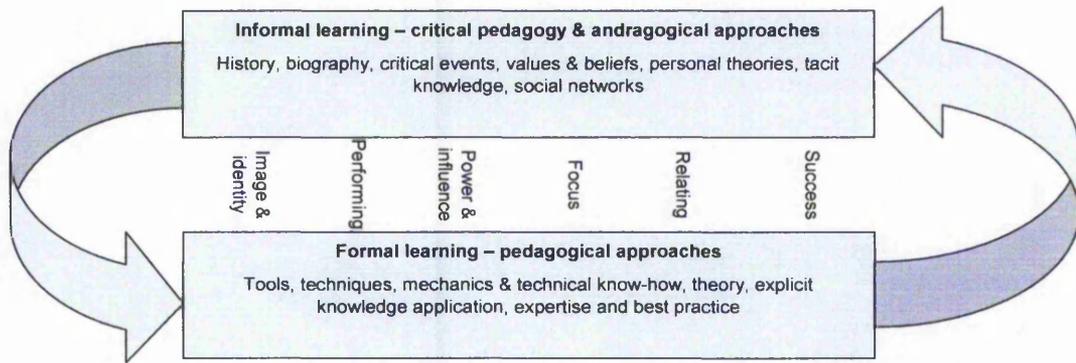


Fig 6.8 Learning and developing in practice

Source: author

Although not an exhaustive list, all of these tensions combine into defining or imaging the public and private faces of non-profit management. Furthermore, they influence the practice potential and development of LDA CEOs. Before looking at learning and managing in more detail, it is useful at this point to move on to consider LDA CEOs responses to these tensions and paradoxes in terms of perceptions and impressions of leadership in the sector.

Reflecting and moving on

In considering the inter-relationships and interdependencies of context, understandings and commitments of LDA CEOs, we can see that there is significant impact on identity construction. Furthermore, this self-concept feeds back into understandings of roles and behaviours and the commitment individuals give to creating, maintaining and enhancing their performance and combining their life and work roles. This supports, and is supported by, associated cognitive maps, personal theories, rules of thumb and action capabilities, see Figure 6.9, page 180. This final association also links thinking and action.

The context in which LDA CEOs are working consists of multiple stakeholders, and is shifting and dynamic. This necessitates ability to monitor and change behaviour in different situations. There is evidence of sophisticated levels of understanding of multiple agenda and priorities in order to perform effectively. Practitioners see themselves as becoming chameleon-like, with the ability and assurance to assume

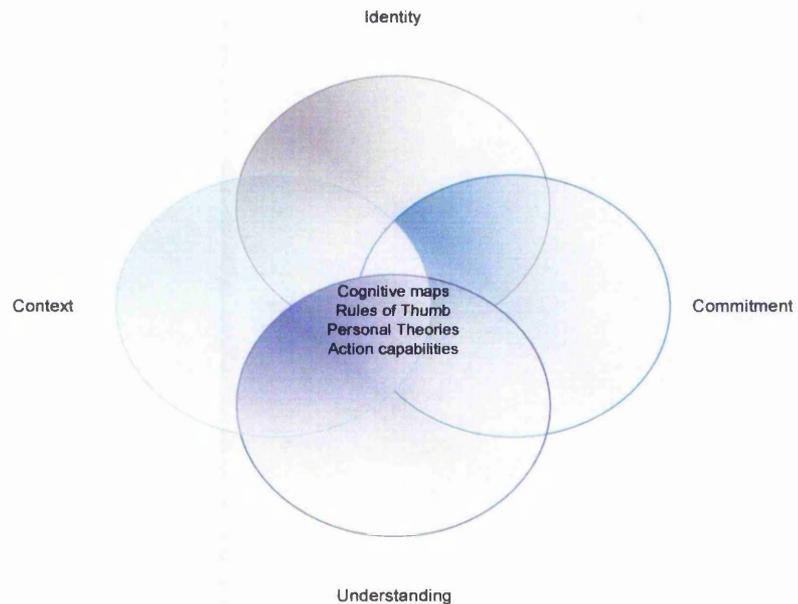


Figure 6.9 Identity construction and cognitive maps

Source: author

and play multiple roles and converse *multi-lingually*. In this sense, they learn and develop the art of *modal participation*: the ability to think, act, and perform effectively over time in ways that sustain their own integrity and the aims and objectives of their organisations.

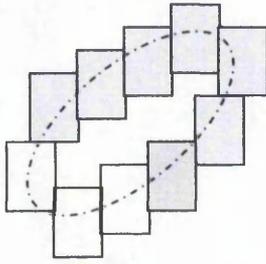
For LDA CEOs, this appears to be underpinned and supported by a commitment to working in a “marginalised” sector, to broad societal aims of social change and addressing the needs for social justice. This commitment may help to manifest self-confidence and self-efficacy even when external images of non-profit organisations and associated individuals are often seen in negative terms (“can’t be any good”). In this way, effective practitioners in this context, appear to sustain *positive marginalisation*.

Positive marginalisation supports the ability to reframe and use negative images associated with the sector to reinforce commitment and action intentions. This can be seen in the language used by LDA CEOs and in some of the tensions identified in practice. For example,

the need to fight, antagonist relationships, them/me, outsiders, feelings of separateness, fear, anger, guts. Being identified with and being part of the sector provides positive feedback in terms of freedom, flexibility, autonomy, passion. In this sense, tensions may not require solutions rather creative manipulation in maintaining sector image.

These together with self-images such as child of the sixties, 20-year old anarchist, Guardian-reader, all combine to produce personal theories and rules of thumb that influence intentions to act. These concepts and theories can also be seen in the language of fairness, equality, social justice, making a difference, leaving a legacy and touching lives.

These theories can be demonstrated in the context and practice of leadership. The following chapter considers how CEOs construct the concept of leadership in a non-profit and LDA context and this brings together some of the concepts and theories that LDA CEOs associate with effective behaviour and which influence how they chose to develop and enhance their practice.



7. Constructing Leadership

Leadership is different from management, but not for reasons most people think. Leadership isn't mystical or mysterious. It has nothing to do with having "charisma" or other exotic personality traits. It is not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement of it. Rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action

(Kotter, 1990, pp. 103-11)

Not everyone can be a leader, nor does everyone want to be a leader. But, we need more leaders

(Boyatzis, 1993: 12)

I mean the problem is that you're not a leader one moment then a manager the next moment. It's altogether. (SIDND)

Mention has been made of the perceived deficit of leadership across all sectors in the UK and, in the non-profit sector, this has resulted in attention being given to its own leadership needs. The disparate nature of the sector and the different structures and cultures of organisations within it means that the concept of leadership in different sub-sectors and all levels of the sector will also differ. As such, this chapter considers how LDA CEOs conceive of leadership and how they might use this conceptualisation to explain and demonstrate their own behaviour and use this to enhance their practice.

In discussing tools and techniques adopted by non-profits, there was emphasis on the "hard" skills needed to run organisations and, as Cummings (1998: 534) suggests, the logic of management-by-information underpinning this emphasises greater scope for the "*display of leadership*" (italics in the original). It does not, in Cummings view, "encourage the development of *true leadership* via the exhibition of courage or charisma or changes in decision and value premises by which the organisation acts" (ibid, 1998: 534, my italics). In many respects, this fits with a recent report published by the Association for Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), two major voluntary sector organisations. In the report, they suggest that many voluntary sector leaders possess some of

the “softer” skills – communication, emotional attachment, integrity, influencing and networking skills – that are “increasingly prized by both the corporate and public sectors” (Bolton and Abby, 2003: 5).

While this distinction between “hard” (private sector) and “soft” (third sector) and indeed the quest for *true* leadership, is both limited and limiting it still begs the question of what management and leadership look like in the non-profit sector and, in particular, within LDAs. Is it a different set of characteristics from other sectors as one participant reflects:

It tends to be people outside of the voluntary sector that you look at think, oh, you know – you know you go along to these breakfast meetings and they have the chief executives of private sector organisations and you think, ‘well go on then how did you get you to the top?’ ‘Oh well now I know’. But they are not necessarily traits that you particularly would want in the job that we’re doing now. That’s interesting. I think some of that is about a style, about trying to explain to people outside of the voluntary sector about what you are going to do...it’s all that complexity. (RGJRN)

As part of the second round of interviews with LDA CEOs, I invited participants to explore the characteristics of LDA CEOs, and leadership capabilities. We did this through a series of steps involving a modified approach to Kelly’s (1955) personal constructs and repertory grid technique. As explained in Chapter 3, this consisted of a warm up exercise using words and phrases drawn directly from participants’ own accounts, of their lives, experiences, practices and concerns, from the first round of interviews. This consisted of twelve sheets with approximately twenty-eight descriptors per sheet. An example is included in Appendix I. Using different coloured pens, participants were asked to tick the words they felt best described – both positively and negatively - LDA CEOs. Of the eighteen participants, sixteen in total took part in this.

Before our interview date, I had asked participants to identify five individuals that had had an effect on them in terms of their leadership style. They were asked to consider both positive and negative influences and consequences. This information was used in the second part of the session where a more structured approach to identifying and defining leadership constructs was used. In creating pole opposites on a continuum, as part of task two, participants were asked to identify and explain as far

as possible, ten "ideal" elements or characteristics they associated with effective leadership in the sector and ten opposite characteristics. Next, participants were asked to rate themselves and their selected individuals from a scale of 0-5 (where 0 was closest to the ideal). An example is included in Appendix J. All sixteen participants produced lists of qualities; fifteen were fully completed and rated. Time expired with one participant – events in between my last visit were such that the "catch-up" interview was longer than anticipated and RGPH had to leave for a meeting before fully completing the second task.

The third and final task consisted of a more traditional approach to Kelly construct identification via triad comparisons and differentiations. Participants did find this third task more difficult, even so eleven participants completed this task. Difficulties were, in part, because of the nature of the task itself, which asked for critical reflection, and sometimes because of the individuals chosen by participants. However, it did give an opportunity for participants to test personal theories and working assumptions:

That was interesting because I thought {} was one of the best managers that I've had and now I've done this I realise that he's not. The worst one has come out worst so that's all right. She's followed to par, but when I've thought about it, {} wasn't always what I thought. Where he scored was that [points to enabling role] because that was the first time I had a manager who did that and I thought he was fantastic because of that. He was my first voluntary sector manager - he influenced me greatly in terms of what I went on to do or what I was trying to do, rightly or wrongly. ...He had some qualities that I didn't feel were so good as well – he was a poor communicator, poor social skills because I think he was quite shy and quite introspective really and he couldn't cope with conflict at all. So he wasn't perfect, so what put him above everything? But he did have a good sense of self, really. (RGEWH)

On reflection and for consideration of future use of the instruments, it may have provided a more in-depth analysis if the third exercise had been part of a separate event with a follow-up debriefing session. However, the information and insight gained is sufficient for the needs of the research at this time as more in-depth profiling would provide more psychological and personality data and was not required. The combination of tasks two and three has provided useful constructs that can be used to identify different dimensions of leadership, which will be reviewed later in the chapter.

In addition, there were a number of practical considerations in carrying out the research as initially planned. Some research participants had already provided over five hours of interviewing time, plus email and other correspondence and three had agreed to a shadowing arrangement. I had lost one participant due to work overload and time constraints and I had found out that another had had considerable time off with stress related illness. One had had a sudden death in the family. Another had broken down mid-interview because of a particularly difficult turn of events with which the CEO was having to deal and yet another was facing possible withdrawal of funding not only for the LDA but a number of organisations across the sector and was considering judicial review. These were only some of the difficulties facing my research group at that time and so there was some concern not to impose extra commitments on an already over-committed group of individuals. However, participation was such that the tools and exercises show promise in terms of developing a robust approach to exploring personal constructs and theories, and linking to theories in action.

Exploring “our own”

Using in vivo coding (via QSR NUD-IST software) to produce a range of words and phrases to aid the first task was interesting in a number of ways. First, the similarity in the type of language and words used in the sub-sector was striking:

social justice ... make a difference ... legacy ... balance ... political ...
passion ... commitment ... tensions ...

Secondly, and emphasised also in tasks two and three, was how the same phrases were used both positively and disparagingly depending on where the focus was directed was also noticed:

Oh yes [LDA] is very professional (positive – linked to organisational profile)...but I've found people like [CEO of said LDA] just too – professional ... you know I think [LDA CEO] was always, you know, going up there somewhere (negative – linked to individual ambition)

Third was the out-of-context lack of recognition or even rejection of words and phrases by the originator of those words and phrases. For example:

That just excited the political animal in me (FINNY)

It's about not being a political animal. There are dangers in being seen to be aligned in a particular direction. Political ambition is akin to political animal – it's not just party politics, it's politics within and between organisations and it's about juggling that process. Political awareness is a thinking thing (RGNNY explaining the choice of politically aware as an ideal attribute).

There was some consensus in terms of the general profile of CEOs and leadership in the LDA sector and this is shown in Table 7.1, below. Even though the table shows the "top ten" characteristics, the percentage relates to the number of participants identifying a particular characteristic as positive or negative, rather than showing a priority hierarchy of one to ten.

Positive Top Ten	%	Negative Top ten	%
Committed to social justice	88	Tiredness	56
Networker	88	Arrogant	38
Developer	81	Combative	38
In the know	75	Overcommitted	38
Negotiator	75	Bogged down	31
Strategic Thinker	75	Conforming	31
Articulate	69	Cynical	31
Committed	69	Limited political awareness	31
Partnership Worker	69	Politically naïve	31
Professional	69	Defensive	25

Table 7.1 LDA CEOs: positive and negative characteristics

Source: author

There was much more consensus around positive characteristics, which had a higher percentage identification than some of the more negative aspects of CEO leadership in the sector. Here, the most consistently expressed negative quality was "tiredness" seen as a loss of commitment and energy and therefore LDA CEOs becoming less effective in their role. There was also a distinction made, quite usefully, between the characteristics CEOs are seen to possess and how or whether they successfully transfer this in to action. For example, in considering the phrase "pushing the limit", one participant commented:

People do this some of the time and not others. So, it's interesting to know why that is. It could be about their political awareness of course. So, they've got it but they don't always use it. (RGNNY)

As stated earlier, this warm-up exercise was designed to move CEOs into a mental frame of leadership characteristics, style and capabilities. The exercise prompted them to think and talk about their own preferred approaches and those of others in the sector, with additional reflection on other negative and positive role models. As one might expect there were some overlaps between generally identified characteristics and those specifically seen as "must haves" for the sector.

"Ideal" Types

The most frequently used descriptors of non-profit leadership and specifically in relation to LDAs, drawn from task two, are shown in Figure 7.1 below. We can see a relationship here between general characteristics for LDA CEOs and leadership characteristics identified in relation to other sectors.

Leadership Ideals and % / number of participants identifying (not less than 25%)	
Integrity	38% (6)
Politically aware	38% (6)
Committed to social justice	31% (5)
Enthusiasm	31% (5)
Open to challenge	31% (5)
Sense of humour	31% (5)
Strategic thinker	31% (5)
Confident decision maker	25% (4)
Inspirer/inspirational	25% (4)
Passionate	25% (4)
Prepared to punch above your weight	25% (4)
Vision	25% (4)

Figure 7.1 Characteristics of LDA Leadership

Source: author

For example, Kouzes and Posner (2003: 25) suggest that in their surveys (first carried out in 1987) "what people *most* look for and admire in a leader has been constant" (*italics in original*). The top twelve characteristics of Kouzes and Posner's survey for 2002 are shown in the Figure 7.2, page 188, together with the top four from previous years (1995 and 1987).

2002	1995	1987
Honest Forward-looking Competent Inspiring	Honest Forward-looking Inspiring Competent	Honest Competent Forward-looking Inspiring
Intelligent Fair-minded Broad-minded Supportive Straightforward Dependable Cooperative Determined		

Figure 7.2: What people look for and admire in their leaders

Source: Kouzes and Posner, 2002: 25

What is interesting, as Kouzes and Posner point out, is that the top four characteristics have been consistent over time, with the number one characteristic being honesty. We can see that integrity may link with honesty as a key component of leadership. Both list the ability to be inspired and to inspire others. We might think of vision as being similar to having foresight and therefore being forward looking. There is no specific mention of being competent in the LDA CEO characteristics although it can be implied in abilities to be effective strategic thinkers and confident decision makers. However, with the LDA CEO listing, there are other characteristics, which are more sector-specific: commitment to social justice, being prepared to punch above your weight and to some extent political awareness (in external relationships).

In many respects, the Kouzes and Posner (2002) characteristics appear to link with leadership within the organisation, whereas while LDA characteristics do have some internal focus, there is also an emphasis on external relationship expertise. This echoes the findings of research undertaken with corporate managers (Benbow, 1995) and Hay McBer's report on voluntary sector leaders (cited in Bolton and Abdy, 2003).

In the former study, while corporate managers espoused outward facing qualities of strategic thinking and adaptability, the research showed that seventy-five per cent of those taking part in the study "revealed an orientation towards short-term tasks and objectives rather than long-term strategy" (Benbow, 1994: 29). In the latter research, and as shown in LDA CEO responses, there was more of a mix of both internal and external

activities. From this, it was suggested that "the best voluntary sector leaders" when "compared to leaders in both the public and private sectors [needed] a rare balance of inward-looking (management) and outward-looking (influencing) skills" (Bolton and Abdy, 2003: 5)

In looking at the twelve most popular characteristics identified by LDA CEOs from task two, it is interesting to consider how CEOs describe these characteristics. Table 7.2 (page 190) details the top three from the ideal characteristics or qualities, together with the identified opposite.

The most identified quality for an LDA/voluntary sector leader is integrity. For this positive or ideal quality, as with some of the others, there are a number of opposites identified. This provides a useful range of descriptors and explanations and demonstrates the scope and meaning of each characteristic. In many cases, ideal characteristics were often expressed in terms of broad purpose and less than ideal identified as being for self-gain, for example: integrity/self-seeking; committed to social justice/self-seeking and passionate/self-seeking. In some respects, this fits with leadership motives in that those with an interest in the broader application of power, which would link with LDA CEOs' commitment to social justice, will see and use power in ways that are "altruistic and collectively oriented" (De Hoogh *et al*, 2005: 20). This is compared to the actions of others whom LDA CEOs see and judge as "using their position to aggrandise themselves at the expense of others or the organisation" (De Hoogh *et al*, 2005: 20).

From the examples given in Table 7.2, we begin to see the different ways in which a particular set of CEOs construct specific aspects of leadership. By asking CEOs to "elaborate, exemplify and specify more exactly what their statements about managerial leadership" mean in practice, there is increased opportunity to explore knowledge in action; a process termed "pragmatic validation" by Sandberg, which involves "testing the knowledge produced in action" (Sandberg, 2001: 168). Giving examples of putting theory into practice, illustrates the concepts more clearly and looks at transfer and linkages between theory and action.

Ideal	Less than Ideal	Participant explanations
Integrity	Disingenuous Bureaucratic Dishonest Unethical Lacking integrity Unprofessional Self Seeking	<p>I think people blame the system rather than having real integrity about what's right and wrong in that kind of 'that's what the rules say' kind of response. Does my head in really.</p> <p>I want to put values, which for me is about the big heart and having soul, but values-led, that's about integrity.</p> <p>There's got to be something about pushing the boundary and taking risks otherwise you wouldn't get anything done...there's a balance between taking reasonable risks and being dreadful...to have guts because that's where you push the boundary, so you don't necessarily do the popular option</p>
Politically aware	Politically naïve* Political ambition Limited political awareness	<p>You wouldn't last minutes unless you were politically aware whether that's just in terms of internal mechanics, working with the board of directors, working with officers and members, and groups. Such a vital, vital skill.</p> <p>Everything we do, there's some politics there – it's just the political nature – if you can see what you want to achieve in 6 months time, to get there you have to think about the politics of getting there. You know, who's going to get in the way, why they would block it, what does X want to get out of it, how can we help him/her or that organisation get something out of it, what's in it for them, where will the opposition come from. So understanding all the potential problems that might come from a strategy or set of actions.</p> <p>I nearly put earnest – it's people who will wreck the organisation because they have no political awareness and they are not pragmatic and realising that there are some battles that you just can't win and deciding which ones are worth fighting and not fighting. You can do that [fight] if it's about political things for yourself but you can't do it if you're actually in an organisation because you'll wreck it.</p> <p>I think it's more about an inability to understand or pick up the sensitivities or complexities of things...an inability to detect/understand complexities/sensitivities and that can be organisations or people</p>
Committed to social justice	Unfair No Values Reactionary Self Seeking Cynical	<p>That's understanding why the voluntary sector exists and the importance of it. I think a lot of people doing good things is acceptable in itself, but for me you've got to understand what "good" things actually are.</p> <p>I suppose it is unfair. Obviously, in my line of business you see, if you are not committed I don't think you should be in the job, so it's a pre-requisite</p>

Table 7.2: Leadership Constructs and defining statements

Source: author

* more than one person identifying

If we take the top three leadership constructs identified in Figure 7.1 and expanded upon in Table 7.2 above – integrity, politically aware and committed to social justice – we can start to see how CEOs' perception of motives of self and others affects how individuals rate themselves. As part of the second task, LDA CEOs were asked to assess themselves and others against the leadership qualities they had previously identified as ideal/less ideal. LDA CEOs were asked specifically to allocate a rating of between 0 (being closest to the ideal) and 5 (being furthest away from the ideal).

As might be expected from the above discussion in relation to moral dimensions of leadership and leader motives, those CEOs identifying "integrity" as a key characteristic rated themselves favourably. In total, six CEOs included integrity as an ideal and the ratings cluster in the region of 0-1 as shown in Figure 7.3, below.

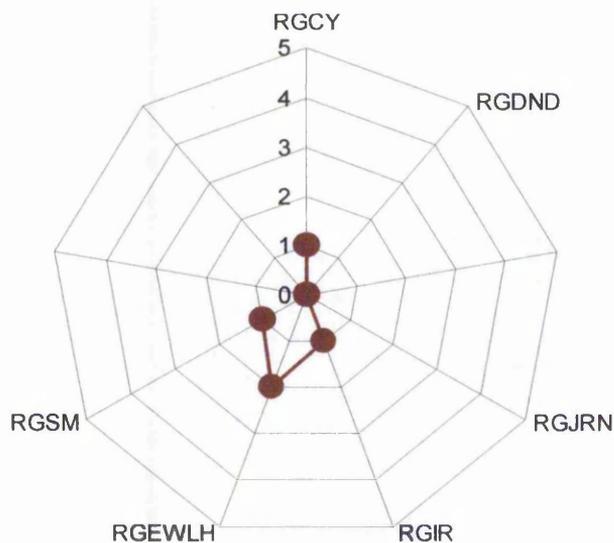


Figure 7.3 LDA CEOs and integrity
Source: author

When we look at 'politically aware', the ratings (for six participants identifying this characteristic) are between 0-3 so a slightly wider spread in terms of how individuals express their political awareness and exercise their political skills. However, if we expand this criterion, to those who use the characteristics of 'political animal' and of being 'politically astute', there is a greater response (11 out of 15 participants) and there is a more concentrated clustering around '1'. See Figures 7.4 and 7.5 below, page 192.

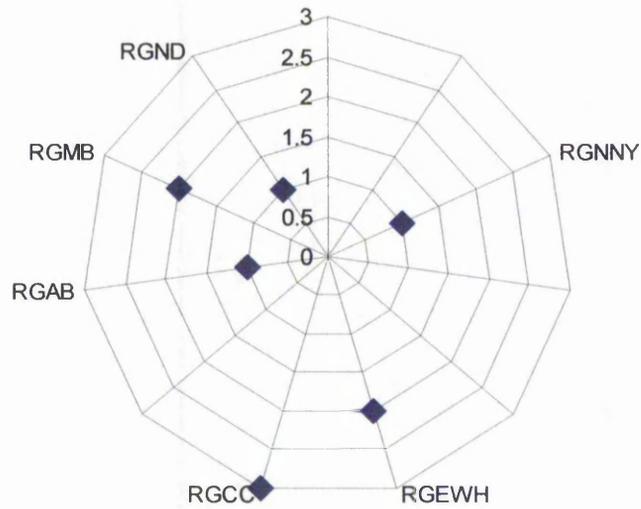


Fig 7.4 LDA CEOs: political awareness

Source: author

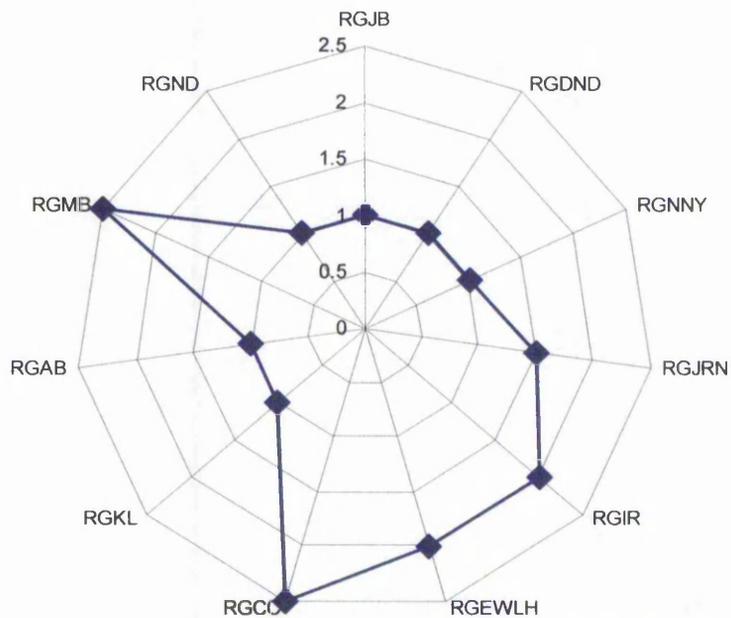


Fig 7.5 LDA CEOs: Politically aware/astute & political animals

Source: author

Finally, in looking at commitment to social justice, Figure 7.6 page 193, we can see a spread of 0-3, with three out of four ratings, out of the total of five respondents, at 1 or less. Interestingly while there is some consistency with the characteristics identified overall, only one LDA CEO, RGNNY, identifies all three – integrity, political awareness and social justice – as top three ideals.

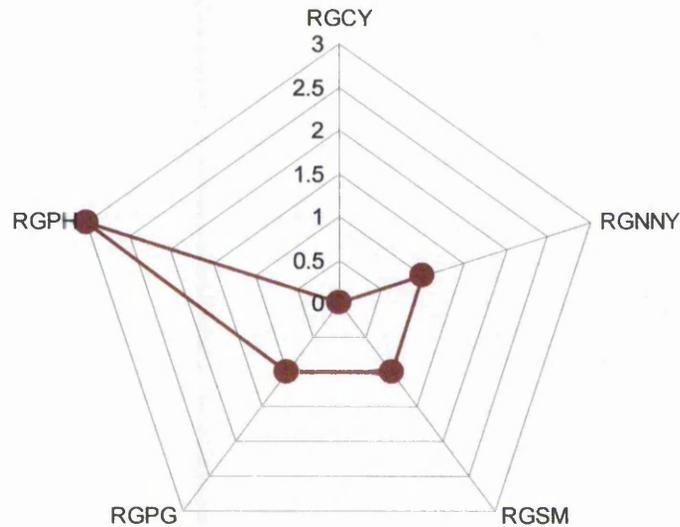


Fig 7.6 LDA CEOs: committed to social justice

Source: author

A number of characteristics identified and defined by LDA CEOs do overlap – as can be seen above with politically aware, politically astute and the use of political animal. Unlike RGNNY, who identified political animal as a negative characteristic, the CEO identifying this as a positive characteristic defined it as “the ability to act effectively in that [small p] political environment” (RGJB). In this way, in reviewing and revisiting the constructs and the ways in which CEOs talk about these constructs and the actions associated with them, it is possible to identify patterns and trends in the characterisation of leadership in the sector, which is discussed in the section below.

Dimensions of Leadership

A study undertaken considering transfer of leadership learning in UK companies to the UK NHS, suggests that as well as the conflation of concepts and practice of management and leadership, that leadership in the UK is both nebulous in definition and symptomatic of out-dated practices (Alimo-Metcalfe and Lawler, 2001). It further suggests that UK organisations still consider leadership as the “heroic kind – out there, at the front, beating the way into new markets, sweeping aside the competition and assuming that the workforce will follow” (Alimo-Metcalfe and Lawler, 2001: 389). This perception is echoed in a report pointing to the need for a new leadership initiative for the nonprofit sector, which suggests that:

Stakeholder interviews suggested that awareness of the wider debate about leadership, and its relevance, to individual voluntary organisations and to the sector as a whole, is generally low. There is scepticism about the value of leadership, based on the erroneous assumption that it means an authoritarian style and single leader model. A mistaken interpretation which runs counter to the less hierarchical, more collaborative style of working generally favoured in the sector (Bolton and Abdy, 2003 : 5)

At the same time as confirming a similar view of leadership being prevalent in the sector as that identified by Alimo-Metcalfe and Lawler, Bolton and Abdy's comments, above, do help to broaden the concept of leadership to consider more emergent and collaborative forms. However, much attention is still given to the top-down aspects of leadership as exhibited by the formal heads of organisations. In some instances, this current research is no exception in its focus on formal heads, except that it is less concerned with leadership effects in internal organisational matters such as followers' performance levels and job satisfaction predominant in much traditional leadership research (Bresnen, 1995). Rather it is more concerned with the subjective experience of LDA CEOs and their practice outside organisational boundaries.

Rather than emphasising authoritarian and heroic leadership styles and processes identified above, when we look at characteristics identified by LDA CEOs we can see a number of patterns that help us to consider a different kind of leadership concept in the sector. From the similarities and differences in the broad range of behaviours and actions identified in "effective" leaders, we can start to see the implicit theories that participants hold about what leadership in the sector may or may not look like and what works best in different kinds of situations.

By reviewing the leadership constructs identified by LDA CEOs and bringing together the positive and "ideals" from tasks two and three, a number of leadership characteristics specific to LDA/non-profit leadership and more general concepts of "effective" leadership emerge. For example, LDA CEOs identified skills such as conflict management, organisational and management skills, attention to detail and analytical skills all of which support the internal and operational aspects of their work. These can be brought together under a technical and skills dimension of leadership. Certain personal characteristics were also described for example, sense of humour, self-belief, sensitivity to others and enthusiasm.

In this way, the leadership constructs identified by LDA CEOs can be assembled into higher-level constructs to provide different dimensions of leadership seen as appropriate for the sector and for LDAs in particular. As shown in Figure 7.7 below, five dimensions have been identified from the research. These have been labelled as technical and skills, socio-political, values and philosophy, personal characteristics, and learning dimensions.

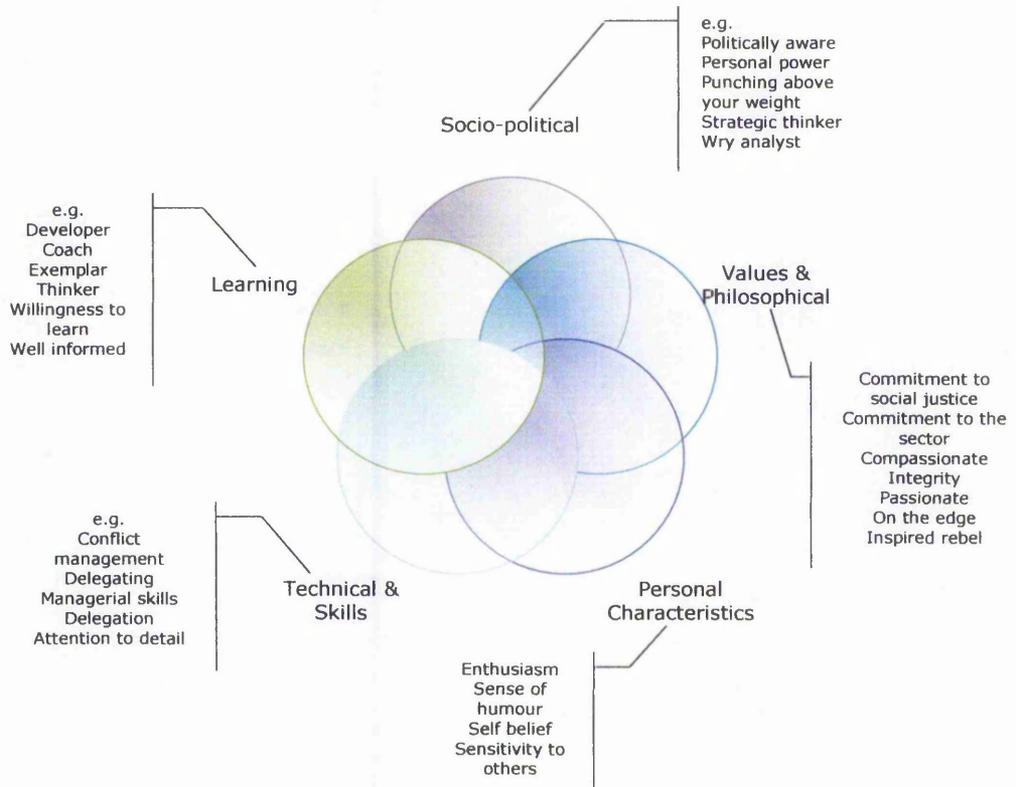


Figure 7.7 Dimensions of Leadership

Source: author

Within the Technical & Skills dimension, we can see elements of transactional leadership style (Burns, 1978). These elements, as already identified, are more associated with managerial task orientation and with specific skills identified around delegation, decision-making and general managerial ability.

The Personal Characteristics dimension includes some personality traits. However, most concepts were descriptions of situational responses explained in terms of ability to cope with complexity, for example,

judicious use of humour to sustain commitment to the job. Interpersonal relationships and sense of self are also important and, together with sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, demonstrate a strong person-orientation. This appears to be combined with an internal locus of control, high self-monitoring and self-efficacy.

This person-orientation is echoed, in part, in the learning dimension where developing others, coaching, acting as a role model all contribute to a sense of democratic leadership and people-focus. However, there is also a self-development focus and actor-as-learner aspect, which focuses on work-based and interpersonal skills and learning.

As we saw earlier, CEOs also identify the ability to inspire, to have and communicate vision and strategic thinking as key activities and behaviours. These criteria - together with self-awareness, integrity, emotional awareness, sensitivity to others and context, high self-monitoring ability, and creating and communicating vision - correspond to identified characteristics of transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass 1993; Cacioppe, 1997). In this way, we can see the complementary relationship of transactional and transformational leadership in LDA CEOs' perceptions of role and effectiveness, echoing Kotter's (1990) statement at the beginning of this chapter.

The final dimensions - socio-political and values/philosophical considerations - link more directly with an understanding of leadership informed by personal values. This links also with individual experience and organisational historical context. In this way, leadership might be considered as a "virtual reality" insofar as it constitutes a socially constructed concept that is filtered, interpreted, and acted upon in different ways, dependent upon diverse cognitive outlooks and experiential circumstances" (Bresnen, 1995: 510).

This virtual reality of leadership can be seen more directly when the ratings produced by the LDA CEOs are brought together and seen in relation to the leadership dimensions identified above. By examining the individual ratings within the higher-level constructs of the leadership dimensions, we start to see the socially constructed concept of LDA leadership. See Figure 7.8, page 197.

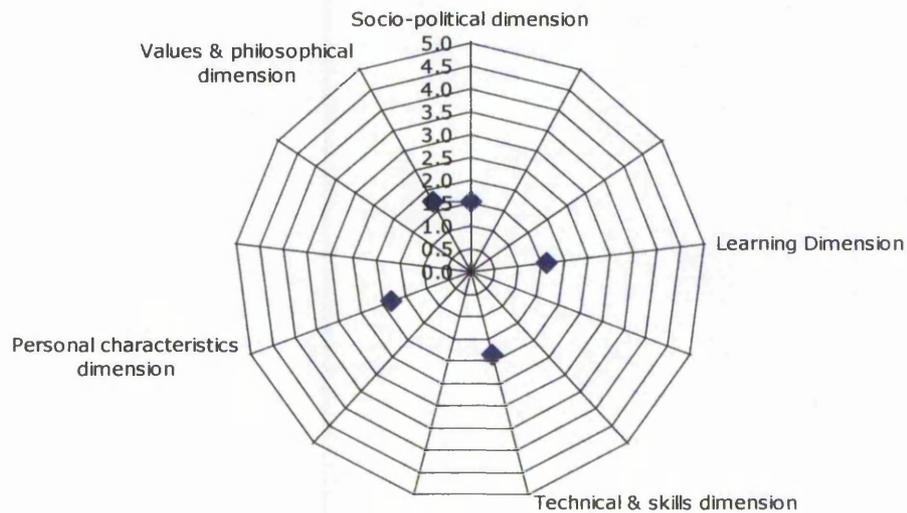


Fig 7.8 LDA CEO Leadership Dimensions
Source: author

As can be seen from Fig 7.8, the socio-political dimension is the strongest dimension. All participants identified characteristics of "ideal" leadership within this higher-level construct. When carrying out the ratings for task two and considering the role models identified for task three, the positive attributes of social awareness, being politically astute, of being for example a "wry analyst" were identified as necessary attributes for effective leadership and action in the sector. In terms of weighting given to the dimensions, by the participants, and the number of types of characteristics allied to these categories, the socio-political dimension together with the values and philosophy dimension were seen as the most significant indicators of effective performance.

All participants identified characteristics that would align with a learning approach to practice. This included being willing and open to learning and to challenge, exploring, developing, being creative as well as well informed. That learning is associated with not just acquisition and access to knowledge but also with an active intent to find, discover and create echoes Mead's (1936:74) commentary on Dewey's appreciation of knowledge as "not a state of static relationship between a mind and its object, but a knowing, a finding out, a discovery". This state of activity may also create opportunities for reflexive practice in order to assess the usefulness of learning in the process of discovery.

Participants gave the final dimensions of personal characteristics and technical and skills dimensions less weight. For example, nine individuals identified characteristics associated with personal characteristics and thirteen participants identified characteristics in relation to technical skills. As mentioned above, personal characteristics were identified in relation to coping with and being skilled in interpersonal relationships rather than individual personality traits, such as charisma and extroversion. Interestingly, in the latter technical and skills dimension, leadership was identified and associated with this was the ability to delegate, set boundaries and long-term planning abilities.

More variation in ratings can be seen when looking at the fifteen LDA CEOs and their self-assessments see Figure 7.9 below. The Values and Philosophy and Socio-Political dimensions show a similar kind of distribution cluster as above. For example, socio-political ratings are, in the main, under '2', with the exception of RGCC.

One CEO (RGKL) covers all dimensions and rates actions and performances the same (1). For another, RGJRN, there are scores on four of the five dimensions (Technical and Skills is the missing dimension) with ratings ranging from 0 (Values dimension) to 2 (personal characteristics dimension).

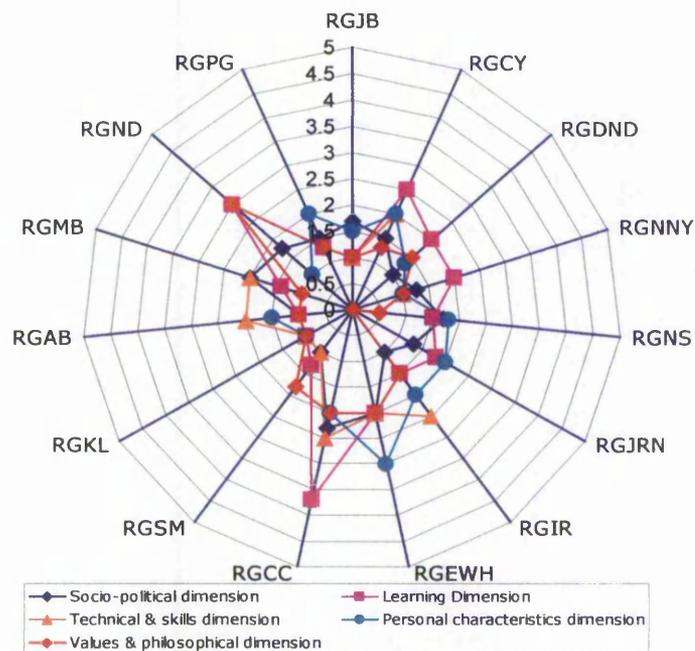


Fig 7.9 Individual Ratings on Leadership Dimensions of LDA CEOs
Source: author

The characteristics identified and ratings given may well reflect the interests and dispositions of each CEO. In addition, they may also reflect the length of time in the job, the context of work and working relationships, which may explain why political skills and learning are valued over technical skills and competencies. In many respects, this reflects Bennis and Nanus's (1997:175-176) findings:

When we asked our ninety leaders about the personal qualities they needed to run their organisations, they never mentioned charisma, or dressing for success, or time management or any other glib formulas that pass for wisdom in the popular press. Instead, they talked about persistence and self-knowledge; about willingness to take risks and accept losses; about commitment, consistency and challenge.

For LDA CEOs, the commitment, consistency and challenge may well be about creating and sustaining viable work organisations and working environments for employees, but it is also connected to personal values and philosophy and socio-political aspects of their lives and work. The role of the LDA as an intermediary or infrastructural organisation is, by definition, a bridging and mediating structure. As such, CEOs have leadership positions in their own organisations and have a leading role for the wider voluntary sector in a geographical location and in relationship with other sectors. The lack of positional power in these external relationships emphasises the need for innovation, flexibility and exercise of influence.

Indeed, in listening to how LDA CEOs describe how they put their leadership characteristics into action, there is strong emphasis on the need for innovation and flexibility. In addition, there is a need to identify opportunities for action and influence, often perceived as operating on the edge or at the margins because of relative lack of recognised positional power. In many respects, although influencing skills and brokering roles are often necessary within organisations, characteristics and descriptions of leadership ability and actions in the LDA sector are different to those described by Kouzes and Posner (2002) and Benbow (1995). They are different to the concept of leading from the front and from the identification of technical skills and leadership needs identified in other non-profit arena (VSNTO, 2003) and support Bolton and Abdy's (2003) assertion that the perception of leadership in the sector (for example, as heroic) is not the leadership of practice.

For a greater understanding of this role, it is useful to move away from traditional concepts of work-based leadership to consider "organisational entrepreneurs" (Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991: 529). Czarniawska-Joerges and Wolff's (1991: 534) definition of entrepreneurs as "people who are the first to see a crack or flaw in a social construction of economic reality, and to interpret it as an opportunity to actualize their ideas of what the world should look like", resonates with the commitment to social justice and achieving social change voiced by LDA CEOs.

For LDA CEOs, the context in which leadership is practised is in the social and community spheres, which further links to concepts of social entrepreneurship (in the UK a concept probably most associated with Michael Young, Lord Young of Dartington, who founded the School of Social Entrepreneurship in 1997) and community entrepreneurship (Selsky and Smith, 1994). In this sense, we start to discover non-profit leadership in an entrepreneurial context and the concept of social change leadership (Selsky and Smith, 1994).

Social Change Leadership

Selsky and Smith (1994) discuss the concept of social change leadership both from their own experience of non-profit executive leadership and from their research. Their concept of community-based leadership is identified as a "distinctive kind of leadership" appropriate for community-based and social change settings. They describe these settings as "highly dynamic and complex...characterized by diverse interests, temporary and fluid alliances, and fast-paced and equivocal events that confound traditional leadership concepts" and where "community entrepreneurs represent a special kind of leader" (Selsky and Smith, 1994: 277 and 278).

Selsky and Smith's (1994) research is based on experience from Philadelphia and Delaware based non-profits, yet there are a number of significant points of comparison with the current research field and profile of participants. It seems relevant then to consider their work in relation to LDA CEO experience. For example, in addition to being executive directors of their own non-profit organisations, Selsky and Smith's (1994) community entrepreneurs (CEs) - like UK LDA CEOs - are seen to play an important role in developing the capacity of other organisations around

specific community issues. This often places them in "inter-organisational, community-based contexts where structures and norms are much weaker [than intra-organisational contexts] and need to be constructed" (Selsky and Smith, 1994: 278). In being so placed, Selsky and Smith (1994: 278) maintain that this is what makes "their practice distinctive and calls for a new appreciation of their role" as "the assumptions underlying the conventional leadership literature make many theories and approaches largely inapplicable to social change settings". (ibid, 1994: 281) Moreover, as with the UK non-profit sector, they suggest "little attention has been paid to the ...individuals who lead, coordinate or facilitate [bridging or meditating structures]" (ibid, 1994: 282).

Selsky and Smith (1994) further describe the social and political context occupied by CEs as in flux, which in turn means that managing and leading in such an environment is both uncertain and unfamiliar. As discussed above, the UK LDA CEOs face similar problems to these non-profit CEs. These include addressing the needs of their own organisations, balancing the broader needs and influence of a diverse range of stakeholder interests, and in operating within the boundaries of their charitable objectives including holding and accounting for public and private funds. It was suggested earlier (for example, Chapter 6), that this requires LDA CEOs to effectively accomplish modal participation - that is the ability to act and speak fluently in a range of different settings with different participants. In their findings, Selsky and Smith (1994: 282) identify the need for a "multi-frame perspective", suggesting that:

CEs deal with a complex and diverse range of issues and stakeholders. Different images of a complex problem routinely emerge when diverse stakeholders interact. CEs play a key role in articulating the diversity of interests, and synthesizing a "common understanding" (Gray, 1989). CEs are involved in reframing, but not obliterating, partisan images of the situation. CEs help foster change in established institutional structures and norms by articulating new action possibilities and novel enactments, based on new interpretations of the patterns of action (Kanter, 1983, p. 279). CEs are skilled in reframing the ambiguity in a turbulent situation and in creating a common understanding as the basis for collective action choices (Gray, 1989, p. 5) ...CEs favor partnerships, alliances and deals that can mobilize collective capacity in an issues domain.

Favouring partnerships and alliances also reflects the relative position of CEs (and by comparison LDA CEOs) in terms of power and influence compared to other actors (private and public sector). CEs/LDA CEOs may be in supporting roles (in enacting government initiatives, for example)

and may be perceived to have less power in partnership arrangements, but from this position they can influence both in the partnership arena and in the community through broad networks and exercising political skills. In this respect, Selsky and Smith (1994: 290) conclude:

The power of community entrepreneurship comes not from keeping a small nonprofit organisation going in a turbulent environment, virtuous as that may be. Its power lies in the ability to influence the course of events in an issue domain from a seemingly peripheral and resource-scarce position

More specifically, Selsky and Smith (1994) draw on Bolman and Deal's (1991, cited in Selsky and Smith, 1994: 278) multiple frame perspective of leadership in organisations. In particular, they build on, and extend, the qualities of leadership and entrepreneurial behaviour, identified by Bolman and Deal for intra-organisational leadership and make a similar case for CEs in inter-organisational contexts. This includes the need to demonstrate multi-frame perspectives, entrepreneurial behaviour in brokering relationships, bringing together resources and managing events, and finally reflective practice. Again, we can see much of this echoed in the language used by LDA CEOs not only in relationship to leadership constructs but also in the general field of practice.

Heimovics *et al* (1993) in their examination of effective non-profit leadership also use Bolman and Deal's framework to explain how nonprofit CEOs "work entrepreneurially". They also draw on resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) and conclude from their study of effective CEOs and a comparison group that a key criterion for CEO effectiveness is in their dealings with external events and those who were more effective were more likely to be "multiple-frame executives" (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 425). In particular:

[E]specially effective nonprofit chief executives have also learned to think and act politically. They act in relation to external resource dependencies in terms of mobilising constituencies, forming coalitions, creating obligations and negotiating and bargaining ...In short, effective nonprofit chief executives recognise that their organisations are in part, interdependent actors in policy and political processes, and behave accordingly. (Heimovics *et al* 1993: 426)

As well as relying on a political frame, effective CEOs "dealt with events in more cognitively complex ways than did those executives not deemed to be especially effective" (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 425). This concept of

effective/less-effective behaviours will be revisited in Chapter 9, *Managing to Learn*. However, there are useful points of comparison between both Selsky and Smith and Heimovics *et al*'s study of social entrepreneurs/non-profit leaders and LDA CEOs. The situations and contexts provide similar characteristics to partnership and intermediary roles played by LDAs. The skills in mediating, brokering and having influence in these relationships also echo the experience of LDA CEOs. Moreover, LDA CEOs identify reflective practice in terms of not only (dis) confirming values and strategising, but in terms of personal and professional development. There are also identified innovative actions in terms of securing funding and continued survival of their own organisations and in promoting a wider social change agenda by working through other agencies' agenda. In many ways, this also conforms to Alvord *et al*'s (2002: 4) conceptualisation of social entrepreneurship as "a way to catalyze social transformation".

Viewing entrepreneurship through different lenses, Alvord *et al* (2002) describe a variety of meanings, which we can see played out in non-profit leadership. First, the creation and maintenance of a viable economic entity that can generate employment and revenue while meeting social purposes. Second, the provision of services and involvement in actions in response to perceived problems (e.g. lack of user involvement in public planning). This provision may meet social purposes or have community or social impact while not necessarily conforming to economic viability measures. Third, social entrepreneurship is seen as the capacity to move beyond immediate social problems, and initial focus of concern, to bring about larger community-wide changes in the longer term. This brings in to focus community development approaches and commitment to social change and social justice. In this latter instance, Alvord *et al* (2002: 4) suggest that:

Social entrepreneurs in this tradition need to understand not only immediate problems but also the larger social system and its interdependencies, so that the introduction of new paradigms at critical leverage points can lead to cascades of mutually-reinforcing changes that create and sustain transformed social arrangements. Sustainable social transformations include both the innovations for social impacts and the concern for ongoing streams of resources that characterize the other two perspectives on social entrepreneurship – and they also lead to major shifts in the social context within which the original problem is embedded and sustained.

It is useful at this point to review dimensions of leadership in connection to multiple frame and resource dependence perspectives (Selsky and

Smith, 1994; Heimovics *et al*, 1993) and the three social entrepreneurial perspectives (Alvord *et al*, 2002) before considering practical examples of LDA CEOs working entrepreneurially. This review is shown in Fig 7.10, below, pages 205-206, below.

As we can see from Fig. 7.10, many of the conditions and behaviours identified in previous research have resonance with the leadership dimensions and actions identified by LDA CEOs. There are multiple frames and dimensions of leadership behaviour that are used to build the capacity of the organisation and to strengthen influence in inter-organisational relationships. How well this is done and how effective individual CEOs are in respect to these intentions usefully correspond with low, moderate and high levels of entrepreneurial leadership identified by Alvord *et al* (2002) and with effective/less effective behaviours identified by Heimovics *et al* (1994).

We can start to demonstrate this further by considering practical examples of social entrepreneurship in relation to local development agencies. With respect to this line of inquiry, it is useful to draw on the experience of development agencies *per se*, that is non-government organisations working in international development roles building local and community capacity. Many of the contextual issues are similar in terms of multiple stakeholders, government intervention, funder interests. In addition, taking Korten's (1987) typology, there are broad points of comparison between international development agencies operating in a small locality and national or geographically based development agencies working with local communities. In his typology, Korten (1987:147) identifies three major roles or orientations, often co-existing: relief and welfare, local self-reliance and sustainable systems development, which he terms first, second and third generation orientations respectively.

LDAs aim to provide relief from disadvantage and marginalisation, but do not primarily do this through provision of relief and welfare services. It could be argued that some of the projects within larger LDAs do undertake this role for example, undertaking community development activities based around preventative health and education for employment. In the main, LDAs can be seen to be carrying out second-generation activities: building the capacity of individual groups and organisations in the

community through capacity-building projects, training and local management of projects.

Leadership Dimensions Source: author	Leadership Behavioural Framework Sources: Bolman & Deal (1997); Selsky and Smith (1994)	Leadership/ Entrepreneurial actions & resource dependency Sources: Heimovics et al(1994); Ulrich and Barney (1984); Alvord et al (2002)
Technical Managerial skills, delegation and attention to detail. Income generation, re-configuration of structures and resources Inner organisation focus	Structural Leader as architect. Focus on goal setting, role expectations and structural arrangements. Rational-legal approach to power and authority.	Unilateral arrangements between organisation and funders (high dependency) Alternative sources of funding (medium/low dependency) Capacity building – a diminishing dependency upwards, towards funders; increasing dependency of voluntary organisations on LDA. Creation and Maintenance of viable economic entity
Learning Coach, developer, team-builder Inner focus Personal development and adaptability Focus on problem-solving (non-commercial activities) Reflective practice Inner/outer focus	Human Resources Leader as empowerer. Focus on people as valuable resources; seeking balance between organisational and individual goals. Personal growth and development, team-building and collaborative working. Political Leader as advocate and networker. Focus on building alliances, influencing allocation and acquisition of resources.	Internal coalitions – positive aspects of project teams builds internal strengths and capacity for learning for LDAs Grassroots project teams build community-based coalitions. Increase profile of LDA in voluntary and community sector and with external statutory agencies and funders Ideas into working projects Increased capacity and projects builds diverse income streams and broader scope of services and activities. Less unilateral and more multilateral relationships with funders. Increased potential for income generation. Maintenance of economic entity. Problem focus on non-economic activities
Personal characteristics Enthusiasm Sensitivity to others Inner/outer organisation focus Sense of self, enthusiasm, inspirer Inner/outer focus	Human Resources Symbolic Leader as inspirer. Focus on organisational culture and meaning	Mobilisation of resources and sustainability of internal arrangements and external relationships Change focus – impact focus on problem solving

Leadership Dimensions Source: author	Leadership Behavioural Framework Sources: Bolman & Deal (1997); Selsky and Smith (1994)	Leadership/ Entrepreneurial actions & resource dependency Sources: Heimovics et al(1994); Ulrich and Barney (1984); Alvord et al (2002)
Socio-political Politically aware, personal power, networker, broker, change agent, historian, social commentator Outer focus	Political	Increased independence and more centrality of voice both for LDA and as conduit to small voluntary agencies. Ability to speak partnership language and increased influence to achieve others' objectives through partnership. Greater ability to mobilise increased resources. Small change, plus community development (transformational change) Responding to and shaping political and social change agenda
Values & Philosophy Passion, justice, change Outer focus Commitment to social justice, passion, change agent, analyst, foresight Outer focus	Symbolic Political	Interdependence: partnerships and alliances to achieve wider societal goals. Commanding support for ideas – agenda setting Utilization of resources in new ways Building social capital Catalyst to transformation change

Figure 7.10 Comparison Frameworks: Leadership and entrepreneurial behaviours and actions.

In many instances as with international NGOs concentrating on individual villages, LDAs may target specific localities and wards within a town or city, often in line with government priorities (e.g. neighbourhood renewal areas designated by the UK government – now under the direction of the Department of Communities and Local Government formed in 2006). However, it is in connection with third-generation orientations where there is increased commonality between international development agency experience and local development agencies' increasing centralised role.

Korten (1987: 149) explains that many international NGOs are realising that "they need to exert greater leadership in addressing dysfunctional aspects of the policy and institutional setting of the villages and sectors". LDA CEOs speak

about their entry into the voluntary sector, some over twenty years ago, with this realisation of dysfunction and need for change, although perhaps not as clearly articulated then as now. Even though LDAs have played a small, but instrumental, part in voicing discontent and discomfort with social and economic arrangements and in highlighting inequalities as they see them, this role is becoming more legitimate in contributing to and shaping government policies and initiatives. As such, and in a similar vein to international NGOs and development agencies, LDAs are working across sectors with local and national governments and private sector agencies that control resources. Their role is such that:

At best the NGO in this role may be able to influence - but not control - these other organisations, and will be working with resources that may seem inconsequential relative to those of the organisations it is helping to change. Therefore success depends on skilfully positioning the NGOs' resources in relation to the target ...in such a way as to facilitate accelerated learning by the organisations which comprise that system. To do so the NGO will need in-depth knowledge of the actors and organisations which define and regulate the systems being addressed [and where] high levels of both technical and strategic competence will be required. (Korten, 1998: 149).

The three generational orientations of NGO leadership and action identified by Korten (1987) become more relevant to LDA experience when considered in conjunction with entrepreneurship as a social problem solving activity. For this, it is useful to turn to Alvord *et al* (2002: 3) who suggest that "while the concept of social entrepreneurship is relatively new, initiatives that employ entrepreneurial capacities to solve social problems are not [and that the] practice of social entrepreneurship may well be ahead of the theory - as in other areas of social action".

As indicated earlier in this chapter, Alvord *et al* (2003) describe three variations on the meaning of social entrepreneurship. Their particular interest, which is relevant to LDAs, is on social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for social transformation. As such, they focus on the nature of innovation, leader characteristics, trends or patterns of good practice and the expansion or sustainability of activities for change. Through organisational case studies, they generate a number of hypotheses, summarized in Figure 7.11, below, which can be used to map LDA characteristics and activities. It is useful to consider all nine hypotheses, pages 208-210.

Success factors for Social Entrepreneurship Source: Alvord <i>et al</i> (2003, pp 10-21)	Findings from Researching LDAs Source: Author
Hypothesis 1 Forms of successful social entrepreneur initiatives : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building local capacity to solve problems ▪ Providing "packages" needed to solve common problems ▪ Building local movements to deal with other powerful actors 	Build local capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support set up of local groups and issue-based organisations ▪ Provide training, education and services to build local skills Building local movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide opportunities for publicity ▪ Mobilise network meetings and forums to input into government policies Providing "packages" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribution of small grants to support health/regeneration activities
Hypothesis 2 Successful social entrepreneurship involves innovations that mobilize existing assets of marginalized groups to improve their lives Scale from low to high.	High: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building for local groups, development of self-help activities ▪ Support for community enterprises ▪ Building networks to work on common issues ▪ Advocacy and campaigning ▪ Provide non-financial resources for groups ▪ Support group applications for resources ▪ Act as intermediary between funders and small groups
Hypothesis 3 Successful social entrepreneurship initiatives emphasise systematic learning by individuals and by the organisation, if they operate on a large scale Scale from low to high.	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Systematic training needs analysis and provision for staff and groups; restricted funds for formal education/learning High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning through networks and alliances ▪ Long-term commitment to learning and change in LDAs ▪ SHJB: policy forum, learning and exchange events ▪ SHNS: reflective practice, "learning from last year"
Hypothesis 4 Successful social entrepreneurship initiatives are often founded by leaders with the capacity to work with and build bridges among very diverse stakeholders	Most existing CEOs were not founders although some had been with their organisations since inception. However, incumbents show high levels of characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close links with local communities either through self or project development workers ▪ Close links with community leaders and cross sector contacts ▪ Ability to work across boundaries ▪ Act as intermediary and interpreter to mediate sector differences ▪ Effective and continued links with membership and funders

Success factors for Social Entrepreneurship Source: Alvord <i>et al</i> (2003, pp 10-21)	Findings from Researching LDAs Source: Author
Hypothesis 5 Successful social entrepreneurship initiatives have leadership that is characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long-term commitment to the initiative ▪ Capacity to catalyse adaptation to emerging contextual challenges Scale from low to high	High: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many in position for 5 years or more; some 20 years plus ▪ Career moves often within same field ▪ Most have led or are leading expansion ▪ Many have overcome significant development challenges (e.g. withdrawal of funding) ▪ Most involved at high-level strategy and policy formulation at local and national levels
Hypothesis 6a Social entrepreneurship initiatives may expand their operations by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisational growth to expand the coverage of their programs ▪ Small organisation in alliance with clients ▪ Small organisation that offers technical assistance to larger organisations Hypothesis 6b Social entrepreneurship initiatives that expand their impacts by organisational growth, must invest in management, staff development, and monitoring and evaluation systems	Growth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of in-house projects ▪ Act as incubator to new projects ▪ Build capacity of management infrastructure of organisation Alliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Umbrella organisation – small core, growing memberships ▪ Joint projects with other organisations ▪ Project staff work with local activists Technical assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and evaluation to link with own needs and government/other agency needs ▪ Consultancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of senior management teams ▪ High level technology for monitoring ▪ Research and policy development
Hypothesis 7 External relations of social entrepreneurship initiatives vary across innovative forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building emphasizes attention to local constituents and resource providers ▪ Package dissemination emphasizes attention to package users and disseminators ▪ Movement building emphasizes attention to members, allies, and target actors. 	Capacity building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular meetings with members and local voluntary and community sector ▪ Knowledge dissemination: updates on policy developments, funding arrangements via different media Movement building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Themes meetings ▪ Consultation events ▪ Briefing meetings and papers
Hypothesis 8 Scaling up strategies vary across forms of social entrepreneurship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building initiatives build on local concerns and assets to increase capacities for group self-help, and then scale up coverage to a wider range of clients 	Capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand coverage through project development ▪ Use of networks to cover larger areas/interests groups ▪ Outreach development work ▪ Increasing membership ▪ Increased presence at strategic partnerships

Success factors for Social Entrepreneurship Source: Alvord <i>et al</i> (2003, pp 10-21)	Findings from Researching LDAs Source: Author
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Package dissemination initiatives scale up coverage with service easily delivered to individuals or small groups by low-skill staff or affiliates ▪ Movement building initiatives expand and indirectly impact campaigns and alliances to influence the activities of targets or allies. 	Movement building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Networks ▪ Training for groups ▪ Media usage
Hypothesis 9 Social transformation leverage and impacts vary across forms of social entrepreneurship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building initiatives that alter local norms, roles, and expectations can transform the cultural contexts in which marginalized groups live ▪ Package distribution initiatives that provide tools and resources to enhance individual productivity can transform their economic circumstances ▪ Movement building initiatives that increase the voice of marginalized groups can transform their political contexts and their ability to influence key decisions. 	Capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local management of services ▪ Community development projects (e.g. food coops, credit unions) Build movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance politicized voices from sector ▪ Working towards increased social capital ▪ Working against marginalization ▪ User involvement in government initiatives

Figure 7.11 Entrepreneurship and social transformation

What we can see from mapping findings from LDA research, shown in Figure 7.11 above, is that LDAs and LDA CEO leadership capacities are more geared to capacity building and movement building initiatives rather than providing services or “packages”. The former emphasises a focus on LDA membership groups and relationships with resource providers. The outcomes of these relationships is to help build the capacity of local groups and communities in tackling inequalities and, indirectly, larger scale social and economic issues. External relationship building and the use of political influence and leverage is aimed at influencing political and cultural contexts (Alvord *et al*, 2003). These can be seen to correspond with the key leadership dimensions identified in the fieldwork with LDA CEOs: socio-political and values/philosophical dimensions.

In addition, leadership in this context is seen to be enabling. That is LDAs can be seen to be using the skills and assets of the communities in which they exist and in bridging and negotiating between less powerful (e.g. community based groups) and more powerful (e.g. government) actors. The ability to be proficient *networked practitioners* also widens the scope of influence through cascade and ripple effects of small-scale changes. This links both with the role of change agents and with a developed capacity to learn and adapt. It also fits with balancing work at a micro-political level (local community development) with the aim of macro-level change and transformation (policy change, commitment to social justice and making a difference).

By shifting the focus from leadership per se, to social entrepreneurship, there appears to be far less of a skills and capabilities deficit within LDAs than first suggested at the beginning of the chapter. Indeed, rather than the hero-type leader described at the outset, we can start to construe a very different entrepreneurial leadership role. One that is congruent with the role of LDAs in promoting a marginalised sector and in the personal values and political ideals of many of those occupying CEO or senior development roles in LDA type organisations.

In considering the many parts and different identities LDA CEOs display, we can see that LDA CEOs need to become adept at adapting to changing contexts and situations. In some instances this requires different mindsets and approaches to those with which they are familiar in their primary work roles. This brings to the fore, as discussed in Chapter 6, the ability to be flexible and adaptable and to co-exist happily with these many selves and identities. The range of identities, behaviours and approaches are brought together in the several leadership dimensions of which socio-political behaviour and a values-led philosophical frame seem to be dominant in LDA CEOs. This links with research highlighting multi-frame perspectives and a high level of political orientation (Selsky and Smith, 1994).

In comparing LDA CEO experience and activity with other non-profit research on entrepreneurial leadership (Heimovics, 1993; Alvord, 2003), LDA CEOs show high levels of entrepreneurial behaviour in sustaining their organisations, brokering and mediating across sectors and multi-stakeholder relationships and are working towards social change. This

again links with research highlighting entrepreneurial behaviour (Selsky and Smith, 1994). The third quality, which Selsky and Smith (1994) refer to, as their final demonstrable characteristic of an effective community entrepreneur is reflective practice. This will be discussed in more detail in considering approaches to management development in the sector (Chapter 8 Learning to Manage) and in looking at how LDA CEOs develop their learning and enhance their practice (Chapter 9 Managing to Learn), which leads us to the third and final part of our journey.

Reflecting and moving on

This part of the thesis has given an opportunity to "hear" directly from the research participants by using significant parts of the empirical materials to consider key issues for LDA CEOs in their practice: image, identity and leadership.

The experience of LDA CEOs, particularly in terms of their learning and development, points to a perceived deficit in skills for leading and managing in the sector. As we have seen this is partly tied to the image of the sector per se and the expectations of professionalism and accountability. In Chapter 5 the need to consider what is meant by professionalism in the sector (viz use of business tools and techniques in line with stakeholder expectations), and the need for different accountability measures based on qualitative outcomes was explored. In the light of this, it was also important to consider a field of practice that ties together these themes with concepts of identity, power and influence. With this in mind, the adaptation of Kelly's (1955) repertory grid allowed for in-depth consideration of the meaning of leadership in the sector.

The identification of leadership constructs and the situated nature of leadership in non-profits and LDAs show a move away from activities and behaviours perceived as being associated with traditional concepts of leadership. The characteristics identified by LDA CEOs are underpinned by personal values, political motivations and concepts of socialised power that give rise to evaluations of effective and non-effective practice. Effective or ideal leaders in the sector are seen to exhibit leadership along a number of dimensions. Some of the technical and skills based qualities are mainly associated with the enhancement of operational practice and interpersonal

skills. Dimensions that appear more specific to non-profits and the LDA sector are values and philosophical dimensions and socio-political dimensions of leadership.

In keeping with moving away from more traditional leadership traits and behaviours, and in exploring the behaviours associated with putting leadership constructs into practice, the concept of social change leadership is significant. The frameworks incorporating multiple frame perspectives, resource dependency and entrepreneurial behaviours usefully demonstrate their applicability to LDAs and LDA CEOs. In this sense, LDA CEOs may be seen to exhibit "a distinctive kind of leadership" (Selsky and Smith, 1994: 277), demonstrating high levels of social entrepreneurship and what Czarniawska (2001) and Weick (2001) would identify as skilled *bricolage*. This perceived ability "to transform a large number of miscellaneous resources into a small number of critical resources through imaginative recombination" (Weick, 2001: 68) also affects self-image and levels of self-efficacy, which in turn affects LDA CEOs' perceived capacity to act, even in situations of limited personal and positional power.

What is important, too, in asking LDA CEOs to think of themselves in relation to others (their choice of five people, for example) is the possibility of exploring the question posed by Illich (1970 and cited by Antonacopoulou, 2001: 219): "what kinds of things and people might learners want to do or be in contact with in order to learn". We have explored what it is LDA CEOs want to be (in relation to their commitment to social change) and what they want to do and be considered to be good at doing (in their leadership and entrepreneurial activities). In addition, we have been able to explore the kinds of things they admire (or not) in the kinds of people they have been in contact with in their personal and work lives. This has been in the context of leadership and behaviour in the non-profit sector. What we can now turn attention to, in the final part of the thesis, is how these come together to influence the choices LDA CEOs make in relation to learning and enhancing their sense of self and their practice.

Part III

Managing and Learning in the Sector

We can see from chapter one, managers in the sector who are well-educated, and entrepreneurial in some respects (6 and Leat, 1997; Batsleer, 1995) with an "obsession", if not always the resources, for training and development. Again, this is consistent with the general profile of sector employees in terms of educational attainment (van Doorn and Hems, 1998; Wilding, 2000).

We also see those who, for a variety of reasons, are not accessing formal means of training, education and learning and in some respects appear cynical of what is on offer. This might account for the apparent low numbers of voluntary sector managers on both non-profit management courses and on MBA and MPA (master of public administration) courses. This accords with Dartington's point, cited by Lewis (2001a:164) that non-profit organisations have generally developed management skills through "the experience of doing and through peer support". While all of the LDA CEOs interviewed have chosen a career in the voluntary sector, there is a noticeable absence of "career management" and this together with an exploration of management development in the sector will be considered in Chapter 8, *Learning to Manage*.

LDAs spend much of their time enabling other voluntary sector organisations to build capacity to contribute, grow, develop and change. It would make sense then to consider the wider contribution that sector organisations can and do make and the link between individual leadership capability and perceived organisational performance/success, which is reflected in the following CEO concerns:

[There's a] need for the sector to take ownership of and genuinely learn to value its contribution to the welfare and well-being of the community as a whole (EQAN)

[T]he thing that worries me most about leaving or potentially about leaving because I will leave at some point, you know – is a loss of

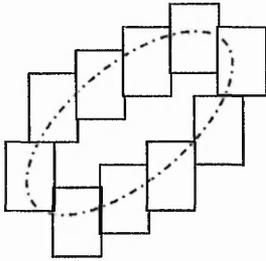
confidence within the organisation because I mean that almost underlies everything. It was almost like a very key change I think that's happened in the organisation and also outside, is the confidence that people have, being part of it. But also the confidence that external people have of it, you know. And I think that's er - if that was lost I - you know, it would really upset me, that point. And I think to some extent that people have confidence in the organisation because of me at the moment... (FIDND)

I'd love to do that sort of mapping of oh, how much does it all equate to in terms of social impact and economic impact. You know, so that we can have a bit of confidence and pride in ourselves as a sector really (FIJRN)

Erm - I think its absolutely crucial to keep my finger on that strategic pulse - erm otherwise we will get left behind. But I think there is an issue of confidence in there (FIPG)

Some of these issues of gaining experience by 'doing' leadership, and social entrepreneurialism will be revisited in relation to the development of LDA executives in Chapter 9, *Managing to Learn*.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 10 *Full Circle*, brings this part of the research cycle to a close. In doing so, it is necessary to revisit the original aims and objectives to consider the content, process and outcomes of the research.



8. Learning to Manage

As stated in the opening chapter a key focus of the research and a central question, is not so much why CEOs are not accessing continuing education, but what is the interplay between formal and informal learning and practice development? In this way, how managers develop themselves, how they are developed, and how they/we construe a sense of management and leadership in their world, can be seen through different lenses. For example, we might see this in terms of how learning opportunities may be used in order to develop managers' skills, tools and techniques, which in turn may have implications for organisational performance (Myers and Sacks, 2003). A different yet related focus is to consider how, over time, through experience and participation, managers as practitioners learn through the context of their work and their interactions with others. This gives attention to the socio-political nature of managerial action and the acquisition and value of different types of knowledge. Furthermore, it problematises the notion of "leadership" and "management development" as unstable. The following two chapters will explore these themes.

In order to identify LDA CEOs' approaches to learning and development, this chapter looks at the concepts of 'management learning' and 'management development'. Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997), for example, describe management learning as part of the activities of those who provide, organise or process learning opportunities (trainers, human resource development consultants and organisational development specialists), suggesting a formalised approach to the process of learning. Although this will be part of the focus of this chapter, 'management learning' in this context will refer to actual managers (LDA CEOs) engaged in the processes of managing and in the processes of learning and knowledge acquisition, rather than providers of such opportunities.

In this way, we are looking at the subjective experience of 'being developed' (by trainers and educators) and 'developing' as individuals and organisational members. This echoes Stewart's (1992) discussion in determining a model of human resource development (HRD), which differentiates between, on the one hand, *interventions* and on the other *learning* as contributing to individual and organisational change. In returning to this discussion later, Stewart (1999: 19, citing Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996) states, an important aspect of HRD is that it "is constituted by planned interventions in organisational and individual learning processes". However, differentiating learning from work-based interventions gives a strategic emphasis, which "implies concern with notions of leadership, culture and commitment" (McGoldrick and Stewart, 1996: 13). Management learning in this context, as Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997: 5) also suggest, includes "natural, incidental, informal, non-contrived learning that takes place in the course of on-going work and activity, without any deliberate attempt to make it happen".

Furthermore, Salaman and Storey (2005: 93) suggest in relation to defining and valuing innovation, that "people act in terms of their definitions" and that this will be "causally related" to how their actions and design of work will achieve the desired results and outcomes. We might see, therefore, a similar relationship between definitions and value given to learning and managing, and related effects on managerial and leadership behaviour in the sector. This helps to be inclusive of CEOs' own theorising about learning, assumed relationships between thinking, actions and behaviour and their models of managing and leading in the sector (Salaman *et al*, 2005). This also reflects Argyris's concern with espoused theories and theories-in-use in incorporating the ways in which CEOs think they act and the ways in which they do act (Argyris, 1999: 131). This type of relationship was discussed when defining characteristics of leadership and entrepreneurship in Chapter 7. In that discussion, there was a move away from more traditional conceptualisations of leaders and measures of effectiveness to appreciate the context and challenges of leadership in an LDA arena.

Using innovation as a background to consider knowledge management and learning processes, Newell *et al* (2002) also identify two significant

approaches. The first approach equates knowledge to "objectively defined concepts and facts" (Newell *et al*, 2002: 107), which can be captured, transferred and reproduced (in this instance using technology) to contribute to individual and organisational success. These defined concepts and facts can be learned and, presumably, they can be taught. Knowledge acquisition (and management learning in this context), then, is focused on individual cognitive abilities.

The second approach identified by Newell *et al* (2002: 107), views "knowledge as socially constructed and based on experience ... gains ... include exploration through the sharing and synthesis of knowledge among different social groups and communities". The contrasts provided by the "cognitive model" and the, second, "community model" (Newell *et al* (2002: 107) are useful in considering management learning and approaches to management development for LDA CEOs and there is a relevance also to the adoption and use of management tools and techniques described in Chapter 5. The community model would allow for the development and application of "new tools" in creating and sharing knowledge and learning across networks of practitioners. The distinctions between the two approaches also echo, to some extent, those provided by Cummings (1998) on management-by-information and management-by-ideology. These concepts were discussed earlier in relation to tools, techniques, and effectiveness (Chapter 5) and associated leadership styles (Chapter 7) and some of the characteristics associated with the community model will be returned to in Chapter 9, *Managing to Learn*.

In considering 'management development', Stewart's (2005) discussion of developing managers and managerial capacities provides an appropriate and useful platform to consider developing managers in the non-profit sector. Given the complexity of managerial activities in this sector, which as previously stated in this thesis, is of a politicised and uncertain nature, then so to, as Stewart suggests, must management development be equally "ambiguous and uncertain" (*ibid*, 2005: 382). Stewart's (2005) discussion of dimensions of traditional management development together with Lee's (1997) approaches to management development will be considered shortly. However, what is also of interest is to consider formal approaches to management

development and the structural and resource implications of developing managers in the sector.

Fit for Purpose

Many non-profit organisations have provision for training and development in their budgets. Due to perceived time restraints and limitations of budgets, training and development may be limited to a certain extent to practical skills training, where formal learning and education occur in relation to improving current skills, or addressing perceived skills gaps. This is shown in research participants' descriptions of most recent training experiences, for example:

I haven't done a lot of formal training other than IT (FIJB)

I went to a course put on last November which was put on through {} and that was about leadership styles - and that was interesting because it gave you an opportunity to actually think about what style you used more and to then look at other styles and look at some of the reasons why you don't use other styles (FIEWH)

I mean I try and keep myself up to date on employment law (FIAB)

There may well be some acknowledgement of training and development for changing roles or more strategic activities (to ensure managers are 'fit for purpose') and for building organisational capacity. For example,

But as the years went by...what I needed was quite hard-nosed, technical skills. So I started going to accountants' conferences... (FICC)

I don't feel fully competent in this job, so I want to learn more and that will take a couple of years at least (SIDND)

However, continued learning may not necessarily be seen as a deliberate occupation for these managers if access to management development is seen as limited to training and technical skills improvement. This may be especially so when it is perceived as no longer in alignment with maturation in role competency within the employing organisation:

I've done lots of management training and I've increasingly stopped doing it...I don't find it as helpful. The last one I went on was time management and I left at lunchtime (FICC)

I've never had any formal management training, just like many people...I've come through without any management training at all apart from the one day courses here and there, which have pretty limited value (FIIR)

There are any number of one- off courses on particular issues, but management, as you know, is a much bigger issue. It is not about – it is about understanding accounts or managing volunteers and it's about how you manage all of those things together and also... and some of the courses do look at management styles and the way people manage and try to understand how they function as managers I think that's part of it. But, I think there's felt to be a dearth of opportunities really (FILSL)

For others, there has been a change from immediate skills needs, to thinking about career management although career progression within the non-profit sector also has structural and financial constraints. Box 8.1, page 221, illustrates part of an interview with an LDA chief executive, which highlights a number of issues in relation to management development.

From this example, we can see that it is acknowledged that the purpose of management development is to increase competencies and skills and to encourage career development and the focus will be on both individual needs and organisational requirements. However, the benefits tend to be at an individual level as the organisational constraints in sustaining career development opportunities are evident in terms of lack of continued and consistent funding for management, administration and long-term employment. The benefit of investing in developing managers may not be seen directly by the organisation if managers have to leave current employers to fulfil their career ambitions.

Even on an individual level, the cost of career development may well outweigh any perceived benefits. For CEO FIJGM (Box 8.1, below), the main perceived avenues for career progression are to re-locate both in terms of geographical location and sub-sector organisational type. This relocation can also be emotional in terms of 'going back' or 'giving

Box: 8.1: In conversation with FIJGM...**In relation to working with other organisations (capacity building for voluntary sector)**

... Our theory some years ago was that we wanted to skill up organisations, that we were about organisational development not individual career patterns. But, increasingly it's become clear that because of what people need to get on in their career, that you can't - that just won't hold anymore

Career development for self and other staff:

I mean unless I go to London and work for a big national there is no career progression really. There's, you know, there's a series of stop starts and sideways moves and odd things happening and I don't think there's a career there really.

We developed a senior management team, but it's incredibly hard to sustain that in terms of funding because some of those posts are around administration or finance but you can't get funding for that, so it's very hard to sustain that idea that within the organisation there is movement. So it tends to mean people go out and you get new people in

Reflection on personal needs and development:

JM: If you were to design a formal [learning] situation for yourself, what would that entail?

FIJGM: Well, I suppose two things really. I think it's on particular things where you sometimes need some technical assistance. I think it's that, so it would be this person is really good on leases, let's say, or whatever. That type of thing. And I think it's also the time to develop your thinking, and I think that's much more dependent on people that you get on with and that you like and you can share with, and there's a degree of understanding. And trust as well, I suppose. And that's what we're trying to do with our peer group support. And to some degree you can't manufacture that; it happens or it doesn't.

FIJGM: I mean I think our roots and our home is the sector; there's no doubt about that. And if you lose that, you do often lose credibility.

JM: I guess that's what you said about being values led?

FIJGM: Absolutely, yes. But I mean those values I don't think are unique to the voluntary sector or are only placed there, and some voluntary organisations don't incorporate those values at all. And are rather pious about it! So I think we, you know; there's a lot of stuff about we all link together and support each other when actually on the ground it's anything but that, so - and so I think there is a leadership role about trying to reflect back to the sector some of the things that you see through the eyes of others.

JM: What would you describe then as the key skills that you've learned or collected or used over the years?

FIJGM: How to win friends and influence people!

JM: And how did you manage to do that? What are the key factors in doing that?

FIJGM: Yes, from my team. Some vision. I think I'm quite good at public speaking. Er - I think trying to translate for people, other people's views. Er - in appropriate ways er - I mean I know, I went - I used to think - I mean I don't think I thought it at the time, but I know that's how I operated, that if you had a good case and it was a good moral case, the mere fact of saying it would win people over. And after a lot of hard experience when that clearly didn't happen, I realised you had to do a lot more than that! So I think it's trying to say, you know; this is what people think. They think it for these reasons. This is why what you're doing isn't appropriate or how you could make it better or whatever.

something up' in relation to current role and status. As can be seen from the quotes below, while this can be seen as losing control and autonomy for some, for others there is no expressed ambition in relation to "management" per se:

I'm not interested in management. I don't really like managing...I don't like all this management rubbish. Er so, it's not like I want to be a better paid manager and managing more people - that thought fills me with horror - because I'm not very good at it, you know. I'm better at other things really. So, it's a bit difficult to move...I'm slowing down and finding learning new things more difficult. So, it feels like I might stay here (FICC)

We can see similar expressions of formal management development as "good, but not good for me", learning as part of an aging process and issues around careers in the following exchanges during two interviews with the same CEO:

- FICY: Er - and you know, I never get on with it [formal training]. You know, it's good for some people - and that's fine for them, but it's not something that I can get to excited about
- JM: So I wouldn't be coming back in a few months and seeing you applying for lots of management courses or -?
- FICY: Management, no! No, they've done their best but it's fallen on deaf ears

and

SICY: Could you get a job at my age? It would be such a salary drop and social workers...do social management so I would probably have to go back into voluntary sector...I've been waiting and seeing for the past 5 years...I can't see myself going back in to the statutory field.. the life is too good in the voluntary sector...I would struggle getting back in to having too many bosses...I mean this work is - I mean people stay in my line of business for a long time generally. I mean I've been in it 15 years and I know people who have been in it 25 years and still going and younger than me - so I'm not that long in the tooth. You make up your own workload and decide what you're going to do. Yes I know you've got trustees, but - you decide where you put your energies...and it's a very fulfilling job in that respect, but more and more I'm finding myself a manager and I'm sure I'm not cut out to be a manager.

This "resistance" to becoming or developing as managers is mirrored in the lack of consistent or sustained approaches to management development in the sector and where there is evidence that the sector

itself does not always value "home grown" managers and leaders. As previously mentioned, many, particularly larger, service providing non-profits are preferring to "recruit senior staff from other sectors, because they place more emphasis on the "hard" skills needed to run organisations, and believe that imports are more likely to have them" (Bolton and Abdy, 2003: 5).

Equally, Smith (2001:35) contends that *apparent* success, as a manager, may be somewhat dependent on the exploitation of "technical knowledge and managerial concepts", ("hard" skills), which tend to be at the forefront of management development approaches. So, it appears appropriate that provision of management development opportunities for the sector follows this tried and tested route. Indeed, as discussed earlier, there is a range of short courses available to voluntary sector managers and there are some non-profit research and practice-oriented units and centres within universities. There are also a number of independent consultants specialising in personal and organisational development in the sector. In addition, key national organisations are providing information and access to research; development and networking opportunities, as well as technical resources such as, legal and financial management and training for trustees.

However, the idea of "success" in the first instance seems to suggest a prescriptive approach to competencies and skills development, which in various ways can be imparted to individuals to improve their management styles and abilities. There has been a tendency for management development and learning to be driven by the priorities of large for-profit businesses, which has privileged "the claims of technical, instrumental reasons" (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996: 11), promoted an array of 'best practice' approaches and generated lists of management competencies. This is a view, which Cacioppe (1997: 340) contends fits with the world of management and leadership education in that "the more the person learns, the more he or she knows and the better they will be as a leader" and we can see is echoed in Stewart's (2005) description of conventional approaches to management development (see this chapter).

This further promotes a unitarist approach to developing managers across sectors and embeds a generalised acceptance of educating for an increasingly (American) enterprise model, which would also fit with a more individualised cognitive approach to learning and development. This approach is, as Kalff (2005:18) suggests also gaining ground in large sections of the public sector and, he argues, embraces:

...the pursuit of shareholder value...a strong CEO...tight planning and control; performance evaluation based on financial (or at least quantifiable) targets; substantial monetary incentives; and managers who believe in winning with the widest possible margin.

This description echoes the previous chapter's identification of traditional approaches to leadership and helps to further explain the adoption of for-profit tools and techniques in both public and non-profit sectors as outlined in Chapter 5. Furthermore, these characteristics resonate with a CEO's re-telling of one aspect of MBA educational experiences:

FIMD: ...I remember one debate we had. We used to do case studies and they were very detailed, intensive case studies - and we did one on {}, which is a pharmaceutical company and the case centred on their determination to protect their intellectual property and their patents... As the case developed we kind of set up this debate: those people in favour of {} easing their patents for use of drugs in developing countries [and others] against and we lost that debate! And we lost it to people who really believed. These were people who were going to go off to manage drug companies - because a lot of them did get really good jobs in pharmaceutical, top pharmaceutical companies - who were going to work extremely hard to ensure their patents weren't breached.

JM: How did that make you feel?

FIMD: I actually thought I would never have come across these people if I'd stayed in the voluntary sector and this is how the real world is. You know, I'd rather it wasn't but it is like this, so you know rather that sort of sit and look at my newspaper on Sunday and say this is really a shitty business and have another cappuccino, it's like there I was- with others obviously - arguing with these really hard headed capitalists. You know, who were absolutely sure that they were right and these patents should not be breached. So yeah, a lot of their ambitions in life were to make loads of money and as long as it was legal, they'd do anything. And even illegal I suppose. No seriously I mean you know when you're interpreting accounts and using accounting information you know, people would push the outside of the envelope in the case studies and argue whether or not their treatment of the figures was legal you know and it was often arguable and that was what was really

interesting about it. It was great. It was really, good fun. But, also, the serious side of it was that a lot of the people, my colleagues on that course, a lot of them were red meat-eating capitalists and they were going to go off and manage these multinationals and make money (FIMD)

In this instance, this CEO had been looking to achieve a "good" management qualification at speed in an effort to prove (to himself and others) his capability as a manager:

[I]t was a thinking gymnasium, it was a good place to go and think hard about things and sharpen up one's own analytical abilities, yeah. Plus, [it was] the chance to read about all different ways of doing things, different models of organising things and conceptualising things... (FIMD)

Yet, while a stimulating and enjoyable challenge, providing technical and conceptual skills building, it does not necessarily fulfil individual or organisational needs. There is also tangible cognitive dissonance between FIMD's values and mental models on managing and the observed values and intended behaviours of "red meat-eating capitalists". Furthermore, the outcome has not led to a feeling of enhanced ability and practice development:

No...yeah it is a bit of proof but it's not convincing. I mean actually, a lot of people will tell you that someone with an MBA is proof of the opposite, they're a bloody awful manager, but no, I still feel, I still feel that I'm not the manager I would like to be. That's probably fair to say...and I'm wondering really, really hard if I want to be a manager the rest of my life. Is that what I really enjoy? Do I really like that? Do I really make a difference being a manager? I'm not convinced that I do (FIMD).

These kinds of responses mark a divergence away from Kalff's (2005) earlier description in this chapter of *substantial monetary incentives and managers who believe in winning* and where *performance evaluation is based on financial and/or quantifiable targets*. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 7, the focus is away from the strong inward focused leader to a more outward oriented change agent.

This apparent lack of value given to third sector knowledge and practice may be because of absence "from the analytical vocabulary of both organisation theory and strategic management" (Butler and Wilson,

1990:9) where "values and practices are frequently marginalised and devalued" (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996: 11 and 13). It may also be a factor in the range and type of provision provided for sector training, both in technical know-how and in mirroring business practice albeit with a twist of non-profit context. Yet, as Alvesson and Wilmott (1996, p. 28) suggest, "acquiring abstract techniques and skills is comparatively easy; establishing and maintaining the power and authority that supports their effective application in specific contexts presents challenges of a completely different order". An observation reflected in the experience of LDA CEOs.

Measuring up to management

As in the example above (FIMD), for the majority of CEO research participants, the focus of making a difference is a measuring tool by which interventions such as formal management development opportunities and occupations may be judged. In this respect, we can see that Stewart's (2005: 387) critique of traditional management perspectives, which exclude "more processual perspectives and analyses of organising and managing" can also be utilised to show the limited relevance of these perspectives to non-profit experience. For example, Fig 8.1 shows Stewart's "dimensions of management development" (ibid, 2005: 385), which categorises conventional approaches and conceptions of management development (MD).

		FOCUS	
		Individual	Organisation
P U R P O S E	Behaviour	Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
	Career Progression	Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4

Figure 8.1 Dimensions of management development

Source: Stewart (1999, 2005).

Stewart (1999: 225) suggests that "most conceptions and definitions of MD can be accommodation by one of the four boxes in the framework", which presupposes the two main focus points of MD for individuals or

organisations and the purposes as being behavioural change or career progression. What needs to be considered is its usefulness in the context of management development and learning in the non-profit sector.

Given the discussion above and if we try to apply non-profit experience to Stewart's framework, see Figure 8.2 below, then we can see that Quadrants 1 to 3 are useful in mapping development approaches for non-profit managers and help us to understand conceptualisation of MD in this context. In relation to LDAs, Quadrant 4 is less applicable, because of the organisational constraints outlined earlier.

		FOCUS	
		Individual	Organisation
P U R P O S E	Behaviour	Quadrant 1 Improve current capabilities, competencies and personal development in relation to managerial role	Quadrant 2 Improve skills sets and technical competence in relation to managerial task
	Career Progression	Quadrant 3 Future oriented skills gaps analysis and education & development; increase knowledge of organisation & sector	Quadrant 4 Future orientated or project determined. Succession planning; Promotion

Figure 8.2 Dimensions of management development and non-profit experience

Source: adapted from Stewart, 1999, 2005)

However, there are still aspects of LDA CEO experience that lie outside of these conventional approaches to and conceptions of management development. In reviewing Lee's (1997) work on approaches to management development, Stewart (1999) suggests that some conventional definitions identified above tend to accommodate only one main perspective from Lee's framework (see Fig. 8.3 below, page 228) – that of maturation. Although if a co-regulated identity is assumed – as Stewart (1999: 228) suggests Harrison's (1997) definition of MD does – then Lee's concept of shaping can also be included (as will be shown in Figure 8.4, page 229).

development approaches, Quadrants 1 to 3, and to a certain extent 4, continue to provide relevance for the sector. See Figure 8.4, below.

		FOCUS	
		Individual	Organisation
PURPOSE	B E H A V I O U R	Quadrant 1 Improve current capabilities, competencies and personal development in relation to managerial role <i>Technical training</i> <i>Formal learning</i> <i>Coaching</i>	Quadrant 2 Improve skills sets and technical competence in relation to managerial task <i>Fit for Purpose</i> <i>Formal education</i> <i>Competencies development</i>
	C A R E R	Quadrant 3 Future oriented skills gaps analysis and education & development; increase knowledge of organisation & sector. <i>Lateral career moves</i> <i>Secondment</i> <i>Mentoring</i>	Quadrant 4 Future orientated or project determined. Succession planning; internal promotion <i>Fit for Purpose</i> <i>Fit for Future</i> <i>Formal education</i> <i>Competencies development</i>

<i>Shaping</i>	<i>Maturation</i>
<i>Shaping</i>	<i>Maturation</i>

Figure 8.4 Management Development: dimensions and approaches

Source: adapted from Lee (1997) and Stewart (1999, 2005).

Traditional development routes can be identified, which include short courses to develop skills and techniques, longer-term commitments to education and individual or career development levels. There is also evidence of traditional management learning through higher education and professional qualifications, all of which the research participants either have experienced or are continuing to search for in order to expand their repertoire of competencies. Some informal approaches connected to self-discovery and matching individual and organisational values can also be seen. Other aspects include, congruence between own beliefs and actions in the community geared towards capacity building; building communities of practice, networking and partnership approaches to learning.

However, while there is evidence from my research to support Stewart's (1999, 2005) framework, as we can see this is only in relation to conventional conceptualisations of MD and for career

progression there is a more tenuous association. We therefore need to be able to expand both the purpose and the focus of management development as outlined in Stewart's (1999, 2005) original dimensions to be inclusive of non-profits. We also need to consider the more emotional aspects of being and developing as a manager particularly in the third sector and to see if Lee's (1997) additional approaches are consistent with LDA CEO experience.

For LDA chief executives, management development or rather their development as managers has an additional purpose to the individual behaviour and career needs identified in Stewart's original framework. This additional purpose links to a broader interest and sense of vocation in relation to structural differences and societal changes. This allows the addition of a further dimension: *making a difference/social justice*.

Together with this additional sense of purpose, there are specific focal points connected with improving standing in cross-sector working and in addressing broader structural injustices perceived in society. The location of learning and development is generally the space LDA CEOs occupy in inter-agency work. Impact of learning is geared to both improving practice in this inter-organisational context and in being able to identify ways in which to influence broader societal structures and relationships. This allows for additional dimensions: *inter-organisation and society*. This gives a further eight quadrants to expand on traditional management development perspectives in relation to non-profits. Furthermore, when we consider Lee's (1997) identified stances, it is possible to fit these into an extended framework. See Figure 8.5, page 231.

In considering Quadrant 7 (Plus 7), because the purpose is on career progression, there is a shaping process in relation to inter-organisational focus. For example, in thinking about management development as a shaping process, Lee (1997: 200) would consider skills development programmes and toolkits as part of addressing "some weakness or gap... by the use of the appropriate tools or blueprints". This may relate to the plethora of short courses that LDA CEOs refer to but also, in reflecting back to non-profits' use of management tools

		FOCUS			
		Individual	Organisation	Inter-organisation	Society
P U R P O S E	B E H A V I O U R	Quadrant 1 Improve current capabilities, competencies and personal development in relation to managerial role <i>Technical training</i> <i>Formal learning</i> <i>Coaching</i>	Quadrant 2 Improve skills sets and technical competence in relation to managerial task <i>Fit for Purpose</i> <i>Formal education</i> <i>Competencies development</i>	Plus 5	Plus 6
	C A R E E R	Shaping Maturation Shaping		Plus 7 Shaping Future oriented skills gaps analysis and education & development; increase knowledge of organisation & sector. <i>Lateral career moves</i> <i>Secondment</i> <i>Mentoring</i>	Plus 8
	S O C I A L J U S T I C E	Plus 9 Voyage Work orientation: alignment of values with job activities, role and purpose. Self- discovery. <i>Informal learning</i> <i>Unitary identity (sense of purpose)</i> <i>Co-regulated identity (multiple selves)</i> <i>External focus</i>	Plus 10 Shaping Alignment of personal, organisation and partner activities with espoused values of organisation. Balancing internal needs of the organisation with external relationships and partnerships <i>Formal and informal learning</i> <i>Stress management</i> <i>Organisational capacity building</i> <i>Internal focus</i> <i>Unity identity moving to co-regulated identity</i>	Plus 11 Emergent Joint strategy setting and ways of working to improve outcomes of services and provision <i>Informal learning</i> <i>Action learning</i> <i>Learning through networks and alliances</i> <i>External focus</i> <i>Co-regulated identity</i>	Plus 12

Figure 8.5: Management Development: four quadrants plus

Source: adapted from Stewart (1999, 2005) and Lee (1997)

and techniques, there is some connection too with identified copycat approaches (Chapter 5). A co-regulated identity and an unknown-end point for development may also include the consideration of cross-sector career moves and appropriate development activities to

promote transferable skills, knowledge and competencies, which fits more with non-profit experience than Quadrant 4.

Similarly, in relation to Quadrant 10, there is also a shaping approach evident, partly because of the focus on achieving organisational goals and in the alignment of personal and professional development. In addition, development approaches may be in relation to building the capacity of the organisation and therefore have more of an external needs focus. However, balancing the internal needs of the organisation with the requirements of external relationships and partnerships also suggests a co-regulated identity focus.

A focus on individual with the purpose of making a difference (Quadrant 9) might be appropriately framed with what Lee (1997: 203) refers to as "development as a voyage". Here, Lee (1997: 203-204) suggests that

...individuals construe their own frames of reference and place their view of self within this ... an active process where individuals are continually analysing their role in the emergence of the processes they are part of, and in doing so also confront their own ideas, un-surfaced assumptions, biases and fears, while maintaining a core of ethicality and strong self-concept.

In thinking back to tools and techniques, this may link to contextualising ways of working to fit non-profit approaches to managing. It also provides a bridge to thinking about the leadership and entrepreneurial characteristics identified in Chapter 7.

Lee's (1997) final approach places a strong self-concept or sense of self in a broader social context, which links to Quadrant 11 emphasising a focus on inter-agency relationships and making a difference. This implies a transformative process which Lee (1997: 205) suggests:

...encompasses individuals' unique perceptions of themselves within a social reality, which is 'continuously socially (re)constructed' (Checkland, 1994: 33), in which 'individuals dynamically alter their actions with respect to the ongoing and anticipated actions of their partners' (Fogel, 1993: 34) and in which they negotiate a form of communication and meaning specific and new to the group and relatively un-accessible or un-describable to those who are not part of the process.

As can be seen in Fig 8.5, above, Lee's concepts of *voyage*, *shaping* and *emergent* approaches can be accommodated in considering the additional purpose and focus in relation to LDA CEO experience, particularly in relation to Quadrants 7, 9, 10 and 11. However, this still leaves four quadrants unaccounted for within both frameworks of conventional (Stewart, 1999, 2005) and less conventional approaches (Lee, 1997) to MD.

These gaps can be filled by extending and modifying Lee's (1997) model. For example, where the purpose of development is behavioural change and the focus is in inter-organisational relationships (Quadrant 5), we have a mix of both formal and informal contributions to and interventions for individual development. In some instances, this is a shaping process, where there are some identifiable gaps in performance and skills levels some of which can be addressed through gaining appropriate knowledge and tools. Improved performance may be seen because of increased practice – finding oneself in various situations in which one becomes more competent to perform over time. Building on Lee's (1997) original descriptors, I have labelled this as *Shaped maturation* (Quadrant 5). See Figure 8.6 below.

		Focus	
		Inter-organisation	Society
P u r p o s e	B e h a v i o u r	Plus 5 <i>Shaped maturation</i> Improve current skills – political, negotiation, bargaining skills. <i>Blend of technical skills and learning.</i> <i>Informal learning and development.</i> <i>Known end-point, pre-determined stages; mix of unitary and co-regulated identity</i>	Plus 6 <i>Maturing Voyage</i> External involvement in other organisations e.g. Board membership. Involvement in campaigning, advocacy, social movements <i>Formal and Informal learning</i> <i>More diffused endpoint, co-regulated identity</i>

Figure 8.6 Behaviour, inter-organisation, and society focus
 Source: adapted from Stewart, 2005 and Lee, 1997)

In this sense, we might see an inevitable process of development. However, this does not explain how one person may mature into a confident and able performer and others may be seen as less competent. Some of this may be answered in terms of looking at self-efficacy and also commitment to role and purpose (as part of an

overall purpose to 'make a difference' and for 'social justice'), where we can see some resonance with CEO experience:

Part of me is incredibly arrogant because I think I can do anything, you know. Give me a job and I'll do it, and - or I'll learn how to do it or I'll find out how to do it or I'll ask someone who'll be able to help me how to do it. But part of me is incredibly er - unconfident - about what I know and what I can do at the same time, you know. So er - so I know that I could always find out how to do something but I don't - can't really - sit down and say well, these are my skills, very easily. (FIDND)

So, I go along to health and care core group. I don't understand anything for the first time. And you just keep your ears open; you keep reading and slowly it makes sense. Er - and it's the same for regeneration - I'm a star at that now! Er - and I know that's largely because at the last voluntary sector forum I did a presentation. I made myself do a presentation, which I'd never done before on neighbourhood renewal - neighbourhood strategy, neighbourhood renewal funds, the community chest, the Community Empowerment Fund, local strategic partnerships and neighbourhood renewal management pilot, and tried to make sense of all that. And I do, and I can understand that now because I tried to turn it into something that was translatable to groups (FIAB)

I really encouraged people to go on different courses because I was taking everything in sight, you know. I was going on everything. I thought oh, I've got to get to grips with this job! (FIND)

Some less formal opportunities for development may arise through involvement in other organisations, for example through Board membership at a local or national level. In this instance, there may be a known endpoint in that involvement in Board level activities contributes to increased analytical and strategic skills (Austin, 1998). Individuals may well become more proficient over time as with Quadrant 5, yet, there is also the longer-term community development and social change aspects, which give more of an external focus, which is negotiated and less determined; hence the label, *Maturing Voyage* (Quadrant 6). See Figure 8.6 above.

In considering Quadrant 8 (See Figure 8.7, below) , as Quadrant 7 the purpose is career progression, but where the focus (society) means that development opportunities are less determined and more externally focused. Hence, the label *Shaped Voyage*. Again, this is

more fitting to non-profit experience than Quadrant 4 and "promotion" may be in remaining in rather than migrating from the sector.

		Focus	
		Society	
P u r p o s e	C a r e r	Plus 8 <i>Shaped voyage</i>	
		Possible moves into national and international arena; local sensitivities; some political alignment Moving to more influential positions in or outside the sector (socialised influence, power) <i>Formal and informal learning</i> <i>Less known endpoint – although more known if seen as achieved through move to national organisation</i> <i>Co-regulated identity</i> <i>External focus</i>	

Figure 8.7 Career and Society

Source: adapted from Stewart, 2005 and Lee, 1997

The final quadrant (12) gives focus to broader society level with the aim of making a difference. In helping to describe this, I've borrowed again from Lee's (1997) terminology by linking together development as 'emergent' and as 'voyage' to provide the label '*emerging voyage*'.

Here, the concept of social justice is part of a transformative process, in which the individual is also a part. The individual constructs reality and identity in the light of this involvement and active participation (Lee, 1997). There is sense of journey and voyage (one may even consider vocation) with no "end-point, no clear path and thus no guide" (Lee, 1997: 201). Here, relationships and identity are negotiated and where new and synthesised ways of working may emerge through collaboration and trust (Newell *et al*, 2002).

Lee's framework has allowed an extension of the original Stewart model to take account of what is perceived as missing from conventional definitions and accounts of management development. However, as we have seen there are still identified gaps within even this extended framework. Fig 8.8, page 236, brings together both Stewart's dimensions of management development with Lee's concepts of development and the additional dimensions related specifically to non-profit LDAs. It includes descriptions of the final four quadrants.

		FOCUS			
		Individual	Organisation	Inter-organisation	Society
PURPOSE	BEHAVIOUR	Quadrant 1 Improve current capabilities, competencies and personal development in relation to managerial role <i>Technical training</i> <i>Formal learning</i> <i>Coaching</i>	Quadrant 2 Improve skills sets and technical competence in relation to managerial task <i>Fit for Purpose</i> <i>Formal education</i> <i>Competencies development</i>	Plus 5 Shaped maturation Improve current skills – political, negotiation, bargaining skills. <i>Blend of technical skills and learning. Informal learning and development. Known end-point, pre-determined stages; mix of unitary and co-regulated identity</i>	Plus 6 Maturing Voyage External involvement in other organisations e.g. Board membership. Involvement in campaigning, advocacy, social movements <i>Formal and Informal learning</i> <i>More diffused endpoint, co-regulated identity</i>
	CAREER	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Shaping Maturation Shaping </div> Quadrant 3 Future oriented skills gaps analysis and education & development; increase knowledge of organisation & sector. <i>Lateral career moves</i> <i>Secondment</i> <i>Mentoring</i>	Quadrant 4 Future orientated or project determined. Succession planning; internal promotion <i>Fit for Future</i> <i>Lateral career moves</i> <i>Promotion out of the organisation</i>	Plus 7 Shaping Future oriented skills gaps analysis and education & development; increase knowledge of other sectors &/or look at transferability of training to other sectors (e.g. MBA) <i>Formal and informal learning</i> <i>Unknown-end point, internally focussed</i> <i>Unitary identity re competency profile</i> <i>Co-regulated identity re transferability</i>	Plus 8 Shaped voyage Possible moves into National and international arena; local sensitivities; some political alignment Moving to more influential positions in or outside the sector (socialised influence, power) <i>Formal and informal learning</i> <i>Less known endpoint – although more known if seen as achieved through move to national organisation</i> <i>Co-regulated identity</i> <i>External focus</i>
	SOCIAL JUSTICE	Plus 9 Voyage Work orientation: alignment of values with job activities, role and purpose. Self- discovery. <i>Informal learning</i> <i>Unitary identity (sense of purpose)</i> <i>Co-regulated identity (multiple selves)</i> <i>External focus</i>	Plus 10 Shaping Alignment of personal, organisation and partner activities with espoused values of organisation. Balancing internal needs of the organisation with external relationships and partnerships <i>Formal and informal learning</i> <i>Stress management</i> <i>Organisational capacity building</i> <i>Internal focus</i> <i>Co-regulated and unitary identity</i>	Plus 11 Emergent Joint strategy setting and ways of working to improve outcomes of services and provision <i>Informal learning</i> <i>Action learning</i> <i>Learning through networks and alliances</i> <i>External focus</i> <i>Co-regulated identity</i>	Plus 12 Emerging Voyage Assessment of enacted values versus espoused values on both an individual and organisational level <i>Informal learning</i> <i>External focus</i> <i>Unitary and co-regulated identity.</i>

Figure 8.8 Conventional and non-conventional dimensions of management development in the non-profit sector
 Source: adapted and extended from Stewart (1999, 2005) and Lee (1997)

As such, this extended framework encompasses non-conventional approaches to management development and the application of both conventional and non-conventional conceptualisation of MD and management learning in the non-profit sector. If we consider the quadrants where social justice is the purpose of development, Quadrants 9 to 12, whether at an individual, organisational, inter-organisation or society focus, there is emphasis on informal learning and an external orientation can be seen. This is more strongly demonstrated by Quadrants 11 and 12.

There is also a resonance here with the modal participation identified in Chapter 6 (altering actions) together with the use of new tools identified in Chapter 5 (negotiated meaning and actions) and the community model identified by Newell *et al* (2002). See Fig 8.9, below.

Focus:	Individual	Organisation	Inter- organisation	Society
Purpose Social Justice	Plus 9 Voyage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal learning & education ▪ Informal learning ▪ Emerging leadership and social entrepreneurial behaviours ▪ Copycat tools to contextualised tools 	Plus 10 Shaping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal learning and education ▪ Cognitive abilities and competence ▪ Informal learning ▪ Organisational capacity building ▪ Copycat tools 	Plus 11 Emergent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal learning ▪ Action learning ▪ Learning through networks and alliances ▪ Community model ▪ Modal participation ▪ Leadership and social entrepreneurial behaviours ▪ Contextualised tools to new tools 	Plus 12 Emerging Voyage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of enacted values versus espoused values on both an individual and organisational level ▪ Informal learning ▪ Community model ▪ Entrepreneurial behaviours ▪ New Tools

Fig 8.9 Management Development for social justice
Source: author, adapted from Stewart, 2005 and Lee, 1997

Where management learning and management development is aimed at producing successful and competent managers, more traditional approaches, as seen from the discussion above, only go so far in accomplishing this for non-profit managers. This being so, they and we need to look elsewhere. Furthermore, where purposes and focus of management development are enhancing behaviour and career

opportunities at individual and organisational levels, there appears to be an additional gap for non-profit managers and LDA CEOs:

I remember once joking with a guy from university who said that there were no career ladders, there are but the problem is they're all very short. You can reach the top of your chosen niche by the time you're in your late 20s (FIPH)

Continuous learning, development, seeking out education, and learning opportunities is not always about promotion and career progression for people in this position. Indeed, Bolton and Abdy (2003, p. 23) cite Kotter's (1990) key factors evidenced in those who achieved leadership positions, which are of interest here: "significant leadership challenge early in their career (i.e. in their 20s and early 30s)" and "lateral career moves", which serve to widen breadth of experience and (personal) networks, both of which correspond to LDA CEO experience. Moreover, Harrison and Kessels (2004, p. 101) cite Mumford *et al*'s (1987) research "into learning processes undergone by successful directors of business", which gave weight to on-the-job experience and role models as opposed to formal learning.

In some instances, for LDA directors, there is even a certain amount of cynicism connected with what are perceived to be traditional routes to increased managerial know-how. Some chief executives are choosing not to take up postgraduate courses in non-profit studies, preferring instead (or being invited to take up) other options, including more specialised areas such as leadership "fellowships" (FIDND). Others are opting out of formal provision altogether – not because they do not appreciate the need to learn, what Antonacopoulou (2001, p. 223) would refer to as mathophobic managers, but because they perceive their learning, for various reasons, to be "beyond" what is on offer in order to be successful in their roles.

Indeed, Smith (2001: 35) suggests that success comes from "an understanding of, and feel for, such factors as organisational politics and culture, the art of influencing others, the ability to delegate, the skills of timing, presentation and selling ideas". Moreover, Baumard (1999, preface of original 1996 publication) suggests that success lies more in "top managers' ability to use *tacit* knowledge than in their gaining or updating *explicit* knowledge" (my italics). This social and "practical wisdom"

(Czarniawska, 2001: 254) or "phronesis" (Baumard, 1999: 22) is part of a process of experiential learning: a contextual or situated knowledge, which will be considered in more depth in the next chapter.

At the same time, however, the perceived lack of management and leadership development and support is an issue for the sector as a whole and certainly an issue for LDAs. A report on skills gaps and leadership deficit for the sector (VSTNO, 2003) brings to the fore technical know-how and management skills development. Whereas the picture being assembled throughout this thesis is one that looks – particularly for long-serving practitioners – at more experientially-based approaches to learning. This is echoed in LDA CEOs' own assessments of their needs:

What I've never really done is actually spent some time with them [public service and private-sector counterparts] trying in a structured way to learn what they are – what their motivation is, what their philosophies are, or their approaches or the constraints and parameters they work within. Though I think I know a lot of them, or understand some of them just from observing, maybe spending time like that would be useful (Secondment)

It would have to be the right people so that it can be reciprocated. I tried [and was matched] with this guy from [well-known high street bank]. I met him once and it was a bit of a waste of time really because he was a business manager in a branch and managed like 200 business accounts. And he was in a system that was so rigid, so set down . . . And I was trying to explain to him that it's a bit different to my world, you know (Mentoring).

The [. . .] leadership fellowship is a useful mechanism . . . trying to replicate that on a more, not local but say regional basis would be useful (Leaders/aspiring leader networks).

What I would like the opportunity to do is maybe to have some week-long sessions, which were cheap. And which the organisation could afford that would actually improve my performance in certain areas and give me some additional skills to be a better manager . . . the opportunity to sit down and actually consider collectively how you might tackle a particular project, a particular strategy, look at it from different angles (Anticipatory learning).

I think probably now I'd like someone to come along and say, well, you know actually you could do so with some training in these areas – perhaps some kind of consultancy really – come along and say well,

yes, these are areas where we think we can help you to improve your performance (Individual consultancy).

I find the research methods are sort of important as well, you know, again dealing with the public sector so much . . . you suddenly realise how little of what is done [in voluntary sector] is actually based on any sort of research or based on any factual knowledge that it might work (Research and inquiry-based learning)

I will need somebody who understands at that level . . . facilitating the thinking (Facilitation and coaching).

If these are the identified needs and potential gaps, how are managers approaching their work and how reflective are they in their need for support and development? Are managers so overloaded with information and the need to act that they are overwhelmed, reacting to the greatest pressure? Are they technically competent in keeping their head above the water – coping with the different demands and pressures? Are they performing – fulfilling the aims and objectives of the organisation and hitting targets? Are they “thinking about [their] actions and analysing them in a critical manner, with the purpose of learning to improve their professional practice”? (Baumard, 1999, p. 96, speaking about reflexive practice). Are they creating opportunities to learn – “seeking exposure within their job, aiming to make the most out of the learning resources and opportunities they have available and taking personal initiative” (Antonacopoulou, 2001:223, referring to philomathic managers)? See Figure 8.10, page 241.

Depending on what “level” managers are operating, perceived skills gaps might determine an “appropriate” intervention. So, what might be relevant at the beginning of their career – developing the skills and abilities to supervise and manage staff, produce budgets, strategic and development planning – may be accessed through short courses, structured events specifically, but not necessarily always, designed for non-profits.

The perceived “know-how” in managing themselves in different situations; becoming voluntary sector managers - and particularly local development agency chief executives – i.e. “*becoming* a practitioner not learning about practice” (Brown and Duguid, 1991, p. 48, authors’ italics) may require a “multi-faceted approach” (Anheier, 2000, p. 8).

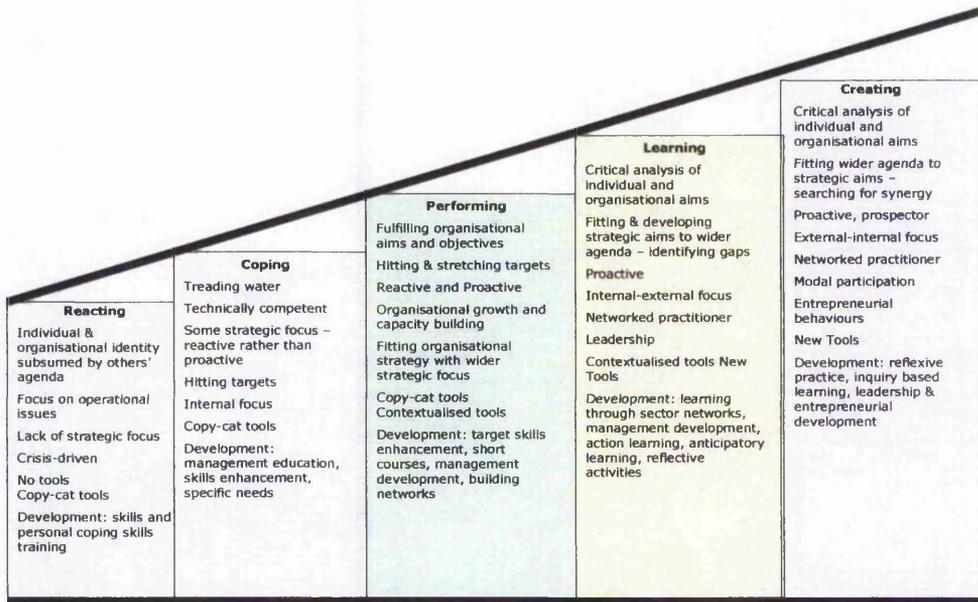


Figure 8.10 Responses to challenges and new events
Source: author

Developing individual competencies and a perceived need for successful managers to move from reacting, to internal and external pressures, to certainly performing, may be addressed by providing management development and education (the bread and butter of many business schools). CEOs also mentioned the need for long-term modular approach to include both formal learning and validation of managerial experience (developed and added to over time and accredited by an academic institution - or a professional body for the sector - to give some kind of academic/professional award). The less clear-cut areas of learning, innovation and creativity, which no doubt impact on performance, may be more about what is perceived as supporting "leadership" potential (a developing area of interest for public and non-profit sectors and the practice of some universities in their links into corporate and public sectors).

In considering different "levels" of performance identified above – reacting, coping, performing, learning and creating, see Figure 8.10 above, these can be seen in a hierarchical fashion moving from less effective to most effective, and skills and competencies acquisition to competence and knowledge development. This would fit with a

competencies approach to management development in identifying gaps in skills, knowledge and behaviour and providing suitable interventions to meet those gaps. However, if we look at each of these as one in a possible range of responses it gives a different perspective. For example, a reactive position may be both positive and negative. A positive response to change may be about reacting to new events and responding in ways appropriate to the organisation's aims and capabilities. A more negative reactive response may be seen in losing organisational direction and drifting away from original aims and objectives (Myers, 2006).

As LDA CEOs find themselves in new situations and facing new events and changing circumstances, they may respond differently. For example, the perception of one event may lead to a coping reaction; in another situation, a similar event may give rise to a more creative response. In this sense, it would not be a growth continuum, per se. The two ends of the continuum may touch (after all, it only takes a shifting of one letter to move from reacting to creating...) to start a new cycle of learning and development. However, taking into account the repertoire of skills, knowledge and competencies that an individual has gained through previous experience may mean that, even when faced with new circumstances, they can operate at a different level than a newcomer with less experience. This encompasses both a maturation process discussed earlier and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, which is considered more in the next chapter. Responses may well be organisationally and structurally constrained (or indeed enabled) in relation to time, resources, personal and organisational commitment for example, which brings back into focus the contextual and situation aspects of learning and development.

Important, too, is breadth and scope of operational and strategic focus. A simple internal focus may be limited to technical and operational aspects of organisational life. Learning and development requirements, therefore, may well remain at a technical and operational level. A developed external focus would give grounds for further consideration of Newell *et al*'s (2002: 107) "community model" and participation in social and professional groupings. Here, creativity and innovation are promoted through knowledge sharing via networking opportunities,

which emphasises dialogue and collaboration. This also takes into account the earlier discussion of the impact of multi-stakeholder perspectives and the pressure they may exert on LDA CEOs (pressure to conform, pressure to professionalise, pressure to embody for-profit ways of working and different levels of accountability).

Furthermore, this links with the concepts of shifting roles and identities as outlined in Chapter 5 and being able to develop and maintain a sense of self. Here, leadership and entrepreneurial behaviours, demonstrated in cross-sector working, are values-led and where pressure to conform may be resisted in order to argue and influence for an agenda of inclusion and social change, part of a process of what Weick (1995:136) terms "belief-driven sensemaking". We can see the inter-relationship of some of these issues, together with issues of identity and effective behaviours for LDA CEOs, in Figure 8.11 below.

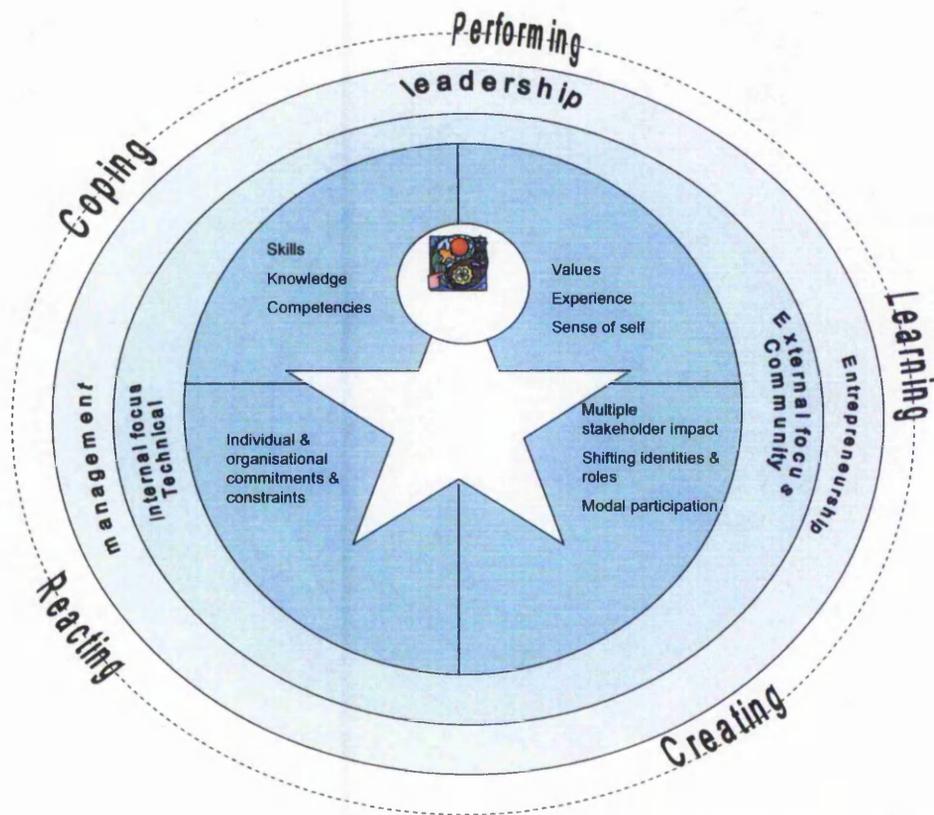


Figure 8.11 Developing LDA CEOs
Source: author

At one extreme, what we are looking to avoid is the total collapse of the system and the individual by absorption into other organisations' agenda or being overwhelmed by the complexity of their situation; the "rabbit-in-the-headlights" lack of response and reaction (which some LDA CEOs described in terms of burn-out). However, what we may be seeing in relation to LDA chief executives – operating at a fairly sophisticated level (not all agencies and/or individuals do) – is what Södergren and Söderholm (2001, p. 248) refer to as "knowledge-intensive work". This requires "constant and informal learning" which, in turn, may be as much about interacting with "others in the same professional areas" (Stein, 2001, p. 213) as being sent off to learn (Huysman, 2001). This focuses attention on the right-hand side of Figure 8.11. It is here where we need to think critically about the ways in which learning for non-profit managers is facilitated and supported and this becomes the focus of the next chapter, *Managing to Learn*.

Reflecting and moving on

In thinking back to some of the questions underlying the main research objectives, we can see that LDA CEOs do enhance their practice through formal learning and development approaches but only up to a certain point. The interplay between formal and informal learning is around distinctions in moving between levels of reacting, coping, performing, learning and creating, some of which focuses attention on repertoires of skills and some of which focuses attention on skilful repertoires. LDA CEOs are looking at development opportunities that link the socio-political context of their leadership and management practice with the inquiry and problem-solving focus of change-oriented behaviours. Where the purpose of development is social justice and the main focus is both at an inter-organisational and societal level, this confirms the initial identified need to focus on considering the emergent and experiential nature of managing and learning in the sector (Chapter 1).

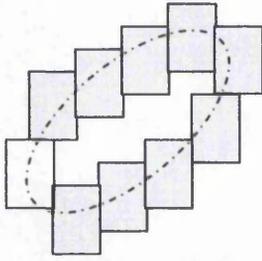
How proficiently or otherwise, LDA CEOs build expertise and competence to handle ambiguous situations and complexity links also to the personal constructs LDA CEOs have in relation to leading and learning in the sector (Chapter 7). The image they have of themselves

and their organisations (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) can both inhibit and enhance their influence and learning in cross-sector relationships.

Even where there is little room for significant financial investment in training and development, there is an awareness of the need for human resource development (HRD) activities in non-profits. This has been observed in a study by Hill (Hill and Stewart, 2000) examining HRD practices in two for-profit firms and a voluntary sector organisation. Although the latter had no HRD budget to speak of, was reliant on external funding for training and development and there was no evidence of systematic and formal approaches to employee development, the organisation nevertheless, was seen to be "more conscious and deliberate" in its approach "and therefore ... illustrates the most advanced HRD practice of the three" (ibid, 2000:112). What was in evidence was international exchange visits, team building events, performance reviews and coaching (ibid: 2000). These observations could also be transferred to an LDA context. In this instance, external funding is often more easily obtained in terms of providing training and development for associated groups under its umbrella rather than directly for employees. However, there are numerous team building events and cross-functional groupings in evidence and regular supervision and appraisal with the latter focused on development related to performance rather than performance related to compensation issues.

Taking all of these observations into account, in order for mainstream management development and learning discourse to be inclusive of the needs of non-profit experience and development needs, the conceptualisation of conventional frames of MD, as explored through the use of Stewart's (1999, 2005) and Lee's (1997) frameworks, need to be extended. This links with arguments for a more critical pedagogical approach to learning and development (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) and brings in to focus the andragogical concepts of adult learning (Knowles 1980, Rachal, 2002), action learning (Revans, 1983), "management as a lived experience" (Wilmott, 1997:173) and a "process-oriented form of enquiry" (Chia, 1997: 75). Capturing learning from cross-sector partnerships is also an issue for LDA CEOs. This takes us back to considering the strategic roles and diversity of tasks

of local development agency chief executives (the "what") in order to explore "the how's and discuss the why's" (Huysman, 2001, p. 87). These concerns underpin the discussion in Chapter 9, which considers LDA CEO experience in relation to non-formal learning and development – how they manage to learn.



9. Managing To Learn

Learning is what most adults will do for a living in the 21st Century
(S.J. Perleman, n.d.)

The wise see knowledge and action as one
(Bhagrad-Gita, cited in Bierly et al, 2000: 597)

As was seen in the last chapter, LDA CEOs are interested in and committed to continued learning, but not always continued management education or development in the conventional sense. The useful avenues of personal and professional development that were among the suggestions offered by LDA CEOs present a mix of formal and informal approaches to learning. However, they tend to be active at the informal end of what might be considered a learning continuum between formal and informal activities, which takes into account their practice experience. Some also demonstrate a questioning approach to learning and practice that might provide opportunities for new ways of thinking and new tools – for example anticipatory learning and inquiry based learning in partnership arrangements and multidisciplinary learning networks. In light of this, this chapter examines CEOs' continued development from an experiential and informal learning perspective and specifically in relation to legitimate peripheral participation (LPP - Lave and Wenger, 1999) and phronesis (Baumard, 1999; Czarniawska, 2001). In this way, LDA CEOs can be presented as information seekers, who look towards a range of options in enhancing their practice throughout their working lives and where "the learning process involves learning an identity and a profession or skill in addition to a sense of belonging" (Elkjaer, 2001: 81).

In the same way, as was argued earlier, that definitions of voluntary organisations are often juxtaposed with what they are not rather than what they are (for example, profit/non-profit), there is a similar tendency with informal or non-formal approaches to learning and development. For example, they are in- or non-formal rather than

formal; can be seen as non-systematic rather than systematic, unintentional or incidental rather than intentional and deliberate and they are non-course based as opposed to course based. In terms of management literature, informal learning is seen as happening, in the main, within the work organisation itself (Harrison and Kessels, 2004).

While definition and labelling is important because it can also ascribe a level of status of one concept over another, perhaps what is more important is the aspect of intentionality in respect to learning in both formal and less formal environments and situations. For example, it is possible that in formal education and learning contexts there is both absence of learning and unintentional learning. In this way, there is no direct input-output relationship between teaching in a formal situation and learning in a formal situation. In using a "constructivist" (or autopoietic) paradigm to describe this, Qvortrup (in press: 5, citing Luhmann, 2002) suggests that:

..education is a structural coupling between two different activities [where] teaching is seen as a specialised form of communication, while learning is seen as an individual or group-based activity where knowledge is constructed.

In this context, educationalists become facilitators and mediators of individual and group learning and look for appropriate tools to achieve this. This emphasises a critical pedagogical or andragogical approach to learning identified in the last chapter, in linking knowledge, experience and action via collaborative and action-based learning. It also has implications for community-based learning and approaches for supporting learning in action, which will be returned to in a later section, *Partnering for Learning*.

The quote also suggests knowledge construction as a separate system of activity from education and as such, presents learning as separate from any identified formal structures. However, not all informal communication and interaction necessarily promotes specialised knowledge acquisition. Yet, when LDA CEOs describe their active search for specific colleagues to seek information, to ask for clarification or test out an idea there is both a deliberate intent and a commitment to learn from this action. What seems important, then, is the deliberate *intention* in seeking out, together with a *commitment* to

learn. In addition, in moving away from primary focus on teaching to learning, Lave and Wenger (1999: 97) suggest this provides a "learning curriculum", which "consists of situated opportunities... for the improvisational development of new practice" and where the "learning resources in everyday practice [are] *viewed from the perspective of learners*" (italics in original). This links to aspects of modal participation and improvisation discussed in Chapter 6.

Learning resources for LDA CEOs are considered shortly. What is useful to consider at this point, is the types of learning that might occur. For example, Eraut (cited by Smith, 1999) describes three types of learning: implicit, reactive and deliberative, which are useful to consider in relation to LDA CEOs. See Figure 9.1 below.

Context of potential learning event	Implicit learning	Reactive learning	Deliberative learning
Past	Implicit linking to past memories and current experiences	Brief reflection on past events and experiences	Review of past actions and experience; systematic reflection
Current	A particular incident from experience comes into mind	Incidental noting of facts, impressions and ideas Recognising learning opportunities	Engagement in problem-solving and planned informal learning
Future	Unconscious effect of previous experience	Being prepared for emergent learning opportunities	Planned learning goals and learning opportunities

Figure 9.1 Types of Non-formal Learning

Source: based on Eraut in Smith, 1999

Implicit learning might indicate a level of coping for LDA CEOs (see Figure 8.10 page 241), but might also link with aspects of intuitive noticing and generalised awareness (the "gut feelings" to which some LDA CEOs refer). Reactive learning would incorporate both reacting and performing in the sense of being able to contextualise a particular

learning event with past experience, which impacts on current and future performance and suggests a readiness to learn. Deliberative learning is linked to actively seeking out learning opportunities and would correspond to levels of high performing, learning and creating (re Figure 8.10, page 241). Deliberative learning would also fit with the example given above in actively seeking out information and knowledge and incorporates aspects of inquiry based learning, anticipatory and problem-based learning and developing reflective practice.

It is also relevant to consider the extension of a repertoire of learning (or learned) responses over time, which might fit more with future-oriented non-formal learning. This would give an added perspective to a learning maturation process, which would incorporate a deepening of existing knowledge together with increasing awareness and capacity to seek out further learning opportunities. This would also require capacity for reflection in and on learning. Furthermore, this would support Conlon's (2004) suggestion in citing Johnson (1999) that:

As individuals mature, they increase their capacity to learn, think, create and they recognize they can learn moment by moment, which can turn into wisdom, not just information or knowledge (ibid, 2004: 286)

In Conlon's (2004) description, transfer of learning into wisdom supposes a deliberate reflective and purposive act. In this way, maturing as a learner and practitioner is more than accumulation and repetition of information and knowledge gained over years of practice. For LDA CEOs, it is an active review against values and beliefs, the negotiated meaning and continued relevance of learned behaviour in context, and the consequences and outcomes of engaged practice. In this way, wisdom accords with Baumard's (1999) and Czarniawska's (2001) conceptualisation of "phronesis" as described earlier. Furthermore, in citing Beck (1999), Bierly *et al* (2000: 601 and 603) suggest, "wisdom is an action oriented concept" that:

...entails the awareness used by the self to relate successfully to the environment. Wisdom is not merely a result of inquiring and reflecting on the relationship between self and society, but it is also the embodiment of action taken to transform self and society towards a better whole.

Several LDA CEOs (for example, FICY, SIMB, SIPG) mention wisdom as something they recognised and admired in their role models and, in some instances, themselves. Their descriptions resonate with the above statement offered by Bierly *et al* (2000): the elegance of a person's ability to analyse, obvious congruence between beliefs and actions, commitment to a change agenda and strength of conviction to take some personal stance to make a difference. Often LDA CEOs used associated descriptors of *passion* and *passionate* and again, this is supported by Bierly *et al*'s (2000) observations. For example, in considering the concept of "champions" whom they consider "highly committed and persistent individuals who typically demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice position or prestige in order to complete the task at hand", passion is "associated with pride, commitment, empowerment and energy". (ibid, 2000: 609).

In describing the characteristics of leaders in non-profits, LDA CEOs mentioned energy, enthusiasm and commitment as positive aspects of leadership in the sector. This links not only with Bierly *et al* (2000) but also with Schön's (1987: 13) assertion that "outstanding practitioners are not said to have more professional knowledge than others but more "wisdom", "talent", "intuition" or "artistry"". The flipside to these characteristics identified by LDA CEOs (some of which were discussed earlier in Chapter 7) were self-seeking actions for personal and or political advancement, cynicism (loss of belief or commitment) and burn-out, which as Bierly *et al* (2000: 611) comment can be the death knell for "strategic wisdom".

For Bierly *et al* (2000), then, as for LDA CEOs, strategic wisdom is linked closely with the underpinning of specific values (such as social responsibility, creativity and social justice), with strategic focus of the organisation and individual and collective action within and on behalf of the organisation. In their estimation (both LDA CEOs and Bierly *et al*, 2000), effectiveness as leaders is also connected to the ability to select and apply knowledge appropriate to situation and context. In this way, Bierly *et al* (2000) look towards Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb *et al* , 1991) to describe a learning process that develops connections between knowledge and (wisdom in) action and point out

that wisdom remains an "important but missing construct from knowledge-based theory of the firm" (Bierly *et al* , 2000: 595).

Indeed, Benbow (1995), in reporting on research on executive leadership carried out by the Institute of Management, expresses surprise at the absence of wisdom and judgement from the list of qualities, which have made chief executives, in the judgement of their peers, successful. Yet, interestingly, in looking at the development of a national skills and learning framework for the voluntary sector, research carried out on behalf of the National Learning Initiative (Canada), Ecosol Consulting suggested that core competencies for leadership in the sector were based on "certain foundational qualities" (Ecosol Consulting/NLI 2005: 3). These were identified by researchers and participants as: self-understanding, life-long learning and principled actions, an ability to articulate personal values together with "wisdom, acumen and the ability to intuit future needs and directions" (*ibid*, 2005: 3). Furthermore, the report suggests that, in this context, "leadership is community-based, includes representation from many sectors of society and is founded on a clear and well-articulated vision" (*ibid*, 2005:5).

This resonates with LDA CEO experience and brings into focus multi-stakeholder perspectives or polyphonic (Boje, 2001; Cunliffe *et al*, 2004) aspects of practice and identity construction discussed earlier. McWhinney (1992, cited in Bierly *et al*, 2000:598) suggests this is indicative of third order learning, where learning occurs when "one uses multiple realities to frame one's own and others' experiences in alternative frameworks". This in turn, develops and broadens understanding and provides opportunities for increased or refined learning and creativity.

In the same way that it might be suggested that different kinds of learning might support different kinds of knowledge acquisition, similarly different "orders" of learning can be seen to support different situational behaviours and contexts. For example, Bateson's (1972) framework describes four orders of learning where level one or first order learning might be seen to correspond to Argyris and Schön's (1978) single loop learning. Here knowledge acquisition is geared to coping with or reacting to perceived gaps and necessity to improve

performance, thereby building skills and competencies in knowing what to do in a given situation or context.

Levels two and three look towards knowing how to learn (reflecting on actions), and learning about the preconditions for reflection in practice, the first of which has resonance with Argyris and Schön's (1978) concept of double loop learning. The second, deutero learning (Bateson, 1972) is what Argyris and Schön (1978) might determine as learning about learning how to learn. In this sense, we are beginning to be able to generate our own learning and capacity to learn – we are performing, we are learning and reflecting, and we have the potential for creating.

The changing nature of LDA context and external environments means that LDA CEOs need continually to critically review their behaviours and actions to maintain synergy (or structural coupling) between their internal organisational worlds and their external world. They need to have developed ways of identifying their own learning preferences and "underlying capabilities for action", which Harrison and Kessels (2004:51) suggest is "critical" for innovation. These underlying capabilities may well be technical and operational skills and management tools developed through their career and through formal training and interventions. For LDA CEOs, developing socio-political acumen, which connects with their own and others' sensemaking, is significant in that LDA CEOs demonstrate awareness of and ability to anticipate the cues that these strategic others will use to shape actions. This also influences their own understanding and future action.

The fourth and final level for Bateson (1972) connects with social and cultural evolution and change (Bierly *et al* , 2000; Qvortrup, in press) and is relevant to LDA CEO experience in terms of underlying values and beliefs systems driving their continued desire for learning and enhanced practice. That LDA CEOs exhibited a need and desire for learning at this final level, which was demonstrated in the last chapter in the extension of Stewart's original dimensions of management development framework (1996, 2005), helps to answer a criticism levelled at reflexive practice. For example, Baumard (1999: 96 and 97) suggests that reflexive practice, that is "the activity of thinking about

one's own actions and analysing them in a critical manner, with the purpose of improving professional practice" has a significant weakness in that it "requires both a knowledge of the practice discussed, and an awareness of professional and personal philosophy". As demonstrated earlier (see for example Chapters 5 and 6), there is often a synergy for LDA CEOs between life and work – their values, aims and objectives and their activities within a work environment. This is encapsulated in an espoused philosophy of social justice (and making a difference). As such, LDA CEOs demonstrate awareness of their practice together with espousal of a professional and personal philosophy. They also express a need to be reflective on and in practice and have, to greater or lesser degree, developed different mechanisms and strategies to achieve this. What needs to be considered, then, are the current and potential opportunities and resources available to support LDA CEOs in managing to learn, in continued sensemaking and in promoting reflexive practice.

Inside Out: managing to learn in LDA organisations

Many LDA CEOs recount steep learning curves in taking up posts in the voluntary sector for the first time or in taking up their post as CEO. Often this related to the culture of the organisation/sector for some (FIEWL), but for others it is in relation to issues such as a perceived need to restructure (SIJN), bring in new policies and procedures (FIPG) and expected/unexpected growth, new projects, recruitment of new staff (FIAB). As described in Chapter 8, various short courses and training for specific skills and techniques were available to and taken up by CEOs in these early stages of their incumbency. Equally though, each individual CEO was seen to have developed personal strategies to develop knowledge and skills as a consequence of having to get on with the job at hand: listening and observing, questioning, reading, seeking out other people who had gone or were going through the same situations and self-talk.

Some CEOs consciously developed coping strategies, which they suggested helped with their thinking processes and with their learning and sensemaking. Examples included long-distance running and hill walking. For some, this "healthy body/healthy mind" connection also

shaped their evaluation and judgement of others' actual performance and performance potential (for example FILSL and FIDND)

There are parallels, here, with findings from a survey of "directors who were known for their innovative approaches" (Holbeche, 2002, p. 203) where much thinking and contemplation takes place outside of work. Where Holbeche describes these activities as "innocuous and seemingly unrelated activities" (ibid, 2002:203), we could also construe such activities as opportunities for reflexive practice and therefore as more purposeful.

Some CEOs received support from within their organisations – such as from the Chair of the Board or specific board members. Often though, support and knowledge building often happens in reverse (from CEO to Board) and few CEOs reported regular support and supervision sessions with their board members. This was the case even though in all organisations, support and development opportunities for other employees were in place.

Where LDA CEOs inwardly directed attention to effective management and operation of the organisation, there was a focus towards coping, reacting and performing; learning how to do the job and acquiring the technical skills to put learning into action. Over time and with appropriate training and learning interventions, managers become more competent and confident in their roles, which we can relate back to Lee's (1997) concept of maturing and the relevance of conventional management development approaches for LDA CEOs. Where focus remains in this direction, we might observe highly competent and skilled practitioners. We might even observe a positive work environment, satisfied employees and an efficient and productive work place. These managerial and leadership skills would contribute to individual CEO's marketability in transferring their skills to other voluntary (and non-voluntary) sector organisations.

However, the effectiveness of LDAs CEOs, taking part in the research, depends not only on technical skills, competencies and internal managing but also on building the capacity of organisational members to provide opportunities to develop external activities. For some of the

larger organisations, this may mean effective delegation to senior managers and project leads and, for all, there is a need to develop productive relationships with stakeholders external to the organisation: a more outer-directed strategic focus. Learning outside LDA organisations will be considered shortly, but in order for this to happen there also needs to be synergy between activities "inside" and "outside" the organisation.

As previously discussed, the lack of long-term funding to support and develop the core work of LDAs means that LDA CEOs consistently have to find contingent funds for project development. This is seen as contributing to fragmentation between organisational members and projects and adds to the complexity of management and leadership tasks within the organisation. In some instances (for example, FIDND), there can be worker allegiance to specific project work over and above the organisation as a whole, which contributes to a sense of frustration in managing internal arrangements and relationships. However, in talking to LDA CEOs about their support requirements, where they gather information to use in strategic engagements with partner organisations or in policy review, and in observing LDA CEOs in action, a different perspective on this problem starts to emerge.

Although, not necessarily articulated as such, what starts to appear is the potential of a creative learning environment, which may have prompted Otto to consider the "fashionable" concept of a learning organisation as "very voluntary sector" (cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996: 172). In this instance, Otto was directing attention to appropriate and inappropriate models of strategic planning and the need to consider the values and purpose of the sector. I will return to this shortly in considering values-led management and belief-driven sensemaking (Weick, 1995), but first I want to explore some positive aspects of the fragmented structures of LDAs.

Having to re-evaluate the aims and objectives of an organisation as a regular occurrence provides significant opportunities for double loop learning (Argyris, 1999). Often, this is achieved by involving all or most organisational members to consider the repercussions of, for example, closing down a project, possibilities of continued, renewed or

new funding arrangements and sustained approaches to the core objectives of the organisation. In some instances, this may also involve members of staff changing roles and job focus within the organisation; it may mean displacement of existing members of staff and the possibility of new employees for time-limited appointments. Depending on the amount of funding turnover, small adaptations to current work may be undertaken or it may require wholesale transformation of existing configuration of services.

For LDA CEOs engaged in this practice, it emphasises the use of socio-political and values dimensions of leadership in negotiating and framing this kind of organisation-wide review. Often activities and outcomes from such reviews may be recorded in annual reviews, reports from strategic planning events and in basic scenario planning documentation. However, it is not generally recognised – or at least outwardly articulated – as learning or indeed, double loop learning in particular. An exception was in observing SHNS. Here, there was a systematic review in place, which was referred to as “learning from last year’s events” (SHNS), which focused attention and review on both internal problems and issues arising throughout the year and changes in external operating environments. In addition, successes and positive events were critically examined so that learning could be captured.

Furthermore, what these situations also provide is a tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity, where perceptions of organisational life are “focused on change rather than order and regulation” (Elkjaer, 2001: 80). This can also contribute to LDA CEOs’ level of comfort and sense of self in dealing with uncertainty in situations external to the organisation.

Strength of learning can also come from the very nature of fragmentation of project-focused work within a broader more unified philosophical framework. As re-examination and reflection on strategic direction occurs, this helps to bring into focus a negotiated and constructed framework of understanding to demonstrate how each project operationally contributes to the organisation as a whole. This in many respects demonstrates the concept of organisations as “social worlds” that Elkjaer (2001) uses to consider the place of communities of practice in learning. Here, collectivised action is exhibited:

... by groups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business (Clarke, 1991 cited Elkjaer, 2001: 83)

In this way, the organisation (and LDA CEOs) privileges the voices of projects' members in order to build a more coherent picture of the worlds in which their practice is focused. At the same time, this is reflected back in ways that encourage a unified approach to working within an LDA context. Indeed, there were a number of examples where this reciprocity was working well. For example, by using the information gathered by various development workers within the LDA, often specialising on one specific part of the political and social agenda (e.g. health modernisation, crime and disorder or regeneration) a more holistic picture of change and implications for practice can be assembled and used by LDA CEOs in their own practice.

In the cases of LDA CEOs being shadowed (SHJB and SHNS), structured approaches to "intelligence" gathering had been developed. For example, SHNS had brought together a senior management team to look at both internal organisation issues (structure, policy improvements, building on regular planned and structured learning events and incorporating this into everyday practice) and the organisation's position in relation to involvement in a myriad of networks, forums and strategic alliances. In this instance, the regular senior team meetings provided a space to develop an informed perspective from the diversity of interpretations and experiences of individual workers while providing the opportunity for consistent articulation of the goals and values of the organisation as a whole.

Although regular and consistent communications methods and networks were already in existence in SHNS's organisation, the strategic emphasis at a senior team level was a relatively new development brought on by internal crisis. Initially with a remit to look at problems arising from this crisis, the broader benefits of the team were also in its strategic outlook. In turn, this has helped to increase visibility and strengthen the organisation's position in external relationships and partnerships.

SHJB's approach was even more strategic and proactive. In SHJB's case, recent appointments at senior management level included two policy officers. One policy officer had a remit in relation to central and local government agenda and the second in relation to a purely non-profit perspective. This latter appointment was partly established to give the voluntary sector a stronger voice, independent of the LDA, in commenting on social policy (and increasingly to build research and evidence-based responses) and partly to provide a thinking space for development of theory and links with practice within the LDA and the wider voluntary sector. The ultimate aim of this development was to set up a separate research and policy unit. In the meantime, SHJB had regular policy forums (including staff other than the policy officers) to think about and discuss issues pertaining to the involvement of the LDA in external activities and the organisation's internal growth and development: a "think tank" or what was more locally referred to as the "CEO's kitchen cabinet" (SHJB).

This development of argument and analysis and safe rehearsal of ideas and viewpoints also contributes to increased confidence, feelings of legitimacy, and promotes and supports active participation of LDA CEOs in strategic arrangements and groupings outside the organisation. It can foster expectations about managerial and leadership behaviours, allow for collective understandings and analysis of events, which give rise to principles of working and rules of thumb. Additionally, it underpins and contributes to the observed leadership and entrepreneurial roles in partnership relationships.

Networked Practitioners: learning external to LDA organisations

Many LDA CEOs develop supportive relationships with key individuals outside the employing organisation. For some, for example SHJB and FICC, these were formal arrangements with external supervision agreed and paid for by the organisation. For others, for example, FIAB, FICY and FIND, these were informal arrangements with a peer or former colleague. These arrangements were both for personal and professional support and development needs and might even cover future career needs and opportunities (SIJB).

In addition, the longer LDA CEOs are in post and in contact with other organisational members and other LDA CEOs, the wider their potential network of contacts becomes. These contacts can simply be used in terms of complementing or bridging gaps between existing skills and knowledge. For example, knowing who to contact for various purposes and particular skills/knowledge ("I know a person who can..." FICC and FIJGM), or relying on a particular member of a network for specific input, for example providing a written synopsis and review of current policy (FICY).

LDAs are also part of a national network and this aids LDA CEOs and staff to have access to other network members. There are specific events to promote CEOs' networking and a number of UK national bodies grouped together to co-ordinate an action-learning initiative (NACVS, 2004). Many of the LDA CEOs in the research did take part in leadership initiatives and CEO networking, but also found many development opportunities on offer through the network quite limiting – geared to less experienced LDA CEOs and newer staff members. As a result, most LDA CEOs had formed their own smaller networks of CEOs to bring together like minds and LDAs working in similar environments (for example, SHNS, FIMD, FICC, FIND, SICY, FIPG, FIIR).

Several CEOs described getting together with other similar CEOs two or three times a year to go through issues of coping and managing the organisation internally and in negotiating external relationships. Not only did this provide support, ideas and specific information for CEOs to improve their practice, it also provided opportunities to cross-reference and affirm/disconfirm specific strategic approaches, theories and actions in relation to, for example, emerging government agenda.

These kinds of networks are learning environments that provide the opportunities for individuals to be or to become 'LDA CEOs' and reflects what Tietze *et al* (2003: 73) refer to as becoming "culturally literate" that is being part of "a process of learning and participation in shared systems of meaning". It provides a space in which the identities of individuals becoming LDA CEOs can be shaped and reshaped. This may account for an assimilation of particular sets of values and beliefs, similar use of language and convergence of identities across LDAs. In

this way, within the larger community of practice (LDA network), certain LDA CEOs find their own communities of practitioners.

The formation of these networks also allows for the inclusion of "experts", that is long-standing voluntary sector/LDA practitioners and "novices" – those new or less experienced practitioners (for example, FIMD and FIPG recount such experiences). Occasionally, these networks can be spontaneously created in response to an individual's articulated need. Often they are a response to the isolation LDA CEOs report. Furthermore, they support the need for "thinking as well as doing" (SHJB). These groupings allow for the identification of problems, they bring diverse viewpoints and perspectives to bear on the interpretation and elaboration of issues and they contextualise events in the practice and experience of practitioners and the history and politics of the sector. In this way, the group builds a collective knowledge of their situation and this in turn contributes to strengthening sector belonging and individual identity as an LDA CEO. LDA CEOs can then use this "established knowledge to determine what they see and they use what they already know to choose what to look for in their environments" (von Krogh *et al* , 1996 cited in Gourlay, 2001:34).

The reproduction and stabilisation of beliefs and values of this community of practitioners could, as Harrison and Kessels (2004: 44) point out "produce...narrowness and rigidity in the ways in which organisational members see their world and make decisions about it", a condition they liken to skilled incompetence (Argyris, 1999). However, what is important to consider here is the inter-organisational context in which LDA CEOs are working, the history and marginalised experience of the sector and the values, beliefs and sense of identity of the individuals. As well as being a highly politicised arena, it is also a highly emotive environment. Emotional responses of CEOs could, for example, inhibit learning and reflective practice. In an LDA context however, CEOs are emotionally connected to a wider vocation (social justice), which can provide an impetus for critical reflection, lead to questioning of status quo, current habits and ways of working and thus link to "continuous evolution of practice" (Engestrom , 1995 cited by Harrison and Kessels, 2004:96). Here, then, we see people seeking out significant others "to develop and improve themselves as being resourceful,

self-directed, inquisitive and creative in their approach to learning" (Antonacopoulou, 2001, pp. 223-224). Often they find themselves working from the periphery of practice to become immersed over time and relying on abduction, that is probable argument (Peirce cited in Böje, 2001, p. 50), to make sense of their worlds.

Earlier, I wrote about the assimilation of values and beliefs as being part of an identified group. Yet, this denies the continued differences in perspectives and responses that different LDA CEOs will bring to the learning process. Utilising the concept of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1999), which has been incorporated into some of the discussion above, helps to frame learning in a situated and participatory context to try to understand how and what learning may take place for LDA CEOs. This "promotes a view of knowing as activity by specific people in specific circumstances" (Lave and Wenger, 1999: 52).

In the examination of LDA CEOs as communities of practitioners, we can see that individual CEOs learn to function as part of that particular community; they become an "insider" where "they acquire that community's subjective viewpoint and learn to speak its language" (Brown and Duguid, 1991: 48). Together they build a picture of their world – a conceptual framework – that influences, and is influenced by, their actions and behaviours in relation to their working environment and relationships with colleagues. Reflecting on and learning from this interactive process is also part of what Brown and Duguid (1991: 51) recognise as "the process of innovating".

This strength of identity and purpose also contributes to legitimising access to and involvement in other participatory frameworks. It is also useful in considering the strength of contribution and participation in more heterogeneous groupings of cross-sector partnerships. This, as previously identified, is a significant and developing arena for LDA CEO practice and performance.

Managing on the edge: partnering for learning

For LDA CEOs communities of practice may well include other chief executives in their field, but it is also as much about the different

communities of which they are a part, particularly the multi-disciplinary, cross-sector partnerships and coalitions. These also appear to provide for learning in situ and for personal support. As such, the organisational worlds of LDA CEOs extend beyond formal organisational boundaries into more diverse inter-organisational environments.

Some voluntary sector organisations and particularly LDA CEOs have become adept at handling 'bi-lateral relationships' (PIJM) for example, voluntary organisation/government department liaison to negotiate funding, joint planning opportunities and for commissioning of services. Over time, these have extended from one-to-one operational relationships into specific networking arrangements around, for example, children's services, relationships between voluntary sector and local government, drugs and alcohol and further into more strategic partnership frameworks and mechanisms. In addition, the sector has also had its own myriad umbrella organisations and networks bringing together disparate groups (and factions) from different parts of the voluntary and community sectors. As such, voluntary agencies and LDAs specifically, can be seen to have had much more practice of working in this kind of multi-agency environment than their public and private sector counterparts.

As seen earlier, LDAs actively engage with these processes. They learn how to manage relationships, to consider consequences for their own and other voluntary sector organisations, and to interpret and shape partnership agenda:

I think coming together around the table in partnership like this gives the voluntary sector more of an opportunity to demonstrate, to model how they can do things, think things through, deliver things, work with other people...and to build a relationship which isn't just one which is about having a service level agreement (PIMN)

As such, the voluntary sector's role and contribution "to developing learning, and in service delivery more generally, has been recognised in a wide range of government initiatives and reports" (Flude and Selby, 2003, p.16). Furthermore, a Local Government Association survey in 2000 (cited by Pearson and Morgan, 2001), showed that 96% of local authorities

believed 'that the voluntary and community sector will be a key strategic partner in the next five years'. Even so, the voluntary sector remains a structurally marginalised voice in mainstream change agenda and there is concern that even acceptance of the sector as having a central role to play, does not necessarily confer full membership status.

In returning to the communities of LDA practitioners identified in the previous section, what we can see in relationships between LDA CEOs are the positive aspects of a peripheral location to participatory learning. LDA CEOs, whether old or new, have legitimate access to the group and in determining their levels of interaction. This is different to the concept of marginalisation. Indeed, as Lave and Wenger (1999) explain, they do not see peripheral as being a specific place in relation to an identified centre and thus an individual does not gradually move from an identified edge to a more central and focal position. Rather participation deepens and broadens over time with increased knowledge and learning about how the community works and how to work in the community which leads to "full" membership – that is temporal rather than spatial movement from being an accepted (that is someone who has legitimate access to the community) newcomer to becoming an "old-timer" (ibid, 1999: 57). This is echoed by LDA CEO experience of moving from invisibility to visibility (FIJRN), spending time listening, watching and learning (FIPG) and as FIAB points out:

...you just keep your ears open; you keep reading and slowly it makes sense. Er - and it's the same with regeneration - I'm a star at that now!

As such, the individual and the community of practitioners are in dynamic relationship and so produce "changing persons and changing communities of practice" (ibid, 1999: 55). This process of gaining access and growing involvement and learning is evident in LDA CEO communities of practitioners and in some external partnerships.

However, Lave and Wenger (1991) do acknowledge power relationships within communities and distinguish between peripheral and partial participation. The former, they suggest is an empowering position since it allows involvement from a peripheral stance and gives access to more intense participation. The latter is disempowering

position as individuals are prevented from participating fully (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 36). This distinction is useful in considering and explaining LDA CEO involvement in strategic partnerships and where the line between empowerment and full participation and disempowerment and partial participation is often blurred.

Groupings of 'like minds' can be observed in partnership arrangements. These voluntary sector groupings appear more than coalitions of individuals as they reflect the characteristics of LPP and communities of practice. For example, with SHNS, the voluntary sector members of the strategic partnership regularly meet before the main meeting to discuss agenda, bring together information and knowledge about issues from their own sector experience and to (re) interpret agenda items in the light of this. Having constructed a frame of reference, analysis and possible actions, this then becomes the strategic and operating platform for individual involvement and participation, and provides a collective voice within the broader group. This meeting was considered essential in countering the marginalised perspective of the sector and the more experienced LDA CEO and a regional government support officer for the sector help to facilitate as well as take part in critical review. The meeting takes place in a well-known café where a number of "activists" are known to have their pre-meetings, which adds to a sense of belonging and collective identity for the group.

This orchestration of a collective voice is important in considering the influence and credibility of minority groups within inter-organisational structures. For example, Weick (1995) suggests that reasoned discourse and argument is part of a belief-driven sensemaking process that allows progression of ideas from one to another or indeed abandonment of ideas. If these arguments are rehearsed and "expressed by a credible minority ... then listeners are more likely to process information actively and to raise arguments and counterarguments" (Weick, 1995: 140). This raises the possibility for increased knowledge creation and learning. Weick (1995) suggests reasons why this might occur, which correspond to LDA experience (PIMN, PIDN, SHJB). For example that:

minorities are exposed to considerable social pressure from the majority; if they are consistent despite group pressure people are

motivated to give careful consideration to their message" (ibid, 1995: 142).

This reflects the aims of the SHNS voluntary sector pre-meetings and may provide some understanding as to why LDA CEOs may continue to be sought out by policy makers and decision makers, for example meetings with central government policy officers and ministers (SHJB, FILSL, FIAB, SHNS) and have access to "high-level" meetings. Another reason offered by Weick (1995: 141), which is also consistent with research observations is that:

It is assumed that people exposed to the view of an opposing minority view exert greater cognitive effort (Nemeth, 1986) and attend to more aspects of the situation, which produces more divergent thought and more novel solutions and decisions

While not always presenting a dissenting voice, often LDA CEOs and voluntary sector organisational members do offer a difference in perspective in how to approach an issue to that of statutory and private sector partners. For example, in approaches to organising community participation in review of policy and service provision (PIMG, SHJB, SHNS). In this way, even if participating members do not share the same language and approaches to working, where the outcomes desired are congruent, opportunities for learning are present.

One particular partnership was trying to encourage this form of learning as part of processing information and reaching consensus decision-making (SHNS). As part of its agenda, work in progress on a particular issue or project was scheduled for regular review and debate. The officer assigned to lead the work gave a presentation to the whole group. Members moved into smaller groups and were encouraged to act as "critical friends" – to look at the issue from as many perspectives as possible and to raise questions, for example, in relation to content, process, plausibility and outcomes. A significant part of the meeting was allocated for this process and the issues raised by the groups were fed back into further thinking and development of the project.

The partnership had received commendation on this action learning aspect of its work from an external review, and had been recognised as

one of the top partnerships in the country. This particular partnership also incorporated a "Reflection" at the end of its agenda – a round robin to encourage review and reflection on what had been learned particularly around the process of the partnership meeting. While this again had the potential for critical reflexive practice, it was less well used and had become more a "what was it like for you" and a pleasant way to close the meeting before lunch was served. In some respects, this highlights the precedence often given in learning to content and output over process and highlights a gap in learning which would be highly significant in these kinds of 'temporary organisations'.

The transient nature of involvement was also an issue for the consistency and contribution of the SHNS voluntary sector group as membership in the partnership forum was a time-limited appointment. In this instance, appointments were made on an individual application basis rather than a sector-wide "representation". The group were trying to negotiate an overlap between older members and newer members to support transition and to provide a hand-over and hand-holding period. SHJB's involvement in strategic partnerships was more central as 'permanent' membership had been negotiated both to keep consistency but also in developing and providing a supported learning environment for voluntary sector participants in partnership groups and sub-groups. Hedlund (1994, cited in Harrison and Kessels 2004:46-47) suggests, this is an essential part of knowledge management:

where horizontal community networks [and] shifting groups of people in temporary... projects [rely on] a high degree of permanence in the personnel pool in order to achieve sustained commonality of purpose and stable communities of practice where tacit knowledge can be preserved, disseminated and integrated

In some respects then, we can see that LDA CEOs become an integral and integrated part of learning in partnerships. This appears to work best if they can achieve full participation – that is, participate, use the language and understand the culture of the community of partners and influence this process – but retain a peripheral and influential voice. This means managing at the margins – a positive marginalisation in terms of retaining credibility, influence and offering critical input

without becoming excluded or subsumed by dominant partners' agenda.

Here full membership and becoming an "insider" (Brown and Duguid, 1991: 48) may not be desired but being an 'outsider on the inside' is what is required. This brings back in to focus modal participation and the ability to be fluent in the many organisational languages and priorities that feed into this kind of process. This as Lave and Wenger (1999:49) contend, extends "the study of learning beyond the context of pedagogical structuring" and "provides a framework for bringing together theories of situated activities and theories about production and reproduction of social order" (ibid, 1999: 47). Rather than learners becoming absorbed in a culture of practice shaped by, in the example of partnerships, public sector organisations, voluntary sector members provide a valuable alternative perspective that may promote new ways of working and new opportunities for learning.

At the time of the fieldwork, strategic partnerships were relatively new structures, struggling to find their own identities and place in the changing context of public services. The potential for learning across these communities of practice appears positive and encouraging. Within these emerging structures, LDA CEOs appear to be attempting to become old-timers in the sense of belonging to and staking a legitimate claim to be part of the process. At the same time, they are also attempting to retain the critical questioning ability of newcomers' constructive naiveté (Lave and Wenger, 1999) in order to encourage continued reflective practice on both process and outcomes. In this way, there may be room for LDA CEOs to retain their own identity and beliefs-led sensemaking within the context of partnership learning, and "to establish their own identity in its future" (ibid, 1999:115).

Reflecting and moving on

The resources that LDA CEOs have for increasing their informal learning and effectiveness come from both inside and outside the organisation. In relation to achieving organisational and wider objectives, this is predominantly in assembling, applying and reviewing information and knowledge from these resources. In terms of personal and wider objectives, learning is achieved through a range of personal

strategies and through collective learning with others (other LDA CEOs but also in relating to other organisations' members).

It does seem clear, in some instances, that local development agencies are able to embed learning from external activities into their strategic and operational planning. Partly this is because this activity is seen as their 'natural habitat' – contextualising, interpreting, responding and anticipating the changing local and national agenda. Furthermore, LDA CEOs actively seek out avenues and opportunities to increase learning potential – through trawling for information within their own organisations and through testing out theories and assumptions with fellow CEOs and trusted individuals. This testing ground – particularly within communities of practitioners - also helps in developing individual and sector identity, common language and accepted ways of working. There are also opportunities here for leadership and entrepreneurial development and contribution to a sense of self and self-efficacy. Furthermore, while creating a common language for LDA CEOs, there is also opportunity to construct a wider appreciation of other organisations' agenda and capacities for action together with the language and concepts that guide or influence those agenda and actions.

Another key issue is capturing and harnessing the learning brought about by these situations and the ownership of learning processes and knowledge creation, particularly in partnership arrangements. Increasingly, the UK government sees this as a central theme for employers where "people will only really be able to learn and use what they learn, if they are working in or with organisations that are also willing to learn" (NRU, 2002, p.6). Furthermore, the need for developed 'reflective behaviours' is being encouraged and, in effect, organisations are being guided to become 'learning organisations' (NRU, 2002, pp.32, 38).

For partnerships to be active learner networks (as opposed to learning organisations *per se*) it would appear that they need to safeguard a dynamic, flexible structure and to incorporate opportunities for collective reflective practice. This is in evidence to some extent in some locations (e.g. SHNS) but it is far from widespread and there are implications for how this learning is encouraged, supported and

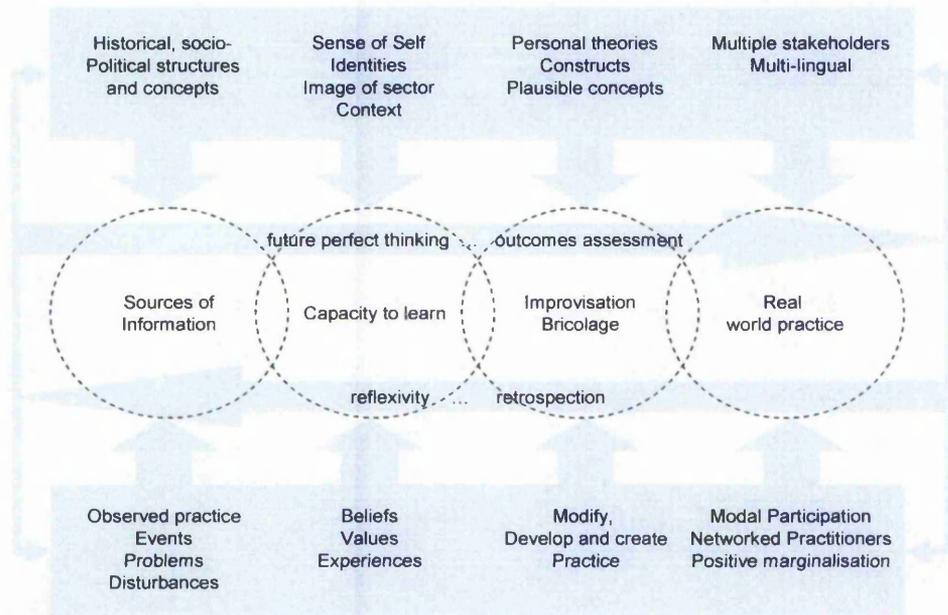
resourced. This is a new and developing area and worthy of further attention and investigation.

As mentioned previously, very often, traditional management training and development is seen to focus on helping an individual to become 'expert' in one area – a manager in their organisation – whereas if we observe the lived experience of these chief executives, what we start to see is that the expert practitioner – now multi-lingual - learns the art of modal participation. This ability to play various roles in various fields of participation can also help to balance the desire for full participation in partnerships and the need to construct and maintain separate and identifiable personal and professional identities. This brings us full circle and it is necessary to revisit the research aims and objectives in the light of thesis discussion, which will be the focus of the final chapter. However, what we can see is that, as Lave and Wenger (1999: 53) suggest, "learning and identity are inseparable: they are aspects of the same phenomenon" and where LDA CEOs are "members of a community" or communities, "the concept of the person closely links with meaning and action in the world" (ibid, 1999: 122).

In linking "life learning relevant to managerial work" (Watson, 2001a: 230) in this way, we can start to see that for LDA CEOs their lived experience is their learning for practice and, in practicing their craft, they continue to learn. Figure 9.2, page 271, starts to bring some of the issues discussed in previous chapters together and plausible explanations can be developed to describe this process.

It appears that historical development of an image of a voluntary sector that, in some ways, is institutionally marginalised from mainstream activities influences the image and self-concepts of those who inhabit the sector. Some LDA CEOs, rather than absorbing negative impacts of these images and position, appear to reframe these concepts into a sense of vocation and psychological fit between life and work.

This constructed habitat supports development of values- or beliefs-led ambition in the sense of making a difference, commitment to social justice and working towards social change. This is informed by a

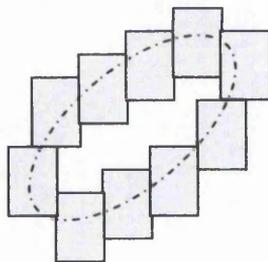


positive image that promotes self-efficacy and in some instances anticipation of struggle (with the accompanying emotions of passion, drive, anger). LDA CEOs' mental models support both perception and

Figure 9.2 Learning for Practice ... Practising to Learn
Source: author

interpretation of "their worlds" and influence action potential. Learning can be seen as supporting action potential as well as being grounded in action. For example, this includes political awareness, learning to punch above your weight and acquiring knowledge of other organisations' agenda, priorities and operational/strategic languages. This can be demonstrated in leadership dimensions identified and entrepreneurial behaviours exhibited by LDA CEOs. Learning to support socio-political and values dimensions of leadership may contribute to enhanced practice. Working within personal and wider networks supports identity enhancement and theory construction and potentially provides a creative and dynamic learning space.

Embracing real world practice, expert LDA practitioners may therefore be seen to learn and enhance their practice through valuing multi-stakeholder perspectives and working from a position of positive marginalisation as networked practitioners skilled in the art of modal participation.



10. Full Circle

...As T. S. Eliot (1944) puts it,
 'The end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time'.
 Shotter (2005:114)

As stated in the opening chapter, the end is in sight now but only in the sense of concluding the current chapter of events. The task in this chapter is to review not only the outputs and outcomes of the research task, but also in basic (one might say pragmatic terms) to consider if it is at all useful. In the latter respect, consideration is given to the insight and implications explored in the thesis and the development of theoretical constructs therein, together with the level and scope of contribution to academic and practitioner knowledge and discourse. Furthermore, implications for further research are explored.

Putting together the pieces of the research jigsaw

The research was instigated by a perceived need to focus attention on a sector of managerial and leadership expertise that if not totally absent from mainstream management discourse was at best marginalised and underplayed. This was first expressed in questioning why voluntary sector managers appeared to be absenting themselves from traditional management development courses, such as MBAs. As was seen by the research participants' educational background, many had taken up formal higher education and professional training, but what was equally important was their learning in practice.

This being so, the interest and sense of discovery was in terms of exploring with participants, how LDA CEOs made sense of what they do, what their perceptions were of managing and leading in the sector, how and what helped them to develop as accomplished practitioners and how might they define and explain this experience. The main themes of enquiry were thus identified as concepts of self and identity, leadership, learning and reflective practice of practitioners in the situated context of their work and the wider, historical and socio-political context of the sector and their

personal lives. This started to put the pieces of the research jigsaw in to place as seen in Figure 10.1, below.

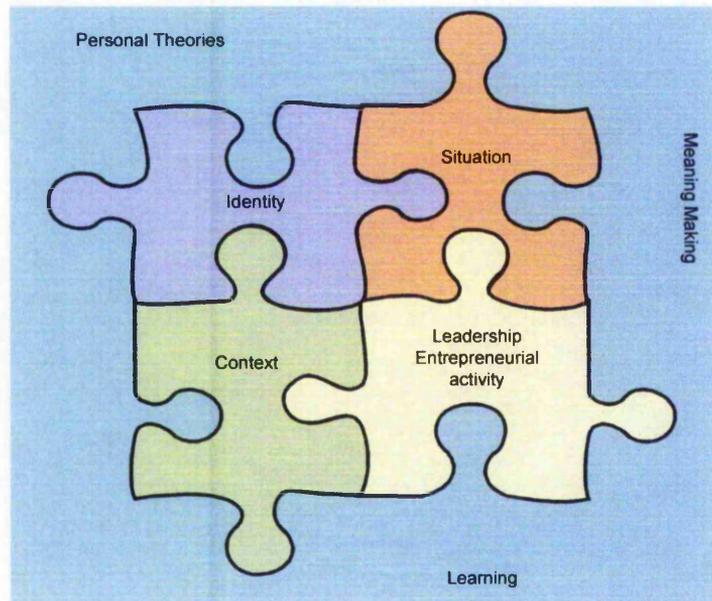


Figure 10.1: The research jigsaw

Source: author

As such, the fieldwork - interviews, observations and construct identification - was designed and carried out in order to explore these themes. This followed a qualitative research approach encompassing a pragmatist philosophical tradition and incorporating a social constructionist research methodology together with the theoretical frameworks of sensemaking, auto-poiesis and legitimate peripheral participation. Inspiration was drawn, in part, from Weick's (1995) work on sensemaking in organisations and Watson and Harris's (1999) and Watson's (2001a) ethnographic accounts of managing and learning in the private and public sectors. The robustness of the research in terms of process, ethical issues and outcomes was carefully considered in the research design as illustrated specifically in Chapters 2 and 3 and has been a feature of reporting process exhibited throughout the thesis.

The inter-relationship between formal and informal approaches to learning was seen to influence LDA CEOs learning and development. It was anticipated that this could be evidenced through explanations and observations of effective performance and accessed through participants' narratives and processes of sensemaking. This, in turn, influences, and is influenced by, identity and capacity to learn and act. These questions and

themes were condensed into two main research objectives and an initial conceptual framework, shown in Figure 10.2 below.

Research objectives

To describe and explain the impact of experiential learning on voluntary sector chief executives' accounts of their managerial and leadership behaviours

To explore through the participants' process of "sensemaking" (Weick, 1995), how personal theories emerge and the rules of thumb chief executives use to develop and enhance their practice

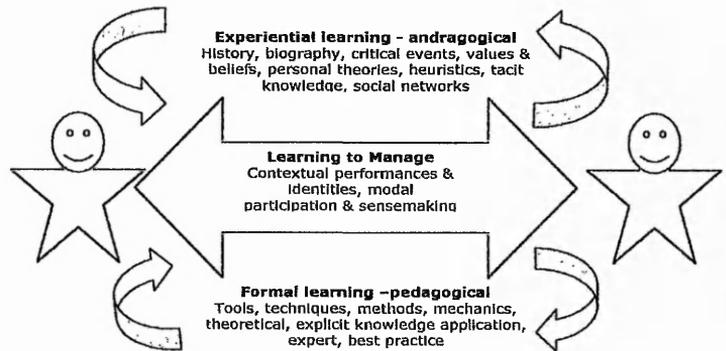


Figure 10.2 Initial conceptual framework & research objectives

Source: author

Making a difference: insights and implications drawn from the research

The research suggests that LDA CEOs' impetus for working and learning is underpinned by their broader, philosophical and political commitments to addressing perceived inequalities in society and in striving for social change. This, together with the image of the sector as marginalised and undervalued impacts on LDA CEOs' own identities and assessment of effectiveness; it shapes the concept of leadership and activity in the sector and influences their confidence and capacity to influence and act in organisational and inter-organisational settings.

The repertoire of skills, knowledge, abilities and aptitudes exhibited by LDA CEOs in the study was gained, in part, through high levels of education, professional training and access to formal education. There was evidence of continued professional development through a variety of short courses aimed at gaining specialist technical knowledge and information. Learning in terms of effective practice and high performance, was seen as more consistently gained through less formal development opportunities. This included: challenging experiences in the work environment, reflexive practice in trying to balance personal values and sense of vocation with

more instrumental aims of everyday management practice and formal links with external agencies, and in dialogue with significant others (including the internalised voices of virtual others and multiple selves).

A strength and delimitation of the research is its focus on local development agencies and their chief executives. In so doing, the research can be seen as having significance limited to a small sub-sector of the non-profit sector. Indeed, it has been expressed in the thesis that many service-providing non-profits have similarities and even identical practices as their for-profit and public sector counterparts. This is due to employment, for example, of particular professionals with similar background training – nurses, care assistants, counsellors. This might also account for arguments in non-profit literature of the applicability of the transfer of tools and techniques from public and private sectors to non-profit activity.

Furthermore, it can be argued that political, philosophical theories and mental models of LDA CEOs are also sub-sector specific and therefore not open to exportation beyond the boundaries of LDAs. However, these add to the strength of the research in providing a voice and exploration of different knowledge bases and experience of a hitherto under-represented sector in both non-profit and mainstream management literature. Moreover, there are similarities of core experience with larger multi-national aid and development agencies and the concepts introduced by the research – modal participation, networked practitioners, social change leadership and entrepreneurship, and inter-organisational learning - have implications beyond the boundaries of LDAs and indeed the non-profit sector.

The research explored the concepts of organisational and individual identity. There are some resonances here with discourse on identity politics and marginalised groups, which would be a useful avenue for further research. However, in looking at these issues in the context of the research, the concepts of *modal participation* and *positive marginalisation* were introduced.

The dramaturgical device of theatre was used and developed to incorporate particular aspects of film-making and performances to

examine and explain the multi-dimensional contexts experienced by LDA CEOs. Here, the ability to sustain a stable self-concept based on the philosophical frameworks and theories in use of LDA CEOs was found to be important in supporting the ability to maintain chameleon-like qualities, which expert practitioners assumed in different situations, at different times and in answering to different agenda and different stakeholders. This ability was identified as *modal participation*. Expert practitioners are seen not only to be able to articulate their own values and aims - and here the synergy between life and work is pertinent - but to be multi-lingual. That is, practised in the languages, organisational objectives and contextual challenges of a range of stakeholders - for example, other voluntary sector organisations, funders, public and private sector partners and the public. It is further suggested that the level of expertise exhibited - coping and reacting or learning and creating opportunities for increased participation - will affect ability to influence and fully participate in inter-organisational relationships.

Here having the strength of commitment, skills, knowledge and ability to influence with credibility and integrity link with the concept of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP - Lave and Wenger, 1999). This framework helps to bring an understanding to the movement of individuals into becoming fully conversant with and full participants in particular communities of practice. I will return to this in relation to individual and collective learning shortly. However, it is also a useful concept in considering LDA CEOs' objectives in relationship to inter-agency working.

Strategic cross-sector alliances were identified as important locations for activity for LDA CEOs. This was both as a testing ground for abilities and expertise and in terms of potential learning for enhanced practice. Furthermore, there was potential for legitimising the particular capacity building knowledge LDA CEOs might bring to these structural arrangements and mainstream agenda. Although seen to have potential for learning as communities of practitioners, there remain questions of power, inclusion and potential for full participation of all members in these arrangements. As such, the research questioned whether a process of apprenticeship associated with LPP was fully appropriate to LDA experience. In this respect, influential participation was seen to arise from reframing perceived negative aspects of sector and individual identity.

Being able to use this peripheral position for optimum influence was termed *positive marginalisation*. Here effective involvement and participation was seen as maintaining an informed and legitimate presence that could also critically question aims, targets and processes of inter-agency working. Where this might be developed fully, it is proposed that opportunities for new tools and techniques for problem solving, critical reflection and learning in relation to process and outcomes of inter-organisational alliances might also be increased.

Non-formal learning between voluntary sector colleagues was also identified within inter-organisational alliances. Here, voluntary sector representatives regularly exchanged information in what could be termed small communities of practitioners. This was seen to contribute to building sector specific knowledge and responses in relation to the partnership agenda. Furthermore, these groups were identified as potential learning networks to support voluntary sector agencies and individuals new to inter-agency working, confirming the relevance of LPP and communities of practitioners in a non-profit context.

Communities of practice were readily identified in the ways LDA CEOs sought out like-minded individuals to meet and discuss similarities and differences in approaches to internal organisation management, problem solving and in external promotion of image and sector objectives. These communities of practice were identified not only as areas for learning and developing practice but also arena for dialogue around values linked to strategising and action. This in turn provides an outlet for cognitive dissonance arising from differences between values and expectations, and instrumentality of everyday practice. As such, these networks also provided opportunities for rehearsal of arguments, strengthening and confirmation of individual and sector identity and production of individual and collective theories and constructs. This has resonance with experiential learning (Kolb *et al*, 1991) and sensemaking (Weick, 1995) as shown in Figure 10.3, page 278.

Within LDA communities of practice, this is also a co-regulated activity with a focus on both knowledge acquisition and complex problem solving. This reflects an action learning perspective (Revans, 1983).

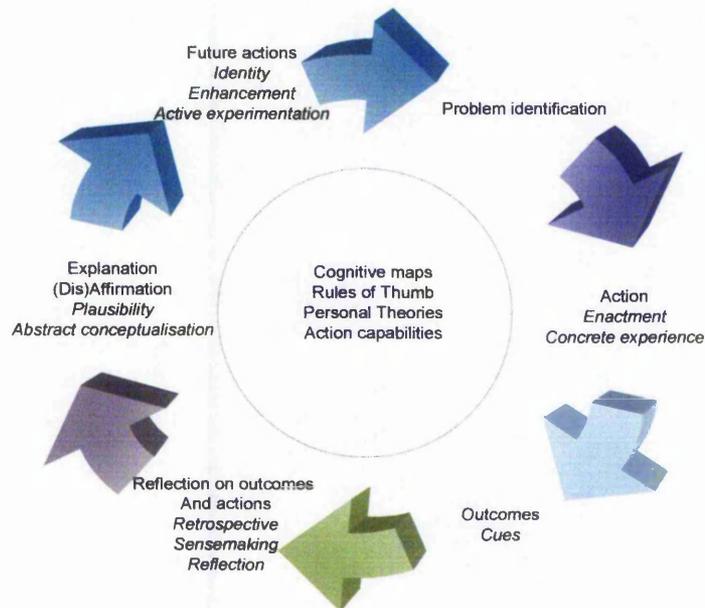


Figure 10.3 Thinking, action and identity

Source: author

In the main, LDA CEOs sought out other LDA CEOs for this kind of activity. However, they also used wider networks and significant others: current and former colleagues, identified strategic thinkers in other voluntary and public sector organisations and key contributors within the LDA itself. These linkages appear more intricate and complex where LDA CEOs had achieved a balanced focus between internal organisational needs and external activities. The greater the need for strategic activity external to the organisation the wider the network was perceived to be. In some instances, these *networked practitioners*, had built up contacts organically over time, but in other instances, there was deliberate intent to develop and maintain active knowledge networks.

The knowledge associated with practice – rules of thumb, personal theories, cognitive maps – was brought forth in relation to how LDA CEOs defined and explained concepts of leadership and effective leadership for the sector. The high-level constructs and model of leadership dimensions developed from this analysis confirm the importance of socio-political and values dimensions of leadership. These leadership dimensions are often manifested in practice through bridging and brokering activities, which supports and extends concepts of entrepreneurial activity and social change leadership. Learning for entrepreneurial activity and social change leadership in a non-profit context is therefore seen to happen outside the

formal boundaries of conventional management development approaches and provision.

From these investigations, the original conceptual framework can be revisited. It can be expanded to include the key findings from the research, as shown in Figure 10.4, below.

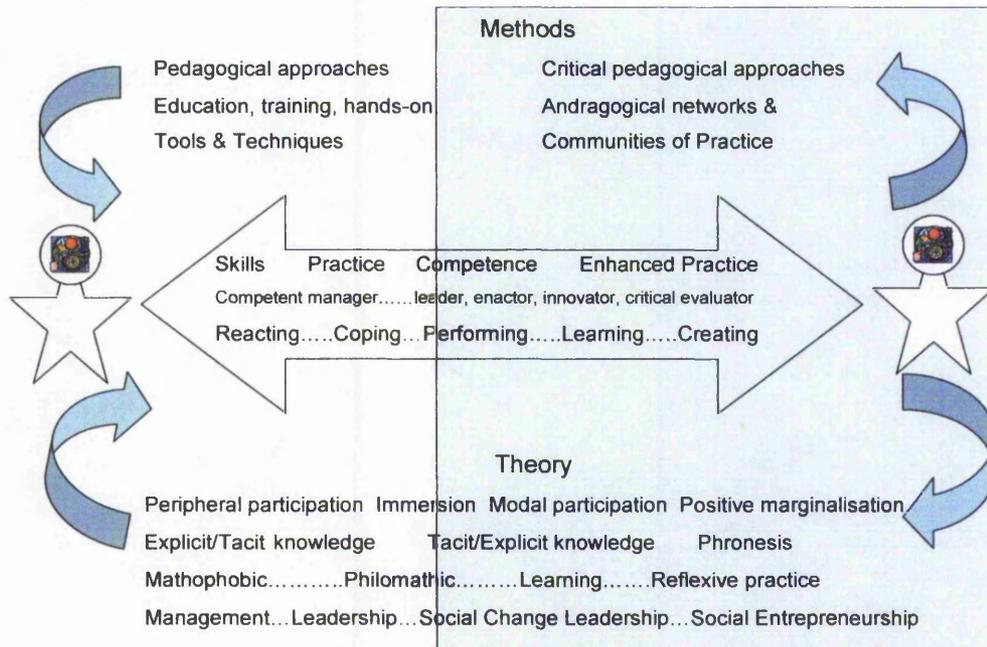


Figure 10.4 Managing to learn and making a difference: an extended conceptual framework

Source: author

Making a difference: contribution to academic and practitioner knowledge and discourse

As stated at the outset, most non-profit practitioner literature has focused on the sector-wide issues of size, identity and economic contribution of its constituent parts. The research has contributed to a new and developing area of discourse for the sector on the subjective experience of non-profit managers. This in turn, has contributed to discussion of concepts of leadership, social entrepreneurship and inter-organisational learning.

The context of inter-organisational activities for leadership and influence for the sector is a developing area of discourse and the contribution and relevance of the research has already been evidenced. This includes citations in master's level research in the UK on building change leadership

capabilities for non-profit support agencies (Allard, 2005) and PhD research on stakeholder management in third sector organisations in Turkey (Demirel, personal communication 2006).

Non-profit experience has largely been absent from mainstream management discourse. As such, the research has contributed to academic research and theory on aspects of learning and development, particularly the extension of conventional approaches to management development and non-formal learning opportunities as explored and identified through Stewart (1999, 2005) and Lee's (1997) frameworks. The research confirms the relevance of action learning and experiential learning processes for non-profit managers and LDA CEOs. In doing so, this supports claims for critical pedagogical and andragogical approaches to formal management development in linking management theory and practice. This is relevant across all sectors to take account of the move to more diverse cross-sector alliances.

The research contributes to knowledge and discussion around management tools and techniques. In turn, this adds to continuing debate on applicability of business-model accountability methods and evaluation for non-profits.

It could be argued that the research is limited by a narrow focus on local development agencies chief executives. It has been acknowledged in the thesis that leading, managing and learning is context specific, socially constructed and dynamic. However, by using a series of individual case studies to identify patterns, trends and exceptions it has been possible to transfer learning from one case to another. Thus, there can be some claim that emerging theory and concepts can be considered generic.

Furthermore, using analytic frameworks that have been used in other contexts (for example public, private and non-governmental sectors) strengthens the application and broader significance of development of theory and conceptual models and frameworks and contribution to mainstream management and learning discourse as well as sector specific research and practice. The significance of the issues raised for audiences wider than non-profit constituencies has been evidenced by the production

and acceptance of research papers for mainstream academic conferences and subsequent publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Potential to make a difference: implications for further research

The outcomes of the research raise a number of concepts and questions that provide potential for future enquiry and research. These implications are both non-profit related and have relevance for broader academic research and practitioner experience.

The thesis points to the need for future research into inter-organisational learning. For example, inquiry based learning and complex problem solving based on practitioner experience has the potential to develop academic, and practitioner, discourse that is inclusive of non-profit experience. This is particularly relevant to partnership and active alliances in inter-organisational settings in considering the potential to develop new knowledge, new tools and new ways of working. This potential can be explored through further research. This could further develop and explore concepts of *modal participation* and *positive marginalisation* identified in the thesis.

This type of enquiry also has implications for academic institutions supporting practice-based learning, both within business schools and in practice settings. Connected with theory-practice link is a continuing need to consider the relevance of inter-organisational communities of practice in developing cross-sector learning and knowledge creation and how these can and are being supported.

The leadership dimensions identified from the research have potential for wider application and development. The tools used to discover dimensions were deliberately naïve (paper, sticky labels and coloured pens) to provide texture to and engagement with the tasks. However, there is potential for computer-based tools to be developed, which would give potential for quantitative as well as qualitative measures. Furthermore, this would allow for comparative research both in the non-profit sector and across sectors.

Much current discourse on social entrepreneurship in the non-profit sector is focused on individual entrepreneurial activity in terms of community

action and, in relation to social enterprises, start up of new organisations. The local and international development focus explored in the thesis provides a basis for further analysis and development of discourse on social entrepreneurship and social change leadership as well as a potential source of future research.

As mentioned above, linking LDA experience to identity politics provides a useful extension of discussion on identity, image and marginalisation. It may provide a basis for further exploration of the identified concept of *positive marginalisation*. In addition, one of the questions asked of research participants, although not reported on in the thesis, was gender of leadership role models. This provides scope for discussion of gendered concepts of leadership and practice in the sector.

Finally, although not focused specifically on internal arrangements and management of LDAs, the thesis noted the fragmented nature of LDAs partly influenced by short-term funding arrangements. Often considered a negative aspect of managing in the sector, the research identified a potential for active learner networks within organisations, which raises potential for double loop learning and reflexive practice. This may have relevance for future research in terms of managing knowledge networks (related to a community rather than technological models – Newell *et al*, 2002) and communities of practice.

Making a difference: implications for researcher

In reflecting on process, my enthusiasm for fieldwork has meant that the research has yielded a variety of rich information, which at times has felt overwhelming. Judicious use of computer software has helped to overcome this and to provide a complex and comprehensive retrieval system.

As mentioned in relation to the constructs exercises, although interview formats were piloted, the time taken for this part of the research was much longer than estimated. However, this exercise - if it were to be repeated - would provide a sound basis for a research project in itself and so the time factor could be accommodated in a new research design. Overall, methods used have proved robust and appropriate to research tasks and objectives.

Having organised, designed and carried out a significant piece of research on a part-time basis over effectively a six-year period has been a significant learning experience. To have been able to maintain contact with research participants over that time period and to retain a sense of enthusiasm for the research has been indicative of a commitment to learning and knowledge acquisition. As with any exploratory and explanatory exercise, the research has raised as many questions and avenues for further enquiry as it has described and explained the initial research questions and objectives, which demonstrates the value of a focus on non-profit experience.

As a neophyte academic and researcher, doctoral research has given an opportunity to develop research capability and skills. Furthermore, the fieldwork and construction of an academic thesis helps to demonstrate understanding of research methods and to contribute a significant perspective to current management and learning discourse both in non-profit and broader academic and practitioner arena.

Appendices

Appendices A-D are contained in a plastic folder at the end of the thesis

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Sheffield
Yorkshire
S8 0GR

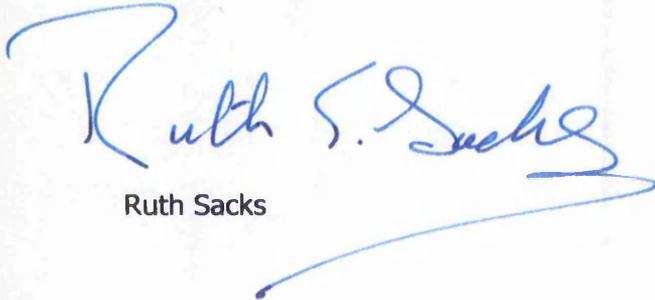
28th April 2006

Permissions to use published materials by co-author

I hereby give Jan Myers permission to use in her PhD thesis, materials used in the preparation and publication of the following conference papers and articles:

Myers and Sacks (2001) Harnessing the Talents of a "loose and baggy monster", subsequently published in 2001

Myers and Sacks (2001) Tools, techniques and tightropes: the art of walking and talking private sector management in non-profit organisations, is it just a question of balance? subsequently published in 2003.



Ruth Sacks

Research Participants: Involvement and basic profile

Involvement	Profile
1 FI SI	Thirty-something female. First degree & post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). Background in administration and information. Worked in private sector, further education and then in voluntary organisations. 3 years' in post at time of first interview. Employed in LDAs since 1995. 20 staff at time of first interview (2001), expecting a further 7 in the course of the year. 2005: No longer in post
2 FI SI	Fifty-something female. First degree, LCC private secretary certificate and some IPM (as was) training. Worked in public sector, local government, also union activist. Main area of work before moving to LDA was in administration: records and statistical information. 15 years in post at time of first interview (2001). 8 staff. 2005: Still in post
3 FI SI	Fifty-something male. First degree, followed 10 years later with master's degree and qualification in social work. First eight years in social work (mental health) then moved in to voluntary sector. 22 years in voluntary sector and in post 14 years in post at time of first interview (2001). 49 staff. 2005: Still in post
4 Pilot FI SI	Thirty-something male. First degree. Moved straight from university in to voluntary sector (services sector: housing) and had been involved in volunteer work since 1983. First experience of local development agency work abroad; moved back to UK and took up post at LDA. 3 years in post at time of first interview (2001). 35 staff and 30 volunteers (doubled over next year). By time of second interview had moved to work as executive and regional director (E&RD) of quango/public sector organisation. 2005: still in E&RD post
5 FI SI	Forty-something female. First degree followed by PGCE (FE) and post-graduate diploma in health education. Worked in health related jobs until moving in to the voluntary sector in 1992. In post 3 years at time of first interview (2001). 12 staff. By time of second interview had moved back in to health sector but with a community development focus and based in the community. Job move related to quality of life issues and geographical location. After a short period moved to public health. 2005: Still in post: public health role
6 FI SI	Fifty-something male. Left school at 15 and moved into assistant manager post in retail and then into logistics. Returned to university as a mature student to gain first degree some 20 years later. Moved to voluntary sector in 1976. 24 years in the sector with 13 of those in a local development agency at assistant chief officer or chief officer level. 15 staff. 2005: Still in post
7 FI SI SH	Forty-something female. First degree followed by post-graduate diploma (bilingual studies) and then Women in to Management programme some 10 years after leaving university. After a career break of 8 years moved into education, politics and self-employed consultancy before joining a local development agency in 1996 and becoming chief executive in 1998. In current post for 3 years at time of first interview (2001). Around 75 staff. 2005: Moved to chief executive role of a national federation of voluntary organisations

Appendix F

Involvement	Profile
8 FI	Forty-something female. First degree and involved in community action programme at university, followed by work in community work, the arts and the voluntary sector, including running an independent social enterprise and community resource. Had been in post for 12 years at time of first interview (2001). 25 staff. By time of second interview was on leave and then moved to new job. Logistical problems – no second interview. 2005: Still chief executive role in regional body
9 Pilot FI SI EQ	Forty-something female. First degree and moved straight in to voluntary sector after leaving university, first into a communications role in a branch of a national charity and after 3 years to a director post in a local development agency. 15 staff. By time of second interview, and after 14 years in post at time of first interview (2001), had moved to chief executive of larger local development agency. 19 years in sector with experience of non-executive director and chair role of health trusts, plus voluntary trustee positions. 40 plus staff and 30+ volunteers. 2005: Still in Post
10 FI SI	Thirty-something male. First degree, followed by work industry. Retrained and gained master's degree & qualification in social work. This followed by MBA. Joined local development agency in 1989. 12 years in post as chief executive. 16 staff at time of first interview (2001), set to rise to 40 by time of second interview. 2005: Still in post
11 FI SI	Fifty-something male. First degree followed by a short stint in civil service and in publisher (has trade qualifications). Ten years after first degree, undertook master's degree and moved into education, politics and own company. Moved into voluntary sector in 1988 – 13 years in sector; in post over two years at time of first interview (2001). 27 staff. By time of second interview had moved twice, once into local authority setting and then back in to voluntary sector. 2005: Still in post: director of voluntary sector service organisation.
12 FI SI	Forty-something female. After graduating from university moved locations and became a manager of a community based voluntary organisation. Moved into campaigning and service based agencies and then to international development agencies. Employed in the sector for 25 years in a variety of developmental, managerial and executive posts. In post nearly three years by time of first interview. 19 staff. By time of second interview had moved to head up a national organisation and then out to become chief officer of new federation of voluntary organisations. 2005: Still in CEO post
13 FI	Thirty-something male. No first degree and moved into a variety of jobs before moving in to voluntary sector in 1984. First CEO post in 1991. Moved into consultancy around voluntary sector issues for a brief spell before taking full time MBA course. Moved to LDA in 1999. 16 years in and connected with sector. Just over 2 years in post at time of first interview (2001). 27 staff, 22 volunteers. 2005: Still in post.
14 FI SI	Fifty-something male. Started in retail and rose to retail manager in early 20s, with about 320 staff. Found way into sector via voluntary work and church related activities and professional training, eventually moved in to voluntary sector post and stayed there for 5 years before becoming CEO of LDA. Been in post for 25 years by time of first interview (2001). 9 staff. 2005: Still in post

Appendix F

Involvement	Profile
15 FI	Forty-something female. From university moved in to local authority and alternated between that and voluntary sector. First experience in voluntary sector was as a volunteer during a career break for childcare reasons. After a year became manager of a local voluntary organisation and stayed there for 5 years. 11 years in total in sector as of date of first interview (2001) and in current CEO post for 5 years. Has done a variety of management training over the years particularly with first voluntary sector post. Most recent formal qualification is diploma in management studies. 25 staff. 2005: Still in post
16 FI SI SH EQ	Fifty-something male. Graduated for agricultural college and moved form a brief period into the agro-industry, but through volunteer activities from the late 1960s soon moved into paid employment in the voluntary sector. Within 7 years was chief executive of national branch of an international development agency and 3 years later became chief executive of a larger international development agency (5 years in post). Joined LDA in 1985, as deputy director becoming CEO in 1991. Thirty years in voluntary sector. Ten years in post by time for first interview (2001). 40 staff, approx 24 volunteers. 2005: Still in post
17 FI SI	Forty-something male. First degree in engineering but dropped out of university and moved into community based work and a youth work course. Moved into LDA work for 5 years and then joined a larger LDA as chief executive for a further 6 years. Went back to university to study for a diploma in management studies and master's degree. Had been in current CEO post for 5 years. 10 staff. 2005: Still in post
18 FI SI	Forty-something female. Left school and moved in to various jobs then 8 years in laboratory work. Became involved with voluntary sector in 1981 with both volunteer and paid employment. In 1991, moved into full time work with a local development agency and after 9 years took up current CEO post. Has been in post for 1 year at time of first interview (2001). 2005: Still in post
19 FI SI	Forty-something male. 19 staff and 7 volunteers. Graduated with a first degree and moved countries. After two years working in the community sector, did a personnel qualification and then moved to supervise a community development scheme. Moved from there into local development agencies. In sector for about 20 years at time of first interview (2001). In current post as CEO for 5 years. 7 staff. 2005: Moved to public sector (further education) in director and development role.
20 FI SI	Thirty-something female. After graduating from university took a certificate in teacher training, (FE) and three years later registered for an open university degree course. Before receiving second undergraduate degree, received an honorary master's degree from first university. Work history began in FE sector and youth work, moving quickly to work in voluntary sector. In sector for 5 years before a 3 year stint as lecturer/educational advisor in university setting. Following this moved back into sector after a short break. Became CEO of LDA in 2000. Had been in post for one year at time of first interview (2001). 20 staff, 9 volunteers. 2005: Still in post

Tel: Dept. of HRM
Nottingham Business School
Direct Line 0115 8482401
E: Jan.Myers@ntu.ac.uk

13 June 2001

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Company»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City» «PostalCode»

Dear «FirstName»

I have attached some background information briefly outlining a research project, which I am undertaking and to which I would be very pleased if you were able to contribute. The basic aim of the work is to consider learning and development of voluntary sector managers.

I am particularly interested in chief executives of local development agencies. This is partly due to my own background and also because the context in which these organisations work provides a particular challenge for chief executives.

I'd like to ask for up to two hours of your time sometime between July and September when I could meet with you to discuss the research further and to carry out an interview. I know you are busy and we are reaching the "holiday season" but as a key respondent, I hope you will be able to take part.

For your information, both chief executives of [REDACTED] participated in the pilot for the research project. The project is being supported by Nottingham Trent University Business School as part of their doctoral programme.

I will telephone you either at the end of this week or week commencing 25th June to give you any further information you may require and to see if you are interested in participating.

Best wishes

Jan Myers

Appendix G

Jan Myers

25th June 2001



Dept. of HRM
Nottingham Business School
T 0115 8482401 (direct line)
E Jan.Myers@ntu.ac.uk

Re.: Learning to manage: a study of experiential learning and practice development of voluntary sector managers.

Dear 

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the above research project. The interview scheduled for **Monday 16th July at 10 am** will last approximately two hours and will take the form of a semi-structured interview. To keep a record of the interview, I would like to use a tape recorder as well as to take some notes.

Information collected as part of interviewing processes will be confidential. Interviews will be transcribed and it may be that all or part of the information collected will be used at different times within the project as a whole. This will be as anonymous individual case studies and as generalised examples. Any specific use of material relating to an individual will be discussed with each contributor. This will also apply where interviews form part of a larger case study.

The interview is semi-structured in the that it will provide opportunity for you, the interviewee, to influence the process of the interview with issues considered relevant and important to your own practice and personal development and the context in which you work. I am also interested in exploring learning and development issues, personal experience and history of employment in the sector with each interviewee. I hope to follow up this initial interview with a further interview in twelve months time.

It would be extremely useful if you could provide me with a copy of your most recent curriculum vitae and copies of your organisation's last two annual reports as a forerunner to the interview and I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience.

Many thanks again and I look forward to meeting you on 16th July. Meantime if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Jan Myers

* (1102).txt page: 1 5/23/ 6 16:08:44

QSR N5 Full version, revision 5.0.
Licensee: Jan.

PROJECT: Voices from the Sector, User Jan,

REPORT ON NODE (1 10 2) '~~/Making a difference'
Restriction to document: NONE

(1 10 2) /Biography/Mental Models/Making a difference
*** No Description

Margin coding keys for selected nodes:

A: (1 10 2) /Biography/Mental Models/Making a difference

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+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: FIDND

+++ Retrieval for this document: 98 units out of 1769, = 5.5%

++ Text units 2-17:

Er - I don't know really. I suppose it's partly by accident because, you 4 A
know, I didn't set off one day and think I want to work in the voluntary 5 A
sector. Er - I mean it sounds trite really, but I mean it was because I 6 A
just wanted to make a difference and to do something that - for society 7 A
rather than just for money. And the money's never, as I say, been 8 A
particularly important to me, although it's nice to have money as well. 9 A
But er - I've always wanted to just to er - you know, the other fairly 10 A
hackneyed phrase is to give something back, you know, because I suppose 11 A
I've had a er - I mean I was brought up on a - in a council housing 12 A
estate in London, and we were never the poorest of the poor but we were 13 A
always pretty, you know, hand to mouth really; and so I was brought up in 14 A
some kind of poverty. I mean not - I'm not saying we were severely poor 15 A
but er - and sort of in a sense managed to get out of that and to work, 16 A
you know, through education get into er - do a degree and things. And so 17 A
++ Text units 40-54:

*JM: And do you feel like working in the voluntary sector has given you A
that quality? 40 A

41 A

Yes. 42 A

*JM: In what ways? 43 A

44 A

Well, I think I've got much more control over my work than I would have 45 A
done if I was in any other sector; I mean I don't know if that's true. I 46 A
mean I suppose if I was - if I had set up my own business and was self 47 A
employed in that sense, I might have had the same kind of freedom. But I 48 A
think that I've had enormous freedom to explore areas of work that I've 49 A
wanted to. I mean there's constraints and stuff on all these but - and 50 A
I've moved jobs, into jobs that I've wanted to do. Er - and you know, the 51 A
bottom line is to do things that I believe in. It's not just about - I 52 A
don't come to work just to earn money, I come because I think what I'm 53 A
doing is useful and I'm going to improve society in some way. 54 A
++ Text units 58-71:

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: FIEWH

+++ Retrieval for this document: 28 units out of 711, = 3.9%

*JM: In what ways? 45

++ Text units 47-52:

Erm...because I think it really did make a difference to people's lives. 47 A
Not me personally, but somebody juts getting them together, somebody 48 A
supporting that - I mean they did it themselves, you know, the benefits 49 A
came from each other, not me. Erm...and, I suppose I'm really committed to, 50 A

* (1102).txt page: 2 5/23/ 6 16:08:44

you know I believe in that kind of approach towards health and well 51 A
being. And... I suppose also that being able to be dynamic in terms of not 52 A
*JM: Yeah 115

++ Text units 119-123:

fairly quickly, I realised that there was two ways of doing or achieving 119 A
what I was trying to achieve. Erm, and that was either work from a - 120 A
outside, and sort of lobby and throw the odd grenade in, which people 121 A
just - shit doors really. Or, try and work with - to try and open the 122 A
door, erm... So, I suppose I chose the latter. 123 A

++ Text units 489-505:

*JM: So, what were the key challenges that you saw when you moved into A
this new manager/managerial and strategic role? How did you assess A
things? 489 A

490 A

Oh, oh very challenging. The organisation had just been through a period 491 A
where it had sacked the previous manager who had taken them to tribunal. 492 A
So, there hadn't been a manager for six months. The credibility of the 493 A
organisation was minus 20 or something in the public sector and in the 494 A
voluntary and community sector. Basically because it hadn't been doing 495 A
anything, it had let people down and there'd been a lot of staffing 496 A
crisis. So, it was a mess really. The only plus was that it did have 497 A
quite substantial reserves so it had money to do things with. Erm, so the 498 A
challenge was really to win back, or rather build its credibility and to 499 A
get the organisation just at least functioning - even it was just 500 A
producing a newsletter, doing what it said it would do and providing some 501 A
kind of basic support to voluntary and community organisations. So very 502 A
practical - get functioning. But not, but nice, it sounds good - but that 503 A
being able to build from scratch was good. And to put those basic 504 A
building blocks in - I enjoyed that. 505 A

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+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: SICY

+++ Retrieval for this document: 3 units out of 88, = 3.4%

++ Text units 47-49:

*JM: Yeah, you were saying you were still a social worker at heart 47 A

48 A

* Yeah, I am...it's the buzz for me...I do get a buzz out of making things A
happen by remote control but it doesn't match the buzz of doing things A
directly. An example...at about 7 when I was still in the office, A
stupidly...and I'd just put down the phone...and talking to this bloke on the A
telephone - the flood relief, and I was talking things through with him A
last night and I thought why was I doing it at half past seven at night A
it's taken 2 years to get here so one more night... ..and I think I did it A
because I wanted to talk to real human beings because that's my job and A
that's what I'm good at...and talking it through it with him...I do get a A
buzz, even though it was 2 and a half hours in to overtime...and I got some A
satisfaction from that that I hadn't really got from much of the day, A
because I'd be dealing with one hassle after another, and I get a buzz A
out of that human and the bloke says well, thanks very much, Mr. A
S...instant hit. 49 A

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: SIKL

+++ Retrieval for this document: 4 units out of 91, = 4.4%

++ Text units 77-77:

*I've always had this thing in terms of careers about how little choice A
we exercise in life - what we do in life. I would say the same about A
marriages and partners is how little choice we exercise, you know. The A
number of people who have careers because that's what their parents did - A
because that's what they knew, they lived with it and it was obvious and A
they just did it and then don't change. And think, well this is it. They A
forget that they have some power. Similarly, I've been saying to some A
people on some of the committees about the frustrations of the systems A
we're working with and how difficult it is to get decisions taken, how A

difficult it is to get things changed, and I say well we created these systems, we can change them -- we shouldn't allow ourselves to become slaves - so many people just become slaves to a system, rather than change them. And I think that's one of the delights of being a chief exec of a smaller organisation is that you can just change it if you want to. Say, alright well we'll do this now. That's still a bit of the drag really in terms of moving from here is wanting to move to somewhere where I still have that sort of influence. There's some research about the amount of influence is more important than the amount of remuneration. People get more job satisfaction out of influence...You always spend what's in you bank account no matter how much or how little it is.

++ Text units 81-83:

*JM: quango? 81 A

82 A

*Yes and no, I see those jobs as basically the job and doing now and I still have a pull about not wanting to get too far away from the community I'm vice chair of the voluntary sector regional sector body and it's so difficult to engage people at the grass roots with anything reachable unless it's about the next bidding round...so it's quite difficult to make those connections. So it doesn't feel the right way to go, I would say. So I'm much more interested in being say chief exec of [] district council where I might actually be able to DO something.

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: SIKLAB
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 1 unit out of 228, = 0.44%
 ++ Text units 92-92:

*We did a very public consultation exercise -- called it design for the future - and we did a lot of structured interviews across industry, community groups, the councils etc and sessions with people, we did report backs on the drafts as it was going along. Pulled in a lot of stuff from the county and {}, the police and the primary care trust so we were able to have an overview of all those things that were happening and put all the pieces of the jigsaw and if we did this then we could time table it -- pedestrianise this, do the visitors centre, develop a new industrial site -- we could set the agenda. Lots of them had discussed elements of it but hadn't seen it in that way. It was a really good exercise for the team because I'd just been through the exercise of revamping the team -- giving people new roles. A lot of people I essentially gave bigger roles to -- now, one of the best officers I had when I left, was an admin assistant when I began. And I went through this exercise to show them how to run this, to do this. And I think I did a good job for A

+++++
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: SILSL
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 7 units out of 212, = 3.3%
 ++ Text units 14-14:

* I had hoped to achieve I think a merger between {} and what was then {} and {} because I thought for the body to punch it's weight really nationally and to fight off a very predatory {} and {} to maintain a local focus we would be much better as a three-way, as a national development body for agencies as a whole. I hoped we were going to achieve that but it became clear that -- there wasn't a commitment from the other two bodies.

Assessed with form	Complex	Competitive	Helper	Sensitive	Specialist
mentally & socially on top ✓	Freedom to explore ✓	Political animal ✓	Facilitator ✓	Here and now ✓	Politically astute ✓
Fit	Flexible ✓	Captivated	Interpreter ✓	Fun	Makes a mark ✓
Healthy	Convincing ✓	Excited ✓	Mediator ✓	Risk taker ✓	Aspirational ✓
Energetic ✓	Inspired ✓	Open to challenge ✓	Quick change artist ✓	Experience ✓	Strong personal relationships ✓
Coach ✓	Social entrepreneur ✓	Force of personality ✓	Campaigner ✓	Generalist ✓	Networker ✓
Adrenaline ✓	Passionate ✓	Adaptable ✓	Developer ✓	Cultivator ✓	Major player ✓

5
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ideal

OPEN TO CHANGE	1	1	3	4	2	2	2	2	INFLXIBLE / INWARD LOOKING
CONFIDENT DECISION MAKER	1	2	2	2	3	3	0	0	DITHERING
PREPARED TO PUNCH ABOVE YOUR WEIGHT	2	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	FEAR OF GETTING IT WRONG
MAKING CONNECTIONS	0	1	2	4	2	2	2	2	NARROW & INWARD LOOKING
CONVINCING	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	BULL SHITTING
POLITICAL ANIMAL	1	2	4	3	2	2	0	0	POLITICALLY NAIVE
WILLINGNESS TO LEARN	2	1	3	4	3	4	4	4	KNOW ALL.
SENSE OF HUMOR	2	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	HUMORLESS
GENDER (style related)	1	1	0	2	2	2	3	3	'MACHO' APPROACH.
ENERGETIC	1	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	PLODDING

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Appendix A

Harnessing the talents of a "loose and baggy monster"

Jan Myers

Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

Ruth Sacks

Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

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Abstract

Much of the research and dialogue around the voluntary sector is around the economics and identity of the sector. Its relationship with clients, suppliers and government has become more sophisticated and complex. The ability of voluntary sector leadership to be proactive in determining the nature of these relationships underpins much of the current debate on the future of the voluntary sector, both in the UK and internationally. There are useful lessons to be learnt from business techniques. Yet, the execution of business-enhancing tools needs to be considered in the context relevant to the sector's interests and to the primary aims of a sector. This paper is based on practitioner experience, previous unpublished research, initial doctoral research into management and learning in the sector and e-mail interviews with key respondents working in the non-profit sector in the UK and Russia.

Introduction

The voluntary sector, described by Kendall and Knapp (1995) as a "loose and baggy monster", is made up of many diverse organisations ranging from the multitude of unregistered and unincorporated associations through to national and international service providers and multi-million pound organisations, but there is no universal agreement on the exact nature of the beast. This is manifested in the various (and often discussed and contested) labels attached to the sector. In the UK alone this can include: non-profit organisations (NPOs), non-government organisations (NGOs), third sector, charity sector, not-for-profits, voluntary and community sector and even, in some instances, SMVEs (small-medium voluntary enterprises).

This has led to a concentration of writing and research on the size, identity and economic contribution of the sector as a whole. One of the largest comparative research projects started in 1990 at Johns Hopkins University has been important in providing an overview of the non-profit sector at local, regional and global levels. Examining the sector in countries in Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the USA, Japan, Israel and Australia, we start to see the size, scope, financing and purpose of the non-profit sector as a major economic contributor, a major service provider and in generating employment.

In the UK, a recent shift for the sector is an increased political, social and economic significance, highlighted by new Labour government initiatives aimed at modernising public services and local government. These initiatives put an emphasis on active engagement between public, private and

voluntary sectors in establishing and maintaining collaborative working arrangements. The sector's confidence, and the ability and competence of voluntary sector leadership, to be proactive in determining the nature of these relationships underpins much of the current debate on its future. This paper is based on practitioner experiences of working with a range of non-profit organisations in the UK and in Europe, previous unpublished research, initial investigations into management and learning in the sector and a small set (6) of e-mail interviews with chief executives and senior managers currently working in the UK and in Russia.

Challenges for the sector

Many voluntary agencies acknowledge that they need to be able to confront a whole range of issues. As Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 163) stress:

... those voluntary organisations that plan for change and find ways to lead the debate will do more to serve their cause than those that simply bury their heads in the sand ... In planning for the future it is vital to take account of trends – both national and international – affecting the environment in which voluntary organisations operate.

Indeed if we look at the development of the non-profit sectors within particular countries, we can see that the sectors may look quite different and have quite different stories about their historical development. Often this is linked to trends in government involvement in welfare state activity, the extent of market economies, privatisation of health and social services and the stringency of the requirement of codification in law. However, many organisations are starting to



face problems, which cut across international boundaries.

The issues identified by Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996) include: contract/provider relationships, a shift from core to project funding and the fragmentation of government. Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the UK National Centre for Voluntary Organisations, in a recent interview (Harris, 2000) echoed key themes of devolution and regionalisation as medium term issues for the UK voluntary sector, with key challenges being the future direction of local government and pursuit of independent funding. Hodgkinson (1999) highlighted the global trend of decentralisation of government and welfare provision together with the privatisation of social services as current challenges.

The issues identified by senior staff and chief executives who were interviewed included: core funding for the sector, developing sponsorship and partnerships with the private sector, re-structuring of public sector organisations, European and British legislative changes, greater accountability, identifying standards, assessing the impact of NGOs. A Russian chief executive also identified "governmentalisation" of the sector, which might parallel what Anheier (2000, p. 4) refers to as the "quango-isation" of the sector by turning non-profits into quasi-public institutions. This corresponds with the UK preoccupation of maintaining independence and autonomy, as funding becomes more projects based and specifically tied to the objectives of central and local government and where the boundaries between the two can become blurred. As one chief executive explained:

... funding core activities, services and management capacity is and will continue to be a constant problem for the sector ... diverting energy, expertise and time away from the more productive activities related to the work of the organisation. [This results in] continual loss of expertise and knowledge out of the organisation as short-term funding and employment contracts come to an end.

Here we can see that responding to environmental and contextual factors – if diverting energy away from developing organisational learning and capacity – can inhibit the potential for sector organisations to lead and innovate. Indeed, the tension between the short-term expediency of gaining contracts and of raising funds to ensure the continuation of services may have the result of increasing the distance between the values and beliefs which led to the organisation's establishment in the first

place and the ways it finds to ensure its existence. Often this can create a culture of fire-fighting and reactive processes where managers lack the experience of strategic practice and critical management to "look beyond their own functional chimneys and acknowledge interdependence with one another and with the characteristics of the system as a whole" (Franklin, 1995, p. 6). In an organisation, the image of crisis – of chaos and fire fighting – may come from the feeling of lack of control, understanding and support. On the other hand, chaos and fire fighting may be seen as part of organisational life and consistent with a perceived resistance to change: "we're a charity – this is how we have to do it". Where there is the opportunity for creativity, it may be because there is a sense of authority, the confidence to deal with a challenge or risk, a growing sense of participation and of being in control (of processes if not the actual outcome). Tied in with this is the need to think innovatively, in order to continually gain and renew project funding. As Senge (1990) reminds us, out of constraint one possible response is creativity.

Rising to the challenge

In this way, the sector needs to take a lead in determining tools and approaches that will provide a level of creativity to rise to the challenge of the turbulent and fast-changing environment of the twenty-first century. Only by adopting a wider, more holistic and systemic perspective can effective development interventions be planned and implemented with maximum impact and benefit for both organisation and individual (Doyle, 2000, p. 580). Developing resourceful human beings in managing change creatively can help organisations focus and learn for current and future actions. They "need not be at the mercy of the environment ... [they] can take the initiative to accomplish the shared values and the purposes of the individuals involved" (Covey, 1994, p. 77). Yet, while attempting to do this, following the warning of Semler (1994, p. 278), to "by all means establish and promote goals but recognise ... divergence and let people determine their own ways of achieving." Yet, as Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 21) point out, very little is known "about the management of such organisations, how strategies are shaped and formulated and how the processes of organisation design, change and adaptation take place".

So how are voluntary organisations managing and learning in this climate of

change? As contracting takes on an importance in terms of ensuring funding streams, and relationships between purchasers and providers deepen, there is a tendency for some organisations to feel the need for a greater rapprochement in terms of systems and processes – particularly to facilitate both contracting and service provision. In this way, voluntary organisations may find that strategy, structures and processes become increasingly influenced by and indeed similar to that of their significant funders (see Appendix 1).

There is a discernable tension between whether to be similar or different to other sector organisations. There is a desire to be viewed as valuable and equal members of the organisational world and yet at the same time standing out and presenting a different role. This tension is apparent both inside and outside the non-profit sector. For example, when NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) promoted their very successful Full Stop campaign they were lauded for consciousness raising and gained widespread cross-community support. They also received much adverse comment when the cost of this campaign became public. NSPCC, in a response in the press, commented that they had spent no more than a private sector organisation of similar size on marketing (Hill, 2000) Yet, the comparison with other types of business sits uncomfortably for some organisational members, stakeholders and customers.

Hoberman (cited in Bruce and Leat, 1993, p. 17), former director of Age Concern observed:

The voluntary sector has been through a quiet revolution ... Charitable enterprise is no longer seen as a filler of gaps to catch the casualties who slip through the net of the welfare state or a contributor of peripheral aid in the developing world. It has become a primary provider of services and essential to the new contract culture.

Furthermore, as Salaman and Anheier comment, cited in Saxon-Harrold and Kendall (1995, p. 82):

... far from an alternative to the welfare state emphasised in mainstream economic theories, a view of non-profits is as a mechanism to facilitate the further expansion of welfare state services. The result is an elaborate network of partnerships arrangements between non-profits and the state.

An interview with a director of a local development agency, about the time of that report, echoed this position. He stated that intermediary organisations, such as local

development agencies (organisations supporting the development and inclusion of the voluntary sector), have become a "permanent feature in government life" and that this "semi-voluntary and semi-statutory" status gives these local development agencies a stronger role. For the voluntary organisation that might regard this as a "safe bet", such a strategy consistently focuses on external validation and therefore fails to give a holistic view of the organisation. As a UK chief executive explains:

... it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain a sense of the issues and needs the organisation wishes to address without them being shaped by the analysis provided by each tier of government: central government, regional development agencies, local authorities.

This scenario is more of a concern for a Russian-based development agency whose chief officer observes that while the government administration proclaims co-operation with the new independent voluntary sector, there is a tendency to usurp this independence by creating government umbrella organisations "in order to control this sector of the society". This echoes past experience of the independent sector in Russia as recounted by White (1993, p. 792). Here:

... the Fund for Youth Initiatives was set up in the mid-1980s under the aegis of the Komsomol to help young people to set up clubs and associations. The local Komsomol attempted to use the Fund as an agency of control, and the national Komsomol then borrowed the idea to set up a means of supervising non-official organisations.

Inhibitors for strategic thinking and development become more likely when organisations are too closely tied to funders' aims and objectives or, as in the case of the Russian example, where attempts are made to control new initiatives by subsuming their activities under a centralised and regulated umbrella. Where voluntary organisations value their independence, from the State and from each other, in providing a multitude of localised services, this can provide both an opportunity to involve communities in social action as well as prevent a strengthening collective identity for the sector as a whole. As Anheier (2000, p. 9) points out:

... non-profit organisations are subject to both centralising and decentralising tendencies ... organisations are often caught between the centralising tendencies of a national federation that emphasises the need to "speak with one voice" in policy debates and the decentralising efforts of local groups that focus on local needs and demands.

Each has demands on the type and complexity of managing. A question here, then, may be how far can traditional management training contribute to the capacity and effectiveness of voluntary sector organisations?

Building capacity

As Bubb (2000) suggests "probably the key role of a chief executive is leading change and developing the organisation and this applies whether it is a multi-million pound company or a small voluntary organisation". There has been a growing trend for senior managers in the sector to become more "professional" in their practice and carrying out their responsibilities for organisational image. Professionalism would also include building capacity (including surplus and reserves for the continued survival of the organisation), of promoting good practice and taking organisations forward, particularly in exploiting technology and recognizing their work in an international context. Statutory bodies often define "professionalisation" in terms of non-profits acting more like small businesses (Dowson *et al.*, 2000, p. 139).

In response to the question: "what do you think are the top three or four organisational skills/attributes for managing change?" A chief executive of a multi-million pound UK voluntary organisation replied: "Leadership skills, clarity of vision, tenacity – not giving in or watering it down, making it happen and stick ability". And in response to the question: "what are the top three or four skills you expect your senior management team to have?" The reply was: "having to deliver, taking a corporate/organisation wide view – long term; having a package of interpersonal skills that take people along the change – having ability to see strategic milestones not nitty gritty". These responses would probably be no different to those of a chief executive in a private or public sector organisation.

There might be no surprise then, that some of the language of private and public sector strategic tools is used across most small to medium voluntary sector organisations. There are certainly useful lessons to be learnt from business techniques and in many instances, the processes of management may be extended across sectors. It has been argued (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996) that a small to medium enterprise offering, for example, computer training and services to other small enterprises may have more in common with a similar-based voluntary

sector agency than with, say, IBM. Terms such as business and development planning, SMART objectives, PEST and SWOT analyses are common currency. Some of the larger organisations are developing quality standards and other benchmarking systems; some have in-house management development programmes. Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 93) comment on the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) who provide "a comprehensive training for junior and middle managers, which includes the option of taking a certificate of management studies".

One of the authors facilitated a development course for managers from RNIB and RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf people). The course took place over a period of eight months in modules of two days. The aim of the training was primarily to develop management skills and share experiences across the two well-established and large organisations. The focus was on operational management skills and development, for example interpersonal skills, time management and delegation. Participants from both organisations learnt not only new management skills and techniques but were able to compare and contrast styles, issues and a wide variety of challenges that each of their user groups encountered. As participants included some members with a visual impairment and some who were hearing impaired the opportunities for first hand understanding and learning were high.

In Russia, the Society of Blind People and the Society of Deaf People both have long established histories, having received official recognition in the 1920s. White (1993) believes that organisations such as this and the Red Cross and Red Crescent have survived up to the present day partly to there being similar organisations in other countries. Many have also developed some international links and follow a British or American model of working and managing, although it is only recently that money and other resources are becoming available for development and opportunities for networking with similar organisations being promoted and made available through NGO support units such as CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Russia.

Even with the setting up of a UK national training organisation for the sector and the developing infrastructure of independent consultants, umbrella organisations and some tertiary education programmes, the emphasis has been on operational issues, the nuts and bolts of everyday management and particularly geared towards the needs of volunteers and trustee boards. While the voluntary sector needs to "demonstrate good

practice across a range of operational issues" (Etherington, 2001), there is no consistent or sustained approach to management development and, as Batsleer (1995) suggests, one of the major stumbling blocks for the UK voluntary sector has been the significant lack of any dialogue around management issues for the sector, particularly within the realms of mainstream management thinking.

Valuing the context of the non-profit sector

Yet the use of business-enhancing tools, management development and learning need to be considered in the context relevant to the sector's interests and to the primary aims of the sector. As Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 2) also point out:

... whilst there are a number of similarities between the roles of chief executives in Shell or ICI and the directors of major charities such as Oxfam or the National Trust, the context in which they operate is, in many respects, dissimilar.

This may well account for seeming reluctance, on one hand, to routinise business management in the voluntary sector and, on the other, the often inappropriate and sometimes unsuccessful blanket application of in-fashion techniques. It also raises the concern that non-profit organisations often adopt management techniques long after experts in the for-profit sector have raised doubts as to their widespread use as good practice tools. As Tom Jennings (IBM course director for voluntary sector managers, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove 1996, p. 93) emphasises:

I think voluntary organisations are destined to repeat the mistakes that businesses have made in recent years ... At IBM, for example, a lot of effort went into performance appraisal. It seemed to work well and be motivating staff, but after a while it was clear that mistakes had been made.

Furthermore, these copycat tendencies may well stifle the innovation and creativity of the emerging values-led management and leadership culture of the sector. If this is so, then voluntary organisations need to rise to Leat *et al.*'s (1981) challenge of the need to pay equal attention to "thinking" as well as "doing".

In Russia, following the import of British, American and other foreign consultants for the sector, one of the main development agencies has set up a training institute for new voluntary sector managers and is working hard to promote corporate

philanthropy. As in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, the new Russian:

... non-profit organisations have been playing an increasingly strong and stable role in protecting the interests of children and of the disabled, retired, homeless and other needy people, and have been able to fill many of the gaps that have resulted from the lessening of government involvement (Legendre, 2001).

Commenting on the work of a Russian-based development agency, the chief officer states:

... our organisation is always proactive, it is impossible to be reactive in Russia. We deal with things which nobody before has ever discussed, so if we do not take an initiative, may be, nothing happens.

As with all non-government organisations, assessing impact and evaluation is complex, especially since the language of efficiency and effectiveness – having "traveled from the world of business via government agencies to the voluntary sector" (Rochester, 1999, p. 5) – reinforces the idea that good practice in non-profit management "frequently means *financial* management" (Anheier, 2000, p. 4, original italics). Where this might be the focus of training and development of managers in the sector, there is some indication that this has led also to the emphasis on recruitment into the sector rather than on continued professional development. The Russian-based development agency tries "to find creative people for positions in our development department" and many UK-based voluntary organisations have recruited for high-level posts from outside of the sector. Olga Johnson, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 87), director of UK-based Charity Recruitment is reported as saying:

Two or three years ago, of the applicants at the chief executive or executive level, half would be from people in the voluntary sector and half from people outside. Now it's more like 75 percent from outside.

This is further supported by Gormley (2000), who comments on the profile of chief executives of humanitarian aid agencies, stating, "an increasing number are likely to arrive from outside the humanitarian sector". While this may account for some of the perceived speed in the uptake and use of private sector tools and techniques and contribute to learning from the successes of the commercial sector, an unqualified importation of commercial sector professionalism "seems to bring about an almost inevitable clash ... [which] may result in a fundamental redefinition of the core values and ideology of the organisation" (Butler and Wilson, 1990, p. 172).

So, it is important to recognize that although the voluntary sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisation development from the private and public sectors, there are difficulties in importing ideas wholesale without interpreting the context and the culture of the sector and taking into account the internal relationships within individual organisations. Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 164) warn that:

... control and rationalisation effected for the management perspective run counter to the rather individualistic culture of these organisations [where] employees expect a great deal of personal space, autonomy and personal say in how the organisation is run and what should be its strategic goals. Currently this is at odds with many of the management styles prevalent in the voluntary organisations which are trying to develop and innovate their strategies.

This style, where "leaders emphasise hard and quantifiable results while neglecting the concerns of people" (Dalziel and Schooner, 1988, p. 249) leaves little room to engage "one of the most powerful resources around; namely a potentially highly-motivated workforce" (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996, p. 82) (see Appendices 1 and 2).

In the third sector setting, the personality, knowledge and skills of the organisation, i.e. the style, structure, culture, resources and systems, may all contribute to how an organisation experiences change. There needs to be an awareness of what Weick (1979) might refer to as a fragmentation or ambiguous approach which focuses attention on the complex array of relationships. This corresponds with Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 14) who advocate "shifting attention from structure and formal authority to relational processes and social influence". In some respects, this might also enable voluntary sector organisations to learn from their own beginnings and move away from adopting the structures and processes of, generally, bureaucratic public sector organisations, as they become larger institutions in their own right. This is shown graphically in Figure 1, where the effect on staff can be seen where espoused actions are in synergy with or in conflict with the actions and language observed in the organisation (Myers, 1996).

Here, we can see that it might be possible to affect a shift from grid 3 to grid 2 (reactive to proactive) by breaking down barriers to encourage cross-functional working, team working, developing managers and improving communication (as with BJS). It may be that a shift can be made from 1 (directive - a style which can exacerbate 3, reaction and defensiveness) to 2 (proactivity)

by looking at management/leadership styles[1] developing facilitative approaches to working and looking at long-term outcomes as well as short-term goals. Moving out of grid 4 (inactive/crisis) is much more difficult and, in the context of the voluntary sector, if an organisation has shifted so far from its roots, the question of its continued survival may be raised.

The recognition and development of some of the "unique" features of the voluntary sector and the mechanisms for sensemaking (Weick, 1995) for the organisation may lie therefore in what Herman and Renz (1998) term the "multiple constituency model", that is, recognizing the differing groups of stakeholders. In particular, this includes the participation of and commitment to/from employees. Similarly, Tony Lee, ex-operations director for NatWest bank and subsequently chief officer for the UK national charity Muscular Dystrophy Campaign claims the contrast between the sectors is that the commercial world is much simpler as there are far fewer stakeholders (Hill, 2000).

Learning and knowledge enhancement

As Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 256) explain: ... people who are enabled change the ways in which they think about themselves, their relationships and their ways of work. They develop new ideas of their potential to act inside or outside the group ... what is important is the dialogue which creates shared meanings.

This is an area of management where there could be reciprocal learning with other sectors. Tom Jennings, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 172), suggests:

I do think that the voluntary sector could learn from business in the area of strategic planning. But from my contact with the voluntary sector I've often thought that there is great scope for learning in both directions. A lot of companies, for example, have made the mistake of thinking they can introduce empowerment from the top down - but to work it has to be introduced from the bottom up ... Private sector managers are more likely to try to use their hierarchical power.

Otto, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, pp. 171-2) warns that charities often use inappropriate models of strategic planning where:

... many voluntary organisations are going over to hierarchies via adoption of strategic planning. We are seeing a swing back in the direction of the traditional power model ... which can wreck the values-driven element (see Appendix 3).

Figure 1
 The congruency grid effect

		Esposed values	
		High	
		3. REACTIVE	2. PROACTIVE/CREATIVE
		<p>Irritation, sense of betrayal, disenchantment, disbelief, losing trust, entrenchment, defensive, disconnection, feelings of exploitation</p> <p><i>"Why should we?" "Yes, but?"</i> <i>"They don't"</i></p>	<p>Active participation, enthusiasm, commitment, collaborative, emphasis on sharing</p> <p><i>"We will", "We can", "We do" "Let's.."</i></p>
Actions			High
Low		<p>Apathy, despondency, no enthusiasm, lack of cohesiveness</p> <p><i>"We can't", "Why bother", "There's no point"</i></p>	<p>Coercion, working under duress, compliance, loss of confidence in decision-making, lack of responsibility; open to sub-plots</p> <p><i>"You will" "Only if you do" "Can I...?" "Should we...?"</i></p>
		4. INACTIVE/CRISIS	1. DIRECTIVE
		Low	

Source: Myers (1996)

Yet Otto also suggests that the "whole idea of the learning organisation – which is a fashionable concept now in the private sector – is very voluntary sector". Indeed the whole area of intellectual capital and knowledge management is placed central to private sector organisations' ability to cope and sustain themselves in a climate of increased competition, active consumers and new technological (Web-based and global) environments.

Johnson (1995) refers to "psychological ownership . . . where everyone inside a business feels a sense of responsibility for what is being done and holds himself or herself duly accountable for delivering on an organisation's pledges". This, she says, is akin to "having your heart invested in the organisation", a key ingredient to empowerment and self-directed leadership and in keeping with the congruency effect described earlier.

If we think of learning as a spiral then the implication is that learning is a continuous process. We are able to spiral up and down as we respond to change and new circumstances. We can revisit established or habited behaviours or have our currently held beliefs and behaviours challenged. Occasionally, we may fall off the spiral, spiral backwards or hang in the balance for a while.

The spiral is a series of events over time, with each loop representing its own cycle of learning within which there are further spirals and loops. Within an organisation, the learning cycles of the individual can contribute to the learning spiral of the organisation. At BJS (Appendix 2), there was little observed use of generic strategy analysis models. However, the organisation was acutely aware of its performance in relation to others, had sound financial planning tied in to the needs and philosophy of the organisation, and a planning cycle which involved key stakeholders (pupils, staff and governors). Information was gathered and disseminated through a system of collaboration and coalitions, which existed with organisations seen to be relevant to BJS. There were also identified members of staff who acted as coordinators for particular areas of concern: marketing, community links, staff development, and special needs. Part of the communication process and "knowledge management" within the organisation is realising what is important to different groups, how it is relevant to them, making sure that they are able to input into processes and development in appropriate ways.

For LDA (Appendix 1) to change its relationship with its funding authority from

an inhibitive relationship to one that can enhance the interdependence of the two organisations, would be for LDA to take on board the strategy of the local authority in ways which keep it separate and which contribute to the survival of the organisation. If strategizing is about making meanings, a process of vision, then what we are attempting to do by our analysis (whether of internal relationships with the organisation or external threats and opportunities) is to construct a reality for ourselves. By doing this, we determine how we act, react to, develop or ignore other realities, which impinge on our organisational systems. We need to be able to cope with diversity, to manage ambiguities and to see correlation between significant factors, which help us to become proactive and creative as individuals and as individuals in groups (organisations).

Taking this kind of processual and developmental approach, which will include the relevance of historical and contextual factors, brings in to play the more emotional and "irrational" side of the business: the effect of developing resourceful humans who can positively enhance (rather than inhibit) the survival or development of the organisation. In this way it is important to see that although the voluntary sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisation development from the private and public sectors, there are difficulties in importing ideas wholesale without interpreting the context and culture of the sector and taking into account the internal relationships within individual organisations. Davenport *et al.* cited by Gourlay (2001, p. 28) suggest that:

studies of successful knowledge management projects show just how vital organisational culture and social relations are ... a discovery that has lent support to what can be called the "communities of practice" perspective of knowledge management, i.e. the informal social networks that pervade organisations and that knowledge is best managed within these groups and where consideration needs also to be given to how the networks themselves are managed.

Moreover, as Rochester (1999, pp. 3-4) comments on the "liability of smallness", an obvious restriction is the available expertise within small organisations. Yet, he warns us from the folly of viewing small voluntary organisations as "underdeveloped versions of their larger counterparts but important and distinctive organisations that require management approaches and methods that take account of the differences". Taylor (1996, p. 26) suggests a future where "smaller organisations, unwilling to surrender values of participation and face-to-face working, will develop alternative ways of growing through

franchises, consortia and other innovative organisational forms".

Harnessing the talents of the non-profit sector

If, as we have suggested, organisations need to be able to position themselves both in relation to their own and other voluntary sector organisations and to public and private sectors, to look at ways of optimizing choice and determination for the organisation, then, in Anheier's (2000, p. 12) words, "management becomes not the controlling but the creative, enabling arm of non-profit organizations". As one UK chief executive explains:

We try to be 12 months or so ahead of the game, if we can, in anticipating issues and developments but also in trying to be innovative in developing new approaches and initiatives.

As Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, pp. 82-3) state:

... voluntary organisations have a particular responsibility to ensure that the work their employees and volunteers are engaged in provides an effective outlet for their aspirations ... [and] that if it is harnessed effectively to serve a worthwhile purpose there is little these people cannot achieve.

At the time of writing, the World Economic Forum has just chosen its "global leader for tomorrow", Manny Amandi, currently chief executive of a small consultancy firm specializing in corporate social responsibility and formerly of the UK charitable foundation, The Prince's Trust. He tells us:

Businesses are looking to acquire the values of other sectors - service from the government sector and dedication from the voluntary sector (Hill, 2001).

Rather than reining in voluntary organisations and trying to make them like organisations from other sectors (Harris, 2000), perhaps now is the time to build reciprocity within and across sectors and harness the talents of non-profit organisations.

Note

- 1 Here leadership is seen as a process rather than something imbued upon one or more persons coupled with what Friedlander, cited in Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 258) calls "distributive influence".

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Appendix 1. Case A

LDA was founded in 1946 on the philanthropic traditions of post-war welfare movement. Gregory *et al.* (1994, p. 193) define such umbrella organisations as existing "to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged people by developing and supporting voluntary organisations". In existence for over 50 years, some of its staff and senior managers had been with the organisation over half its life. To some extent because the organisation had developed in line with the growth in the voluntary sector generally and according to the availability of different pockets of funding, LDA started life as a central core of services and developed project-based work as money became available to expand. LDA could be seen to fall within Mintzberg's typology, cited in Handy (1995, p. 201) of an "adhocracy": an "organic structure with a tendency to group the specialists in functional units for house-keeping purposes". A development report stated "this structure appears complex but in fact responds to the demands of the funders to see identifiable cost centres with a separate identity for each separate area of work". It goes on to say that "this fits the traditional sector ethos of creating small, responsive, simply-managed organisations able to concentrate on the needs of the moment".

The question raised here is whose needs are being responded to: "a danger is that the organisation becomes more concerned with resource efficiency than service effectiveness" (Johnson and Scholes, 1988, p. 18).

Compare this to an organisation of similar size, aims and functions taken from a report prepared by the organisation:

Although [VA] functions in a broadly similar way to many other councils for voluntary service up and down the country, it differs from most in one vitally important way: it receives virtually no core funding from the local authority. In theory this lack of financial entanglement enables [VA] to act entirely independently, setting its own agenda, free to tackle the council on any issues without fear of compromising its funding.

The perceived need to keep separate units for funding purposes became so embedded that the sum of the parts of LDA were, at one point, greater than the whole. Each had its own set of aims, objectives and work priorities, seemingly without reference or link to other parts. This separate identity for teams led to greater isolation of strategic thought and a lack of corporate ownership of vision and direction for the organisation as a whole and raises a fundamental issue about who "owns" the strategy and processes of the

organisation. Some within the organisation argued that there was no clear strategy and that new projects had been imposed on top of current workloads. While there was a concept of "voluntary overtime" accepted within the organisation, with commitment historically being shown in terms of providing free labour, what had started out as voluntary commitment had begun to feel like exploitation. This indication of "lost loyalty" is important in voluntary organisations. As Hudson (1995, p. 37) clarifies: "the point is not that organisations in other sectors do not have values, but they have to be treated with much greater sensitivity in the third sector". Many people join voluntary organisations to "do good", to "make a difference" and for value-driven political or ethical reasons. So, we can see that any "fundamental contradiction, repeatedly illuminated for them in the difference between what they know they are supposed to do and what they are told they are supposed to believe, is likely to drive them from scepticism to cynicism" (Anthony, 1995, p. 78).

Appendix 2. Case B: a public sector perspective

In the early 1990s, intake rates at BJS had fallen from the expected 60 to 30 and the school was in danger of being merged with another school. A new head teacher was appointed at this time and within six years there had been considerable upturns in pupil intake, with some year groups averaging 78 pupils. BJS's mission statement is a set of beliefs, essentially a "back-fit" in that it was an attempt to write a description of what the head perceived to be already happening or that they would be aiming to do. However, over time this has become a major driving force for the school and where "self-respect and self worth" are central to its core. The congruence between espoused actions (intent) and reality (observed behaviours) is documented in the external government department report: "Overall, the vision statement and aims provide a real sense of purpose and direction to the development of the school. Generally they have been achieved and resulted in high quality educational provision".

The head has a policy for multi-skilling. As such, one of the teachers who has a theology degree actually takes physical education and acts as a support and advisor to the religious education teacher (whose specialism is in something entirely different). In this instance, this has contributed to breaking down cultural barriers built up within "specialisms", contributed to individual and organisational learning and given high performance results.

Appendix 3. Case C

A leading figure in a large mental health association in Russia described key objectives for Russian NGOs in terms of their development and stability. He did this in a series of stages: survival, developing and stabilisation. Three pillars support these stages: legal (and independent) status, financial support and resources and the structure of the organisation.

If organisations were to remain unregistered, then they would only be accountable to the people in them, those who started them and to informal networks of

friends. With registration comes wider accountability (and with this a move from informal group to organisation). Stabilisation comes with funding, the use of paid workers as well as volunteers and run well, i.e. planning two to three years in advance. Measures include inputs (resources/issues), processes and structures (qualifications, raw materials, means of production) and outcomes.

The challenge here must be to sustain the creativity and initiative that brought the fusion of ideas to respond to a particular unmet need as the organisation becomes more formalised.

Harnessing the talents of a "loose and baggy monster"

Jan Myers

Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

Ruth Sacks

Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

Keywords

Non-profit organizations, Learning, Case studies, Management

Abstract

Much of the research and dialogue around the voluntary sector is around the economics and identity of the sector. Its relationship with clients, suppliers and government has become more sophisticated and complex. The ability of voluntary sector leadership to be proactive in determining the nature of these relationships underpins much of the current debate on the future of the voluntary sector, both in the UK and internationally. There are useful lessons to be learnt from business techniques. Yet, the execution of business-enhancing tools needs to be considered in the context relevant to the sector's interests and to the primary aims of a sector. This paper is based on practitioner experience, previous unpublished research, initial doctoral research into management and learning in the sector and e-mail interviews with key respondents working in the non-profit sector in the UK and Russia.

Introduction

The voluntary sector, described by Kendall and Knapp (1995) as a "loose and baggy monster", is made up of many diverse organisations ranging from the multitude of unregistered and unincorporated associations through to national and international service providers and multi-million pound organisations, but there is no universal agreement on the exact nature of the beast. This is manifested in the various (and often discussed and contested) labels attached to the sector. In the UK alone this can include: non-profit organisations (NPOs), non-government organisations (NGOs), third sector, charity sector, not-for-profits, voluntary and community sector and even, in some instances, SMVEs (small-medium voluntary enterprises).

This has led to a concentration of writing and research on the size, identity and economic contribution of the sector as a whole. One of the largest comparative research projects started in 1990 at Johns Hopkins University has been important in providing an overview of the non-profit sector at local, regional and global levels. Examining the sector in countries in Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the USA, Japan, Israel and Australia, we start to see the size, scope, financing and purpose of the non-profit sector as a major economic contributor, a major service provider and in generating employment.

In the UK, a recent shift for the sector is an increased political, social and economic significance, highlighted by new Labour government initiatives aimed at modernising public services and local government. These initiatives put an emphasis on active engagement between public, private and

voluntary sectors in establishing and maintaining collaborative working arrangements. The sector's confidence, and the ability and competence of voluntary sector leadership, to be proactive in determining the nature of these relationships underpins much of the current debate on its future. This paper is based on practitioner experiences of working with a range of non-profit organisations in the UK and in Europe, previous unpublished research, initial investigations into management and learning in the sector and a small set (6) of e-mail interviews with chief executives and senior managers currently working in the UK and in Russia.

Challenges for the sector

Many voluntary agencies acknowledge that they need to be able to confront a whole range of issues. As Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 163) stress:

... those voluntary organisations that plan for change and find ways to lead the debate will do more to serve their cause than those that simply bury their heads in the sand ... In planning for the future it is vital to take account of trends – both national and international – affecting the environment in which voluntary organisations operate.

Indeed if we look at the development of the non-profit sectors within particular countries, we can see that the sectors may look quite different and have quite different stories about their historical development. Often this is linked to trends in government involvement in welfare state activity, the extent of market economies, privatisation of health and social services and the stringency of the requirement of codification in law. However, many organisations are starting to



face problems, which cut across international boundaries.

The issues identified by Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996) include: contract/provider relationships, a shift from core to project funding and the fragmentation of government. Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the UK National Centre for Voluntary Organisations, in a recent interview (Harris, 2000) echoed key themes of devolution and regionalisation as medium term issues for the UK voluntary sector, with key challenges being the future direction of local government and pursuit of independent funding. Hodgkinson (1999) highlighted the global trend of decentralisation of government and welfare provision together with the privatisation of social services as current challenges.

The issues identified by senior staff and chief executives who were interviewed included: core funding for the sector, developing sponsorship and partnerships with the private sector, re-structuring of public sector organisations, European and British legislative changes, greater accountability, identifying standards, assessing the impact of NGOs. A Russian chief executive also identified "governmentalisation" of the sector, which might parallel what Anheier (2000, p. 4) refers to as the "quango-isation" of the sector by turning non-profits into quasi-public institutions. This corresponds with the UK preoccupation of maintaining independence and autonomy, as funding becomes more projects based and specifically tied to the objectives of central and local government and where the boundaries between the two can become blurred. As one chief executive explained:

... funding core activities, services and management capacity is and will continue to be a constant problem for the sector ... diverting energy, expertise and time away from the more productive activities related to the work of the organisation. [This results in] continual loss of expertise and knowledge out of the organisation as short-term funding and employment contracts come to an end.

Here we can see that responding to environmental and contextual factors – if diverting energy away from developing organisational learning and capacity – can inhibit the potential for sector organisations to lead and innovate. Indeed, the tension between the short-term expediency of gaining contracts and of raising funds to ensure the continuation of services may have the result of increasing the distance between the values and beliefs which led to the organisation's establishment in the first

place and the ways it finds to ensure its existence. Often this can create a culture of fire-fighting and reactive processes where managers lack the experience of strategic practice and critical management to "look beyond their own functional chimneys and acknowledge interdependence with one another and with the characteristics of the system as a whole" (Franklin, 1995, p. 6). In an organisation, the image of crisis – of chaos and fire fighting – may come from the feeling of lack of control, understanding and support. On the other hand, chaos and fire fighting may be seen as part of organisational life and consistent with a perceived resistance to change: "we're a charity – this is how we have to do it". Where there is the opportunity for creativity, it may be because there is a sense of authority, the confidence to deal with a challenge or risk, a growing sense of participation and of being in control (of processes if not the actual outcome). Tied in with this is the need to think innovatively, in order to continually gain and renew project funding. As Senge (1990) reminds us, out of constraint one possible response is creativity.

Rising to the challenge

In this way, the sector needs to take a lead in determining tools and approaches that will provide a level of creativity to rise to the challenge of the turbulent and fast-changing environment of the twenty-first century. Only by adopting a wider, more holistic and systemic perspective can effective development interventions be planned and implemented with maximum impact and benefit for both organisation and individual (Doyle, 2000, p. 580). Developing resourceful human beings in managing change creatively can help organisations focus and learn for current and future actions. They "need not be at the mercy of the environment ... [they] can take the initiative to accomplish the shared values and the purposes of the individuals involved" (Covey, 1994, p. 77). Yet, while attempting to do this, following the warning of Semler (1994, p. 278), to "by all means establish and promote goals but recognise ... divergence and let people determine their own ways of achieving." Yet, as Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 21) point out, very little is known "about the management of such organisations, how strategies are shaped and formulated and how the processes of organisation design, change and adaptation take place".

So how are voluntary organisations managing and learning in this climate of

change? As contracting takes on an importance in terms of ensuring funding streams, and relationships between purchasers and providers deepen, there is a tendency for some organisations to feel the need for a greater rapprochement in terms of systems and processes – particularly to facilitate both contracting and service provision. In this way, voluntary organisations may find that strategy, structures and processes become increasingly influenced by and indeed similar to that of their significant funders (see Appendix 1).

There is a discernable tension between whether to be similar or different to other sector organisations. There is a desire to be viewed as valuable and equal members of the organisational world and yet at the same time standing out and presenting a different role. This tension is apparent both inside and outside the non-profit sector. For example, when NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) promoted their very successful Full Stop campaign they were lauded for consciousness raising and gained widespread cross-community support. They also received much adverse comment when the cost of this campaign became public. NSPCC, in a response in the press, commented that they had spent no more than a private sector organisation of similar size on marketing (Hill, 2000) Yet, the comparison with other types of business sits uncomfortably for some organisational members, stakeholders and customers.

Hoberman (cited in Bruce and Leat, 1993, p. 17), former director of Age Concern observed:

The voluntary sector has been through a quiet revolution ... Charitable enterprise is no longer seen as a filler of gaps to catch the casualties who slip through the net of the welfare state or a contributor of peripheral aid in the developing world. It has become a primary provider of services and essential to the new contract culture.

Furthermore, as Salaman and Anheier comment, cited in Saxon-Harrold and Kendall (1995, p. 82):

... far from an alternative to the welfare state emphasised in mainstream economic theories, a view of non-profits is as a mechanism to facilitate the further expansion of welfare state services. The result is an elaborate network of partnerships arrangements between non-profits and the state.

An interview with a director of a local development agency, about the time of that report, echoed this position. He stated that intermediary organisations, such as local

development agencies (organisations supporting the development and inclusion of the voluntary sector), have become a "permanent feature in government life" and that this "semi-voluntary and semi-statutory" status gives these local development agencies a stronger role. For the voluntary organisation that might regard this as a "safe bet", such a strategy consistently focuses on external validation and therefore fails to give a holistic view of the organisation. As a UK chief executive explains:

... it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain a sense of the issues and needs the organisation wishes to address without them being shaped by the analysis provided by each tier of government: central government, regional development agencies, local authorities.

This scenario is more of a concern for a Russian-based development agency whose chief officer observes that while the government administration proclaims co-operation with the new independent voluntary sector, there is a tendency to usurp this independence by creating government umbrella organisations "in order to control this sector of the society". This echoes past experience of the independent sector in Russia as recounted by White (1993, p. 792). Here:

... the Fund for Youth Initiatives was set up in the mid-1980s under the aegis of the Komsomol to help young people to set up clubs and associations. The local Komsomol attempted to use the Fund as an agency of control, and the national Komsomol then borrowed the idea to set up a means of supervising non-official organisations.

Inhibitors for strategic thinking and development become more likely when organisations are too closely tied to funders' aims and objectives or, as in the case of the Russian example, where attempts are made to control new initiatives by subsuming their activities under a centralised and regulated umbrella. Where voluntary organisations value their independence, from the State and from each other, in providing a multitude of localised services, this can provide both an opportunity to involve communities in social action as well as prevent a strengthening collective identity for the sector as a whole. As Anheier (2000, p. 9) points out:

... non-profit organisations are subject to both centralising and decentralising tendencies ... organisations are often caught between the centralising tendencies of a national federation that emphasises the need to "speak with one voice" in policy debates and the decentralising efforts of local groups that focus on local needs and demands.

Each has demands on the type and complexity of managing. A question here, then, may be how far can traditional management training contribute to the capacity and effectiveness of voluntary sector organisations?

Building capacity

As Bubb (2000) suggests "probably the key role of a chief executive is leading change and developing the organisation and this applies whether it is a multi-million pound company or a small voluntary organisation". There has been a growing trend for senior managers in the sector to become more "professional" in their practice and carrying out their responsibilities for organisational image. Professionalism would also include building capacity (including surplus and reserves for the continued survival of the organisation), of promoting good practice and taking organisations forward, particularly in exploiting technology and recognizing their work in an international context. Statutory bodies often define "professionalisation" in terms of non-profits acting more like small businesses (Dowson *et al.*, 2000, p. 139).

In response to the question: "what do you think are the top three or four organisational skills/attributes for managing change?" A chief executive of a multi-million pound UK voluntary organisation replied: "Leadership skills, clarity of vision, tenacity – not giving in or watering it down, making it happen and stick ability". And in response to the question: "what are the top three or four skills you expect your senior management team to have?" The reply was: "having to deliver, taking a corporate/organisation wide view – long term; having a package of interpersonal skills that take people along the change – having ability to see strategic milestones not nitty gritty". These responses would probably be no different to those of a chief executive in a private or public sector organisation.

There might be no surprise then, that some of the language of private and public sector strategic tools is used across most small to medium voluntary sector organisations. There are certainly useful lessons to be learnt from business techniques and in many instances, the processes of management may be extended across sectors. It has been argued (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996) that a small to medium enterprise offering, for example, computer training and services to other small enterprises may have more in common with a similar-based voluntary

sector agency than with, say, IBM. Terms such as business and development planning, SMART objectives, PEST and SWOT analyses are common currency. Some of the larger organisations are developing quality standards and other benchmarking systems; some have in-house management development programmes. Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 93) comment on the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) who provide "a comprehensive training for junior and middle managers, which includes the option of taking a certificate of management studies".

One of the authors facilitated a development course for managers from RNIB and RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf people). The course took place over a period of eight months in modules of two days. The aim of the training was primarily to develop management skills and share experiences across the two well-established and large organisations. The focus was on operational management skills and development, for example interpersonal skills, time management and delegation. Participants from both organisations learnt not only new management skills and techniques but were able to compare and contrast styles, issues and a wide variety of challenges that each of their user groups encountered. As participants included some members with a visual impairment and some who were hearing impaired the opportunities for first hand understanding and learning were high.

In Russia, the Society of Blind People and the Society of Deaf People both have long established histories, having received official recognition in the 1920s. White (1993) believes that organisations such as this and the Red Cross and Red Crescent have survived up to the present day partly to there being similar organisations in other countries. Many have also developed some international links and follow a British or American model of working and managing, although it is only recently that money and other resources are becoming available for development and opportunities for networking with similar organisations being promoted and made available through NGO support units such as CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Russia.

Even with the setting up of a UK national training organisation for the sector and the developing infrastructure of independent consultants, umbrella organisations and some tertiary education programmes, the emphasis has been on operational issues, the nuts and bolts of everyday management and particularly geared towards the needs of volunteers and trustee boards. While the voluntary sector needs to "demonstrate good

practice across a range of operational issues" (Etherington, 2001), there is no consistent or sustained approach to management development and, as Batsleer (1995) suggests, one of the major stumbling blocks for the UK voluntary sector has been the significant lack of any dialogue around management issues for the sector, particularly within the realms of mainstream management thinking.

Valuing the context of the non-profit sector

Yet the use of business-enhancing tools, management development and learning need to be considered in the context relevant to the sector's interests and to the primary aims of the sector. As Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 2) also point out:

... whilst there are a number of similarities between the roles of chief executives in Shell or ICI and the directors of major charities such as Oxfam or the National Trust, the context in which they operate is, in many respects, dissimilar.

This may well account for seeming reluctance, on one hand, to routinise business management in the voluntary sector and, on the other, the often inappropriate and sometimes unsuccessful blanket application of in-fashion techniques. It also raises the concern that non-profit organisations often adopt management techniques long after experts in the for-profit sector have raised doubts as to their widespread use as good practice tools. As Tom Jennings (IBM course director for voluntary sector managers, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove 1996, p. 93) emphasises:

I think voluntary organisations are destined to repeat the mistakes that businesses have made in recent years ... At IBM, for example, a lot of effort went into performance appraisal. It seemed to work well and be motivating staff, but after a while it was clear that mistakes had been made.

Furthermore, these copycat tendencies may well stifle the innovation and creativity of the emerging values-led management and leadership culture of the sector. If this is so, then voluntary organisations need to rise to Leat *et al.*'s (1981) challenge of the need to pay equal attention to "thinking" as well as "doing".

In Russia, following the import of British, American and other foreign consultants for the sector, one of the main development agencies has set up a training institute for new voluntary sector managers and is working hard to promote corporate

philanthropy. As in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, the new Russian:

... non-profit organisations have been playing an increasingly strong and stable role in protecting the interests of children and of the disabled, retired, homeless and other needy people, and have been able to fill many of the gaps that have resulted from the lessening of government involvement (Legendre, 2001).

Commenting on the work of a Russian-based development agency, the chief officer states:

... our organisation is always proactive, it is impossible to be reactive in Russia. We deal with things which nobody before has ever discussed, so if we do not take an initiative, may be, nothing happens.

As with all non-government organisations, assessing impact and evaluation is complex, especially since the language of efficiency and effectiveness – having "traveled from the world of business via government agencies to the voluntary sector" (Rochester, 1999, p. 5) – reinforces the idea that good practice in non-profit management "frequently means *financial* management" (Anheier, 2000, p. 4, original italics). Where this might be the focus of training and development of managers in the sector, there is some indication that this has led also to the emphasis on recruitment into the sector rather than on continued professional development. The Russian-based development agency tries "to find creative people for positions in our development department" and many UK-based voluntary organisations have recruited for high-level posts from outside of the sector. Olga Johnson, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 87), director of UK-based Charity Recruitment is reported as saying:

Two or three years ago, of the applicants at the chief executive or executive level, half would be from people in the voluntary sector and half from people outside. Now it's more like 75 percent from outside.

This is further supported by Gormley (2000), who comments on the profile of chief executives of humanitarian aid agencies, stating, "an increasing number are likely to arrive from outside the humanitarian sector". While this may account for some of the perceived speed in the uptake and use of private sector tools and techniques and contribute to learning from the successes of the commercial sector, an unqualified importation of commercial sector professionalism "seems to bring about an almost inevitable clash ... [which] may result in a fundamental redefinition of the core values and ideology of the organisation" (Butler and Wilson, 1990, p. 172).

So, it is important to recognize that although the voluntary sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisation development from the private and public sectors, there are difficulties in importing ideas wholesale without interpreting the context and the culture of the sector and taking into account the internal relationships within individual organisations. Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 164) warn that:

... control and rationalisation effected for the management perspective run counter to the rather individualistic culture of these organisations [where] employees expect a great deal of personal space, autonomy and personal say in how the organisation is run and what should be its strategic goals. Currently this is at odds with many of the management styles prevalent in the voluntary organisations which are trying to develop and innovate their strategies.

This style, where "leaders emphasise hard and quantifiable results while neglecting the concerns of people" (Dalziel and Schooner, 1988, p. 249) leaves little room to engage "one of the most powerful resources around; namely a potentially highly-motivated workforce" (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996, p. 82) (see Appendices 1 and 2).

In the third sector setting, the personality, knowledge and skills of the organisation, i.e. the style, structure, culture, resources and systems, may all contribute to how an organisation experiences change. There needs to be an awareness of what Weick (1979) might refer to as a fragmentation or ambiguous approach which focuses attention on the complex array of relationships. This corresponds with Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 14) who advocate "shifting attention from structure and formal authority to relational processes and social influence". In some respects, this might also enable voluntary sector organisations to learn from their own beginnings and move away from adopting the structures and processes of, generally, bureaucratic public sector organisations, as they become larger institutions in their own right. This is shown graphically in Figure 1, where the effect on staff can be seen where espoused actions are in synergy with or in conflict with the actions and language observed in the organisation (Myers, 1996).

Here, we can see that it might be possible to affect a shift from grid 3 to grid 2 (reactive to proactive) by breaking down barriers to encourage cross-functional working, team working, developing managers and improving communication (as with BJS). It may be that a shift can be made from 1 (directive - a style which can exacerbate 3, reaction and defensiveness) to 2 (proactivity)

by looking at management/leadership styles[1] developing facilitative approaches to working and looking at long-term outcomes as well as short-term goals. Moving out of grid 4 (inactive/crisis) is much more difficult and, in the context of the voluntary sector, if an organisation has shifted so far from its roots, the question of its continued survival may be raised.

The recognition and development of some of the "unique" features of the voluntary sector and the mechanisms for sensemaking (Weick, 1995) for the organisation may lie therefore in what Herman and Renz (1998) term the "multiple constituency model", that is, recognizing the differing groups of stakeholders. In particular, this includes the participation of and commitment to/from employees. Similarly, Tony Lee, ex-operations director for NatWest bank and subsequently chief officer for the UK national charity Muscular Dystrophy Campaign claims the contrast between the sectors is that the commercial world is much simpler as there are far fewer stakeholders (Hill, 2000).

Learning and knowledge enhancement

As Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 256) explain: ... people who are enabled change the ways in which they think about themselves, their relationships and their ways of work. They develop new ideas of their potential to act inside or outside the group ... what is important is the dialogue which creates shared meanings.

This is an area of management where there could be reciprocal learning with other sectors. Tom Jennings, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 172), suggests:

I do think that the voluntary sector could learn from business in the area of strategic planning. But from my contact with the voluntary sector I've often thought that there is great scope for learning in both directions. A lot of companies, for example, have made the mistake of thinking they can introduce empowerment from the top down - but to work it has to be introduced from the bottom up ... Private sector managers are more likely to try to use their hierarchical power.

Otto, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, pp. 171-2) warns that charities often use inappropriate models of strategic planning where:

... many voluntary organisations are going over to hierarchies via adoption of strategic planning. We are seeing a swing back in the direction of the traditional power model ... which can wreck the values-driven element (see Appendix 3).

Figure 1
 The congruency grid effect

		Espoused values	
		High	
	3. REACTIVE	2. PROACTIVE/CREATIVE	
	<p>Irritation, sense of betrayal, disenchantment, disbelief, losing trust, entrenchment, defensive, disconnection, feelings of exploitation</p> <p><i>"Why should we?" "Yes, but?" "They don't"</i></p>	<p>Active participation, enthusiasm, commitment, collaborative, emphasis on sharing</p> <p><i>"We will", "We can", "We do" "Let's.."</i></p>	
Actions			High
Low	<p>Apathy, despondency, no enthusiasm, lack of cohesiveness</p> <p><i>"We can't", "Why bother", "There's no point"</i></p>	<p>Coercion, working under duress, compliance, loss of confidence in decision-making, lack of responsibility; open to sub-plots</p> <p><i>"You will" "Only if you do" "Can I...?" "Should we...?"</i></p>	
	4. INACTIVE/CRISIS	1. DIRECTIVE	
			Low

Source: Myers (1996)

Yet Otto also suggests that the "whole idea of the learning organisation – which is a fashionable concept now in the private sector – is very voluntary sector". Indeed the whole area of intellectual capital and knowledge management is placed central to private sector organisations' ability to cope and sustain themselves in a climate of increased competition, active consumers and new technological (Web-based and global) environments.

Johnson (1995) refers to "psychological ownership ... where everyone inside a business feels a sense of responsibility for what is being done and holds himself or herself duly accountable for delivering on an organisation's pledges". This, she says, is akin to "having your heart invested in the organisation", a key ingredient to empowerment and self-directed leadership and in keeping with the congruency effect described earlier.

If we think of learning as a spiral then the implication is that learning is a continuous process. We are able to spiral up and down as we respond to change and new circumstances. We can revisit established or habited behaviours or have our currently held beliefs and behaviours challenged. Occasionally, we may fall off the spiral, spiral backwards or hang in the balance for a while.

The spiral is a series of events over time, with each loop representing its own cycle of learning within which there are further spirals and loops. Within an organisation, the learning cycles of the individual can contribute to the learning spiral of the organisation. At BJS (Appendix 2), there was little observed use of generic strategy analysis models. However, the organisation was acutely aware of its performance in relation to others, had sound financial planning tied in to the needs and philosophy of the organisation, and a planning cycle which involved key stakeholders (pupils, staff and governors). Information was gathered and disseminated through a system of collaboration and coalitions, which existed with organisations seen to be relevant to BJS. There were also identified members of staff who acted as coordinators for particular areas of concern: marketing, community links, staff development, and special needs. Part of the communication process and "knowledge management" within the organisation is realising what is important to different groups, how it is relevant to them, making sure that they are able to input into processes and development in appropriate ways.

For LDA (Appendix 1) to change its relationship with its funding authority from

an inhibitive relationship to one that can enhance the interdependence of the two organisations, would be for LDA to take on board the strategy of the local authority in ways which keep it separate and which contribute to the survival of the organisation. If strategizing is about making meanings, a process of vision, then what we are attempting to do by our analysis (whether of internal relationships with the organisation or external threats and opportunities) is to construct a reality for ourselves. By doing this, we determine how we act, react to, develop or ignore other realities, which impinge on our organisational systems. We need to be able to cope with diversity, to manage ambiguities and to see correlation between significant factors, which help us to become proactive and creative as individuals and as individuals in groups (organisations).

Taking this kind of processual and developmental approach, which will include the relevance of historical and contextual factors, brings in to play the more emotional and "irrational" side of the business: the effect of developing resourceful humans who can positively enhance (rather than inhibit) the survival or development of the organisation. In this way it is important to see that although the voluntary sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisation development from the private and public sectors, there are difficulties in importing ideas wholesale without interpreting the context and culture of the sector and taking into account the internal relationships within individual organisations. Davenport *et al.* cited by Gourlay (2001, p. 28) suggest that:

studies of successful knowledge management projects show just how vital organisational culture and social relations are ... a discovery that has lent support to what can be called the "communities of practice" perspective of knowledge management, i.e. the informal social networks that pervade organisations and that knowledge is best managed within these groups and where consideration needs also to be given to how the networks themselves are managed.

Moreover, as Rochester (1999, pp. 3-4) comments on the "liability of smallness", an obvious restriction is the available expertise within small organisations. Yet, he warns us from the folly of viewing small voluntary organisations as "underdeveloped versions of their larger counterparts but important and distinctive organisations that require management approaches and methods that take account of the differences". Taylor (1996, p. 26) suggests a future where "smaller organisations, unwilling to surrender values of participation and face-to-face working, will develop alternative ways of growing through

franchises, consortia and other innovative organisational forms".

Harnessing the talents of the non-profit sector

If, as we have suggested, organisations need to be able to position themselves both in relation to their own and other voluntary sector organisations and to public and private sectors, to look at ways of optimizing choice and determination for the organisation, then, in Anheier's (2000, p. 12) words, "management becomes not the controlling but the creative, enabling arm of non-profit organizations". As one UK chief executive explains:

We try to be 12 months or so ahead of the game, if we can, in anticipating issues and developments but also in trying to be innovative in developing new approaches and initiatives.

As Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, pp. 82-3) state:

... voluntary organisations have a particular responsibility to ensure that the work their employees and volunteers are engaged in provides an effective outlet for their aspirations ... [and] that if it is harnessed effectively to serve a worthwhile purpose there is little these people cannot achieve.

At the time of writing, the World Economic Forum has just chosen its "global leader for tomorrow", Manny Amandi, currently chief executive of a small consultancy firm specializing in corporate social responsibility and formerly of the UK charitable foundation, The Prince's Trust. He tells us:

Businesses are looking to acquire the values of other sectors - service from the government sector and dedication from the voluntary sector (Hill, 2001).

Rather than reining in voluntary organisations and trying to make them like organisations from other sectors (Harris, 2000), perhaps now is the time to build reciprocity within and across sectors and harness the talents of non-profit organisations.

Note

- 1 Here leadership is seen as a process rather than something imbued upon one or more persons coupled with what Friedlander, cited in Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 258) calls "distributive influence".

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Appendix 1. Case A

LDA was founded in 1946 on the philanthropic traditions of post-war welfare movement. Gregory *et al.* (1994, p. 193) define such umbrella organisations as existing "to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged people by developing and supporting voluntary organisations". In existence for over 50 years, some of its staff and senior managers had been with the organisation over half its life. To some extent because the organisation had developed in line with the growth in the voluntary sector generally and according to the availability of different pockets of funding, LDA started life as a central core of services and developed project-based work as money became available to expand. LDA could be seen to fall within Mintzberg's typology, cited in Handy (1995, p. 201) of an "adhocracy": an "organic structure with a tendency to group the specialists in functional units for house-keeping purposes". A development report stated "this structure appears complex but in fact responds to the demands of the funders to see identifiable cost centres with a separate identity for each separate area of work". It goes on to say that "this fits the traditional sector ethos of creating small, responsive, simply-managed organisations able to concentrate on the needs of the moment".

The question raised here is whose needs are being responded to: "a danger is that the organisation becomes more concerned with resource efficiency than service effectiveness" (Johnson and Scholes, 1988, p. 18).

Compare this to an organisation of similar size, aims and functions taken from a report prepared by the organisation:

Although [VA] functions in a broadly similar way to many other councils for voluntary service up and down the country, it differs from most in one vitally important way: it receives virtually no core funding from the local authority. In theory this lack of financial entanglement enables [VA] to act entirely independently, setting its own agenda, free to tackle the council on any issues without fear of compromising its funding.

The perceived need to keep separate units for funding purposes became so embedded that the sum of the parts of LDA were, at one point, greater than the whole. Each had its own set of aims, objectives and work priorities, seemingly without reference or link to other parts. This separate identity for teams led to greater isolation of strategic thought and a lack of corporate ownership of vision and direction for the organisation as a whole and raises a fundamental issue about who "owns" the strategy and processes of the

organisation. Some within the organisation argued that there was no clear strategy and that new projects had been imposed on top of current workloads. While there was a concept of "voluntary overtime" accepted within the organisation, with commitment historically being shown in terms of providing free labour, what had started out as voluntary commitment had begun to feel like exploitation. This indication of "lost loyalty" is important in voluntary organisations. As Hudson (1995, p. 37) clarifies: "the point is not that organisations in other sectors do not have values, but they have to be treated with much greater sensitivity in the third sector". Many people join voluntary organisations to "do good", to "make a difference" and for value-driven political or ethical reasons. So, we can see that any "fundamental contradiction, repeatedly illuminated for them in the difference between what they know they are supposed to do and what they are told they are supposed to believe, is likely to drive them from scepticism to cynicism" (Anthony, 1995, p. 78).

Appendix 2. Case B: a public sector perspective

In the early 1990s, intake rates at BJS had fallen from the expected 60 to 30 and the school was in danger of being merged with another school. A new head teacher was appointed at this time and within six years there had been considerable upturns in pupil intake, with some year groups averaging 78 pupils. BJS's mission statement is a set of beliefs, essentially a "back-fit" in that it was an attempt to write a description of what the head perceived to be already happening or that they would be aiming to do. However, over time this has become a major driving force for the school and where "self-respect and self worth" are central to its core. The congruence between espoused actions (intent) and reality (observed behaviours) is documented in the external government department report: "Overall, the vision statement and aims provide a real sense of purpose and direction to the development of the school. Generally they have been achieved and resulted in high quality educational provision".

The head has a policy for multi-skilling. As such, one of the teachers who has a theology degree actually takes physical education and acts as a support and advisor to the religious education teacher (whose specialism is in something entirely different). In this instance, this has contributed to breaking down cultural barriers built up within "specialisms", contributed to individual and organisational learning and given high performance results.

Appendix 3. Case C

A leading figure in a large mental health association in Russia described key objectives for Russian NGOs in terms of their development and stability. He did this in a series of stages: survival, developing and stabilisation. Three pillars support these stages: legal (and independent) status, financial support and resources and the structure of the organisation.

If organisations were to remain unregistered, then they would only be accountable to the people in them, those who started them and to informal networks of

friends. With registration comes wider accountability (and with this a move from informal group to organisation). Stabilisation comes with funding, the use of paid workers as well as volunteers and run well, i.e. planning two to three years in advance. Measures include inputs (resources/issues), processes and structures (qualifications, raw materials, means of production) and outcomes.

The challenge here must be to sustain the creativity and initiative that brought the fusion of ideas to respond to a particular unmet need as the organisation becomes more formalised.

Appendix B

TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND TIGHTROPES: THE ART OF WALKING AND TALKING PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT IN NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS, IS IT JUST A QUESTION OF BALANCE?

JAN MYERS AND RUTH SACKS*

INTRODUCTION

To what extent is it appropriate to apply to voluntary agencies the managerial solutions and practices developed for other sectors? It is clear from this volume that this key question remains as it did when the Centre for Voluntary Organisations was established 15 years ago.

So conclude Margaret Harris and David Billis (1996, p. 239) when considering emerging challenges for research and practice for non-profit organisations. Yet, we see a growing emphasis on tools and techniques borrowed from the business sector, often filtered through the public sector, and applied in an ad hoc manner to situations in the voluntary sector. Such tools refer to the devices, the off-the-shelf products and templates that are available for managers. Their uses include definition of aims and objectives, analysis of productivity, outputs, managing performance, effectiveness and efficiency. Techniques, in this context, are the ways in which managers use such tools and the processes involved in carrying out their management roles and tasks.

As we know, the private sector is diverse, ranging from sole traders; family owned and run local business, to national and global organisations. The voluntary sector, too, is of similar dimensions and scale. Unregistered and unincorporated associations exist alongside small to medium voluntary sector enterprises. There are large-scale national and international service providers, many of them having trading arms set up as non-profit companies. Some of the larger organisations have developed quality standards while others have systems for benchmarking and financial forecasting. Some have their own in-house management development programmes. The language of strategic tools is used within most small to medium voluntary sector organisations. Terms such as business and development planning, SMART objectives, PEST and SWOT analyses are often common currency.

*The authors are both Senior Lecturers in the Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University.

Address for Correspondence: Jan Myers, Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School, The Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU, UK.
e-mail: Jan.Myers@ntu.ac.uk

Taking this into account, we can see why it might be argued that a small-medium enterprise offering computer training and services to other small enterprises has more in common with a similar based voluntary sector computer training agency than, for example, with IBM (Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996). Or indeed, that large, trans-national non-profits might find common ground with large multi-national companies and consortia. In this respect, the oft-vaunted differences between management in other sectors, particularly the commercial sector, are seen as less clear-cut on a day-to-day basis. The question arises whether it is sector or size that matters?

Nevertheless, while there may be seen to be growing similarities between sectors, there may also be inherent tensions in using tools within small-medium non-profit organisations, which were designed for and initially utilised in 'big business'. We need therefore to consider the appropriate links and opportunities for learning and cross-fertilisation of ideas to bridge this gap between the two sectors, our virtual tightrope.

In doing so, we might bear in mind comments from Giddens (1999, p. 75) on examining the relationship between the private sector and government sector. He points out, 'the appropriate response is not to introduce market mechanisms or quasi-markets' such as those seen in the UK National Health Service (for example, purchaser/provider splits and fund-holding) 'but it should also mean reasserting the effectiveness of government in the face of markets'. Similarly, it could be argued that the voluntary sector needs to be aware of its own context and environment and assert its own identity and successes in the face of adopting market-based tools and techniques. A question of balance?

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

This interest in the challenges of managing in third sector organisations has arisen from the authors' work with, in and alongside non-profit organisations for a considerable number of years. This is underpinned by a commitment to and enthusiasm for individual learning, managerial and organisational development.

This experiential knowledge is backed up with research at masters' level and preliminary doctoral research to provide insights into the challenge of leadership and how managers make sense (Weick, 1995) of their organisations, environments, decision-making processes and actions. Through our continuing qualitative research and practitioner experience, we are exploring the tools and techniques, which managers use to 'modify and develop their understanding and practices' (Watson and Harris, 1999, p. 17).

For the purposes of this article, our focus has concentrated on the experiences of small to medium organisations (less than 100 paid staff and volunteers). Some information is gathered from a small pilot of in-depth

interviews with 5 chief executives of non-profit organisations, along with 20 in-depth interviews with chief executives of local development agencies. These intermediary charitable bodies – such as councils for voluntary service – support the development and sustainability of other voluntary sector and volunteer-led organisations and act at the interface between the voluntary sector and public and private sectors. In addition, 15 key respondents – chief executives of local, national and international development agencies and social welfare service providing organisations with an interest in management development issues and experience of working at national policy level – were approached via e-mail. Seven e-mail questionnaires were returned. Topics covered included approaches to managing, setting directions, key issues for the sector, how decisions and priorities might be agreed and any tools and techniques used to help in these processes.

APPROACHES TO MANAGING

From our initial investigations, there appears to be gaps in information relating to how managers in the not-for-profit sector make sense of the organisations and environments in which they work. Concern with specific characteristics of the sector – size, definition, economic contribution and voluntarism – has dominated debate and, as Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 21) point out, very little is known ‘about the management of such organisations, how strategies are shaped and formulated and how the processes of organisation design, change and adaptation take place’. Osborne (1996) echoes this in his assessment that research and dialogue has concentrated on the ‘how to’ practicalities of operational management and Batsleer (1995, p. 229) states that ‘the thinnest literature is the systematic research literature’.

As Hosking and Morley (1991, p. 147) point out ‘actors differ in their relations with their contexts such that they differ in their understandings and commitments’. In this way, it is important to consider that although the voluntary sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisation development from the private and public sectors, there are difficulties in importing ideas wholesale without interpreting the context and the culture of the sector and taking into account the internal relationships within individual organisations. Organisations in similar fields of operation may have similar characteristics and may absorb similar environmental factors, which have an effect on their make-up. How they manifest these characteristics and interpret environmental factors is also influenced by other factors such as leadership style, staff development, competence and flexibility to managing change. So, context and interpretation become significant factors.

If managers construct their operating environment through defining its reality based on their own selection of significant features, then this ‘constructed reality’ becomes the basis for managerial decisions on amongst

other things both strategy and structure. These sets of decisions though are not separated and isolated from each other. Rather, they are interdependent since they are both informed by the same constructed reality and, organisationally, they are as Mintzberg (1988) terms them 'the left and right feet of the management processes' (Weick cited by Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996, p. 106). In this sense, the organisation is affected by changes relevant to its *modus operandi* and these factors become part of the organisational system. This may mean seeking active alliances with other organisations through strategic networking or it may be using and adapting private and public sector language, tools and techniques and adopting different approaches to managing.

Batsleer (1995, pp. 226–27) points to three approaches that may affect the way in which voluntary organisations engage with management tools and techniques: a social policy and administration approach; via organisational management and theory; and the community development or 'alternative organisations' perspective. The organisation and management theory approach advocates that there are fewer differences between voluntary and private sector organisations that we might imagine. As such, the appropriation of management tools, deemed successful for the private sector, is viewed as acceptable for use in the voluntary sector. This is echoed by a non-profit chief executive who explained:

The voluntary sector needs to be efficient and effective and I think it needs to use whatever methods it needs to from wherever to achieve that. I have no problem with that at all. If mechanisms that are being developed in local authority or private sector will help us to that, then great let's do that.

The social policy approach, however, 'has sought to steer voluntary organisations along their own unique road, keeping clear of dangerous highways of state bureaucracy or market opportunism' (Batsleer, 1995, p. 226). Here strategic approaches to management are centred on effectiveness in making a difference to service provision and responding to unmet needs. A key priority is to maintain 'the independence and integrity and plurality of values of an essentially welfare-oriented voluntary sector' (ibid, p. 226). While this 'involves the elaboration of distinctive organisational cultures and processes' (ibid, p. 226), it might also mean that some of the management tools adapted and made to reflect the context of the voluntary/statutory interface can be useful in establishing a commonality between sectors while also helping to bolster its unique contribution through more sophisticated methods of evaluation and promotion. A non-profit manager commenting on the need for some reciprocity in relationships between sectors suggests that:

Maybe there does need to be more use of joint training facilities between sectors to actually make best use of whatever's going on – methods, mechanisms, systems that are in place.

This may point a way for more meaningful implementation of tools and techniques borrowed from other sectors and transfer of learning between sectors, moving away from the traditions of 'one-best-way'. This cross-fertilisation may bring other benefits, as one non-profit manager outlines:

I think what it would do, it would get us all a new set of tools. Sitting down trying to plan a strategy or a piece of work, we've got new tools that we can use to actually move that forward. We're beginning to talk in language that we each of us understand, we each have a better understanding of what the priorities are in industry, in local authorities...we could give them a better understanding of where we're coming from, how we tick. So I think we could all gain.

As Tom Jennings, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 172), suggests, 'I do think that the voluntary sector could learn from business in the area of strategic planning. But from my contact with the voluntary sector I've often thought that there is a great scope for learning in both directions.' An example offered by Jennings is in the area of empowerment and use of managerial status and power.

When considering the tools, techniques and management approaches that might be common across the sectors, Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, pp. 224–25) further suggest:

there has been a pervasive worry that management would be a Trojan horse, infiltrating alien systems and practices, undermining the perceived autonomy, cherished values, core identities and distinctive working methods of individual organisations and the sector as a whole... Moreover, suspicions of management have been compounded by a fear that devoting more energy to organisational processes would be a distraction from the 'real' business of working with clients and communities.

While 'business-speak' is common – our respondents spoke about strategic planning cycles, business plans, performance indicators, targets, soft data, benchmarking and corporate management teams as ways of identifying issues and priorities and reviewing outcomes – there were some concerns about distraction and approaches. Such downsides were seen to be as limiting creativity, diverting energy, expertise and time.

Perhaps this helps to put into context the community development and alternative organisations approach. The collective organising and alternative modes of leadership referred to by Batsleer (1995) are not overwhelmingly common features within the non-profit sector in the UK. The number of co-operative enterprises has declined considerably over the last 20 years and such organisations, sometimes by dint of their codification in law, tend over time to adopt a traditional hierarchical approach to management. However, with growing emphasis on community enterprise, civil society and social and economic regeneration this approach may well become more significant.

Yet, within these typologies there is a blurring of boundaries through promotion of partnerships across sectors as the 'new' way, 'the way forward', the 'third way' (Giddens, 1999). The pull towards collaborative working may seem an uphill struggle. For some managers, this means reactive planning, absorption of central and local government agenda and becoming the 'third arm of the State'. For others, in the view of a development agency chief executive it's an opportunity to 'be proactive partly in anticipating issues and developments but also in trying to be innovative in developing new approaches and initiatives'.

Grayson (2000, p. 6) sees this as an opportunity to borrow and contextualise tools from the business sector. The need to manage the pressures for alliances can be explored as opportunities to promote the work of the sector and forge new relationships especially in the joint ventures of regeneration of communities and citizenship. Grayson uses the example of adopting the business model of franchising; turning it into what he refers to as the 'social franchise model'. He refers to this as the *cafetière* (top down) and *percolator* (bottom up) approach to rebuilding communities. He states that:

just as franchising has proved a safe, half-way house for many people wanting to run their own businesses, but with the security of following a proven model, so now there are successful models for improving social cohesions which could be 'franchised'.

Certainly there is scope to consider this technique in relation to economic development – community enterprise and social entrepreneurs – yet social regeneration i.e., the role and involvement of communities is less defined. Even where local development agencies are key 'deliverers' of community participation in terms of voluntary sector inclusion and consultation, there are difficulties in setting organisational strategy. As one chief executive explained:

[there is fear of] being marginalized out of the sphere of influence by both the cult of the 'individual' and the cult of the 'community' – though what is [meant] by community is never defined

and another chief officer states:

the government wants community involvement, what [does] it mean by community involvement? But that's what it says it wants and the role of the infrastructure [organisations] in supporting community involvement is absolutely key.

This is an area where there is current debate among practitioners as to the best ways – tools and techniques – to participate, measure and account for these activities and respond to different organisational interpretations of the community involvement and sector partnership agenda.

The tensions in the tightrope here are concerns with the push for short-term gains ('quick wins'), particularly from funders of such activities, and the longer-term outcomes of community development approaches. Balancing

between the two may be about contextualising the tools for performance measurement outlined by government and statutory organisations or, through dialogue, creating new tools. As one practitioner explains:

It's hard to measure because the impact is not always visible. [In this way] it's not necessarily what gets incorporated into planning documents that matters. It could be a change in the way of thinking amongst movers and shakers which could have an impact.

THE NEED FOR CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINED APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT

The 'perceived social and economic marginality of the voluntary sector' (Batsleer, 1995, p. 225) has also led in some respects to the concentration of writing and research on the size, definition, identity and economic contribution of the sector as a whole. Yet, as Etherington (2001) points out, in a speech given at the Kingston Smith annual charity lecture, the voluntary sector needs to 'demonstrate good practice across a range of operational issues'. While Batsleer (1995) suggests, the significant lack of any dialogue around management issues has become one of the major stumbling blocks for the UK voluntary sector, particularly within the realms of mainstream management thinking.

At the same time, there is growing pressure on non-profit organisations to become more business-like and professional in their approach to management, a view that 'appears to accept uncritically the notion that non-profit organisations are fundamentally flawed institutions, inferior in most important respects to market-driven, for-profit firms' (Smith, 2000, p. 183). Butler and Wilson (1995) identify three key aspects, which they say are the overriding issues for all charities: managing organisational image, managing the change process and managing organisational structure and culture.

We see the need for careful handling of image quite clearly in relation to the growing concern about trust and accountability of the sector. While this is not only specific to the non-profit sector (witness consumer pressure in relation to SHELL Oil and supermarket responses to the growing concern around genetically modified foods), it is particularly relevant to the gift relationship between the general public and charitable organisations. In the UK, this is perhaps best shown in terms of attitudes to large charity fundraising and spending, but it is something to which smaller voluntary sector organisations are not immune.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) received considerable media attention concerning the sums of money spent on an advertising campaign launched in March 1999 to raise awareness of child abuse. When the NSPCC was criticised (*Guardian Leader*, December 9, 2000) for spending large sums of money on the Full Stop campaign, the

response from the charity was to point out that the campaign had advertising costs of £18 million and had raised £80 million with further pledges of £100 million, a return on investment of almost four to one. The expenditure was also put into context in terms of the charity's overall income and expenditure with annual fundraising providing 85% of the charity's income.

In the commercial environment, this 'return' might be lauded by shareholders, but for the NSPCC and similar organisations there is accountability to a public that holds very different beliefs about the purpose of a charity. This example clearly shows how walking and talking private sector management techniques can push the organisation towards greater scrutiny, in the public arena, particularly in relation to change of culture and image strategies in order to juggle and balance the complicated and divergent needs of income generation and marketing with opinions and expectations of stakeholders (Hill, 2000).

A further aspect to be considered is the increase in the perceived speed in the uptake and use of private sector management tools and techniques, which may well be an outcome of a shift in recruitment patterns. Many voluntary organisations have recruited for high-level posts from outside the sector in order to facilitate their learning from the successes of the commercial sector. Olga Johnson, cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996, p. 87), director of Charity Recruitment is reported, in *Third Sector* magazine, as saying:

Two or three years ago, of the applicants at the chief executive or executive level half would be from people in the voluntary sector and half from people outside. Now it's more like 75% from outside.

This is further supported by Gormley (2000), who comments on the profile of chief executives of humanitarian aid agencies, stating, 'an increasing number are likely to arrive from outside the humanitarian sector'. However, Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 172) warn that this unqualified importation of commercial sector professionalism 'seems to bring about an almost inevitable clash... [which] may result in a fundamental redefinition of the core values and ideology of the organisation'.

To date, our research participants are broadly speaking 'grown' in the voluntary sector. Some may have initially landed in the sector 'by accident' having chosen a different professional route (e.g. social work/social administration) but have many years experience in the sector. Others have considerable experience having moved from public sector (local authority) with a minority with private sector (industry, self-employment) experience. Perceptions of movement into and professionalisation of the sector seem cautiously optimistic:

I think it's bringing in different people, people with different skills. Perhaps more management skills – local authority experience.

Voluntary organisations want to be seen as very professional, very respectable outfits. Whereas, in the past, somehow there were a lot of rebels out there. And it wasn't always very helpful and things sometimes didn't always get done, but

it's like we've swung from one extreme to another. So I think it's that kind of... moving almost away from the voluntary sector much more towards statutory provision almost private style of delivery.

And again:

... [I]n the voluntary sector – not the voluntary sector that I joined twenty odd years ago you know, what you've got is smartly dressed, suited individuals with brief cases and mobile phones and the sorts of discussions are quite different... it feels much more like the third sector.

SECTOR-FRIENDLY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The relevance of context to business-enhancing tools might need stronger emphasis so that there is a clear relationship specific to the sector's interests and to its primary aims. A lack of understanding of the context may well account for the often inappropriate and sometimes unsuccessful blanket application of in-fashion tools. Neither should one ignore the seeming reluctance to routinise business management techniques in the voluntary sector.

An additional concern is that non-profit organisations often adopt management techniques long after experts in the for-profit sector have raised doubts as to their widespread use as good practice tools. This may well stifle the innovation and creativity of the emerging values-led management and leadership culture within the sector. Tom Jennings (IBM course director for voluntary sector managers and cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996, p. 93) again puts this more firmly:

I think voluntary organisations are destined to repeat the mistakes that businesses have made in recent years... At IBM, for example, a lot of effort went into performance appraisal. It seemed to work well and to be motivating staff, but after a while, it was clear that mistakes had been made. I think some voluntary organisations are in danger of repeating those mistakes.

This can perhaps be seen in one non-profit organisation's use of external consultants (five in a 12-month period). Here, although skilled in their own practice, the consultants left the organisation reeling in the wake of development recipes and solutions leaving people feeling 'done to' with no clear direction on successfully implementing recommendations, which were seen to be vital to the continued health of the organisation. The challenge for the voluntary sector, therefore, must be to resist short-term gain from blanket and often, inappropriate use of tools and techniques to a more contextual, sector-friendly and environmentally aware approach.

TENSION BETWEEN SHORT-TERM NEEDS AND LONGER-TERM GOALS

A global trend highlighted by Hodgkinson (1999) is the decentralisation of government and welfare provision together with the privatisation of social

services. In the UK, this is linked with contracting in order to get 'best value' and 'additionality' (added value) for the resources invested. Hodgkinson (1999, p. 210) states that:

in many countries, non-profit leaders are faced with similar challenges to plan, change, build capacity in their organisations and seek additional resources as government funding declines and the role of government in the provision of welfare moves from a more national to a more local responsibility.

As stated earlier, the dilemma of balancing different stakeholder needs is a consistent undercurrent in many organisations. The desire to be able to fund projects that the organisation was created for and the necessity to find a regular income stream by responding to changes in other sectors may result in internal conflicts or compromise. The concern for consistent and core funding to achieve a long term perspective for the organisation is often curtailed by the need to continuously raise funds for survival.

One of the challenges this raises is that it changes the nature of work. As one voluntary sector chief executive explained:

funding core activities, services and management capacity is, and will continue to be, a constant problem for the sector . . . diverting energy, expertise and time away from the more productive activities related to the work of the organisation [resulting in] continual loss of expertise and knowledge out of the organisation as short term funding and employment contracts come to an end.

It is easy to see then how the 'suspicions' regarding management mentioned earlier can take a strong foothold.

This tension between the short term expediency of, for example, gaining contracts and of raising funds to ensure the continuation of services may have the result of increasing the distance between the values and beliefs which led to the organisation's establishment in the first place and the ways it finds to ensure its existence. There is often a recognition of a need for more analysis and a strategy for coping with short-term funding and contracting. The vicious circle is that without project development and contracts there is no funding – without the funding there are no services and without being able to offer services, the organisation can no longer exist. In citing Locke, Osborne (1996, p. 202) acknowledges the dilemma facing voluntary organisations in a fast developing contractual world of service delivery. He states:

the problem is that whilst there is no lack of vision or commitment in most voluntary organisations, the ability to express this in terms of a contractual negotiation requires a high level of analytical skill . . . This contractual environment poses major challenges for the managerial skills of voluntary sector managers.

So how are voluntary organisations managing and learning in this climate of change? As contracting takes on an importance in terms of ensuring funding streams, and relationships between purchasers and providers

deepen, there is a tendency for some organisations to feel the need for a greater rapprochement in terms of systems and processes – particularly to facilitate both contracting and service provision processes. In this way, voluntary organisations may find that strategy, structures and processes become increasingly influenced by and indeed similar to that of their significant funders. Sometimes this can even be compulsory and subject to the contract being agreed.

Similarly, knowing that management tools and techniques have a perceived value in demonstrating the professionalism and the effectiveness of the organisation can give rise to a sagacious conformity and may be what encourages their use. Access to the availability of such tools is easy and can be obtained from any number of management texts, courses or consultants for the appropriate fee.

Greater public awareness of voluntary sector activities and the changing needs of its customers may be a further impetus to use techniques that have been tried and tested in commercial environments. Where voluntary organisations provide consultancy services – for example working with private sector companies to be more customer friendly or with public sector organisations on user involvement, then using such tools and techniques may even facilitate the relationship and ease of communication across sectors. These tools may promote the business-like cultures that the voluntary sector is encouraged to develop.

ORGANISATIONAL STANCES TO MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

In reviewing the literature and from initial research with practitioners, we can begin to describe some key approaches to the take up and use of management tools and techniques within the third sector. We suggest that voluntary sector organisations are likely to adopt one of the four stances as outlined in Figure 1.

Each stance identifies not just an attitude or approach to the use of management tools and techniques, but also presents an expression of organisational history, culture, values and image. Like any typology, there may be ‘pure’ types although there will be blurring between the types by dint of individual and organisational complexity.

‘Should the salt of the earth be managed?’ was a question posed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisation’s Management Development Bulletin in 1983 (cited in Batsleer, 1995, p. 224) and provides a stance adopted by those organisations where management tools and techniques appear, in the main, to have little or no place. This, coupled with the justification that charitable work is by definition good and therefore should not be held up to account, can perhaps develop into an anachronistic and paternalistic approach to service provision. It has also been, in the past, a trap for public sector

Figure 1

Organisational Stances to Management Tools and Techniques

<p>No Tools/Techniques</p> <p>'Salt of the earth' Status quo concealed</p>	<p>Copycat Tools/Techniques</p> <p>Fit for purpose Off the shelf Blanket approach Meets needs quickly Funder demand/ externally-driven Defensive Easy access/in-fashion Ad hoc</p>
<p>Contextual Tools/Techniques</p> <p>Maintaining values & vision Clarity of purpose Reactive/proactive as required Internally driven Adapted</p>	<p>New Tools/Techniques</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Knowledge building & sharing Experiential Lateral/creative thinking Innovative Proactive Strategic Fit for future Sense-making</p>

funding providers who often fund groups on an historical 'we've always done it' basis rather than on any output/outcome basis.

Earlier we posed the question that perhaps size matters. Here, as Rochester (1999, p. 2) points out size is 'appropriate to the nature and scale of... activities'. Moreover to the extent and form that activity takes – in this instance the lack of take up and use of normative management tools and techniques. Such organisations may be the alternative, user-led, collective forms of organisation e.g., small, informal self help groups, which exist for the benefit of members and operate on the basis of trust, mutual respect and collective support. Or, what Rochester (*ibid*, p. 6) terms 'hybrid' organisations – small organisations (less than the equivalent of four full-time workers) where operational management and governance of the organisation blur, with members of the governing body working alongside paid staff members. Here, 'staff are not usually expected to produce detailed work plans or have their activities monitored or their performance appraised' (*ibid*, p. 24). When and if the organisation grows, there may be

a need to rethink structures, work design and processes as managing becomes more complex and more 'formalised'.

Often resistance to or slow take up of new tools and techniques can be associated with inexperience and unfamiliarity. However, there is growth of 'good practice' development and approaches, which attempt to bring a formality and systematic processes to such groups. Basic systems and routines have been developed specifically for small voluntary and volunteer-led organisations around management and governance (health checks) and quality assurance (such as PQASSO – a Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations developed by the Charities Evaluation Service).

ARE NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS SUFFICIENTLY DISTINCT TO REQUIRE SEPARATE MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES?

Anheier (2000, p. 1) presents us with the assumption that 'current management and organisational theories have not fully come to terms with [this] simple question' and related questions around non-profits closeness to public management or as a variation of business management. Furthermore, Schofield (2000, p. 1) examines 'new public sector management' with its 'fad for managerial and entrepreneurial behaviour' and finds that 'there is some resonance with the experience of some non-profit organisations'. She comments, 'as a consequence of policy initiatives, management of health care institutions have had to learn to become 'business' managers'.

Working in a world of increasing uncertainty may mean individuals in public sector and non-profit organisations are looking outside of their sectors for new ideas and models. As one chief executive explains:

I'd looked around the voluntary sector... and I couldn't see any.

As Anheier (2000:4) suggests to 'look for outside models they perceive as successful and promising... is a copycat behaviour quite common in the business world and in government'.

Copycat Tools and Techniques

Initially if we look at Copycat Tools and Techniques we can see that voluntary organisations recognise they need models and ways of understanding their environment both internally and externally. As Johnson and Scholes (1988, p. 18) observe:

the influence of the funding bodies is likely to be high; indeed the organisation may well develop strategies as much to do with and influenced by its funding bodies as by clients. Moreover, since they are heavily dependent on funds which emanate not from clients but from sponsors, a danger is that the organisation becomes more concerned with resource efficiency than service effectiveness.

Furthermore, as Salaman and Anheier comment, cited in Saxon-Harrold (1995, p. 82):

far from an alternative to the welfare state emphasised in mainstream economic theories, a view of non-profits is as a mechanism to facilitate the further expansion of welfare state services. The result is an elaborate network of partnership arrangements between non-profits and the state.

An interview with a director of a local development agency about the time of that report echoed this position. He stated that intermediary organisations, such as local development agencies (organisations supporting the development and inclusion of the voluntary sector), have become a 'permanent feature in government life' and that this 'semi-voluntary and semi-statutory' status gives these local development agencies a stronger role.

Here then, we might see the emergence of a pattern of strategic development to promote partnership arrangements. Drivers may include more alignment and identification with statutory partners, becoming an integral and, presumably indispensable part of central and local government life, enhancing survival, continuing to develop new roles. This brings into question how 'new roles' are decided upon. It could also be seen to make strategic sense to pursue closer integration if the organisation is indeed 'semi-statutory'. Yet, what can happen is that this strategy is viewed more as a one-sided, haphazard alignment not wholeheartedly embraced by the local authority. For the voluntary organisation that might regard this as a 'safe bet', such a strategy consistently focuses on external validation and therefore fails to give a holistic view of the organisation.

For this organisation, a different perception of the strategic position and direction would be that there is an increasing dependency on the favourable wind of an external organisation which keeps it on course without taking a risk assessment should the direction of the wind change and leave the organisation adrift. A tension that many non-profit managers have to navigate. As a chief executive explains:

it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain a sense of the issues and needs the organisation wishes to address without them being shaped by the analysis provided by each tier of government: central government, regional development agencies, local authorities.

Here the tension around strategy and tools is between the voluntary and public sector relationship. Yet, with increasing privatisation of public sector services and the pressure to modernise, we also find the interpretation of business enhancing tools for use in public sector organisations being passed on to voluntary sector organisations. As the number of funding and sponsor relationships increase, so too does the variety and number of tools and techniques, which fit the funders' needs for accountability rather than the

voluntary organisations' needs. It presents us with a tension between copycat tools and techniques borrowed or absorbed wholesale from outside the sector and the assimilation or contextualisation of such resources.

The copycat approach may give the impression, as Otto (1996, p. 171) outlines of 'blundering into formulaic approaches to strategic planning' without taking into account the role, purpose and value of the sector. Furthermore, while we may concur that voluntary organisations are not necessarily unique and that processes of management may be similar across enterprises from different sectors, it may not always be in the organisation's interest to exploit them in exactly the same ways (Newham and Wallender, 1978; and Gerrard, 1983). Here (see Figure 2), the tightrope embodies the tension and the skills involved in balancing between the two points. The question for the voluntary organisation is how it balances along the tightrope of using the same tools as its funder, or acknowledges the differences, which reflect the organisation's vision and purpose and perhaps in some instances means making a successful journey from Copy Cat to Contextual, if indeed that is appropriate.

Figure 2

A Question of Balance?



WALKING THE TIGHTROPE: FROM COPYCAT TO CONTEXTUAL – DEVELOPING NEW TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Borrowing tools, techniques, and the modelling of management styles copied from the private sector has a perceived value in that such tools come 'tested', off the shelf with back up and sources of reference which may provide a comfort factor at a time when the voluntary organisation is undergoing change. Moulding tools and techniques into a voluntary sector context may engender a tension.

Some organisations may use a combination of copycat tools and context related tools. Other organisations are developing tools that enable them to have an awareness of the specific environment in which they are working. The strategy is to become more proactive about understanding and working

with the environment in ways that reflect their aims, values and goals. Yet, as Hudson (1995, p. 95) states:

Given that it took from 5 to 10 years for similarly complex business to give their managers sufficient skills and experience to manage strategically, it is hardly surprising that the third sector is finding this a challenge.

The process of developing and adapting tools and techniques from other sectors may well develop new approaches. This is not to produce another set of recipes for action, but to pay greater attention to the 'social and organisational reality' (Schofield, 2000, p. 9) of managing in the third sector.

New Tools and Techniques

New tools and techniques may involve entrepreneurial partnerships and coalitions, even mergers, and be developed through collaboration, active alliances, networking, sharing and creating knowledge. Some useful mechanisms for sense-making (Weick 1995, pp. 1–16) for non-profit organisations may lie in what Herman and Renz (1998, pp. 23–38) term 'multiple constituency model' – the differing groups of stakeholders. In particular, this includes the participation of and commitment to/from employees. While recognising that 'employees expect a great deal of personal space, autonomy and personal say in how the organisation is run and over what should be its strategic goals', Butler and Wilson (1990, p. 164) note that 'currently this is at odds with many of the management styles prevalent in the voluntary organisations which are trying to develop and innovate their strategies'.

New Tools and techniques may be a reflection of, or make explicit in the case of hidden tools, the creative ways in which non-profit organisations have coped with diversity, financial constraints, and evolving and promoting enabling frameworks. This would, in turn, give some recognition of and legitimacy to development of some of the 'unique' features of the voluntary sector. Some of these qualitative ways of working could be lost in the more instrumental and normative approach incorporated in many models for measuring, assessing and evaluating effectiveness and efficiency.

A TENTATIVE CONCLUSION

*Voluntary organisations are constantly being pressed to be like other kinds of organisations. 'Why can't you be more business-like?' ask their corporate funders. 'Why don't you conform with our public accountability procedures?' ask the local authority service purchasers. 'Why can't you get together and come up with a single coherent viewpoint on public policy issues?' ask the politicians (Harris, *The Guardian*, January 2001).*

Often voluntary organisations negate the value of 'home-grown' resources in favour of looking outside the organisation, setting up externalised examples of good practice while failing to acknowledge accomplishments in the

workplace. The environment in which voluntary sector organisations work may, in part, determine this reaction. Short-term funded projects seem to encourage columns or silos within organisations especially if these projects are managed and implemented by part-time, fixed term contracted staff. Even though the projects may tackle long-term issues these are chipped away at rather than consistently strategically addressed. Often this creates a culture of fire fighting and reactive processes where managers lack the experience of strategic practice and critical management to 'look beyond their own functional chimneys and acknowledge interdependence with one another and within the characteristics of the system as a whole' (Franklin, 1995, p. 6).

This can be further complicated as Etherington in an interview with Harris (2000, p. 321) points out because 'we still have not developed management technologies in the voluntary sector at the senior level – outcome measures specifically for the sector.' The new 'business environment' has increased 'demands for 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness', the search for a 'market niche', performance indicators and the need for 'strategic planning' (Billis and Harris, 1996, p. 5). In an effort not to reinvent the wheel, many voluntary sector managers may see the next best thing as adoption and adaptation of management tools and techniques.

Given the nature of work within voluntary sector organisations includes lack of security, short-term contracts, shifting work patterns – 'there is a tolerance for ambiguity and disagreement that is very foreign to most businesses' (Austin, 1998, p. 50) and, because of this, voluntary sector managers need to make difficult decisions with regard to people management, resource management and priorities because of the very scarcity of resources to hand. As Drucker (1994, p. 39) explains:

as a rule, nonprofits are more money-conscious than business enterprises are. They talk and worry about money much of the time because it is so hard to raise and because they have so much less of it than they need. But nonprofits do not base their strategy on money, nor do they make it the center of their plans, like so many corporate executives do.

This emphasises the need to contextualise business tools to help record and assess the effectiveness and sustainability of a voluntary sector organisation. In this way, 'starting with the mission and its requirements... focuses the organisation on action... defines the specific strategies to attain the crucial goals. It creates a disciplined organisation' (ibid, p. 39). Where this has worked, it may well be the result of a 'conscientious attempt to create flexible, responsive and entrepreneurial patterns of work in circumstances, which have often borne the hallmarks of casual labour than a classic professionalism' (Batsleer, 1995, p. 235).

Earlier we commented on the concern for professional identity, image and reputation that requires an acknowledgement of the sector values in order not to tip the balance in favour of public criticism of the organisation. As

Etherington (2001) extols, in order to survive and to secure 'the best possible services for beneficiaries' voluntary sector organisations need to be 'both professional and entrepreneurial'.

Furthermore, Manny Amandi, chief executive of Cause & Effect Marketing (a small consultancy firm specialising in corporate social responsibility and formerly of the Prince's Trust) and who in 2001 was chosen as 'global leader for tomorrow' by the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, tells us that 'Businesses are looking to acquire the values of other sectors – service from the government sector and dedication from the voluntary sector' (Hill, 2001). Consideration is being given by the Forum to relationships with non-government organisations – 50 representatives of civil society including 36 people from NGOs and 11 from philanthropic foundations joined with 1000 top businessmen and 250 politicians from around the world. The aim of the session? To move from diatribe to dialogue between the two sectors.

If successful repackaging of management tools and techniques can make a difference then it may be possible not only for the voluntary sector to learn from this development, but to increase dialogue within and across sectors and through this consider and promote different ways of working – tools and techniques relevant to the context and needs of the sector. Similarly if the sector has the confidence in itself to develop its own tools and techniques this might also provide the space for new types of partnerships and new self-determinism.

As pointed out by Zemnick:

The relations between private, governmental and voluntary sectors should be reciprocal, with each emulating the best practices of the others. In recent years it would appear that the voluntary sector has received more than it has given and its unique features have not been sufficiently valued by other sectors. Now however, the time is ripe for change (1997, p. 15).

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Appendix C



Developing managers: a view from the non-profit sector

Developing managers

Jan Myers

Department of HRM, Nottingham Business School,
The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

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Keywords Non-profit organizations, Management development, Leadership, Voluntary welfare organizations

Abstract This paper is rooted in practitioner experience of working within the non-profit sector. It is both underpinned by Master's level research and built on as part of an on-going sense-making process for the author in terms of her doctoral research. Focusing on a specific part of the sector – local development agencies, explores how personal theories emerge and the rules of thumb chief executives of such agencies use to develop their practice. This paper draws on fieldwork involving interviews with 20 chief executives and considers the roles of chief executives in relation to learning and development needs. As such, this is not a search for “truth” or for blueprints for managers, but represents a concern for and interest in how people – “puzzled” individuals who have to deal with ambiguous situations day-by-day – juggle multiple realities, and what informs their (thinking and) actions.

Introduction

In an article that appeared in an earlier volume of this journal, I was writing with a colleague (Myers and Sacks, 2001) about our concern to harness the talents of a “loose and baggy monster” (Kendall and Knapp, 1995). The “monster” in question was the amorphous mass of micro, small, medium, large and extra-large organisations that might be included as belonging to the UK voluntary and community sector; the “third sector”. One of the challenges identified for the sector in that paper was in the level and range of effective development interventions to maximise impact for both the individuals and the organisation with a view to “developing resourceful human beings in managing change creatively [to] help organisations focus and learn for current and future actions” (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p. 455). The concern was the need to interpret and contextualise the systems and lessons that could be learned for improved organisational development and leadership from the public- and private-sectors and for some means of reciprocal learning opportunities across sectors.

Since this time there has been increased discussion for the UK non-profit sector in terms of skills development and leadership for the future. These discussions have been given increased weight and centrality through a government cross-cutting review, which we can also link with a perceived key role for the sector in addressing governmental domestic agenda of social and economic regeneration, modernising public services and of a general push to increase education and training levels and attainment. Recent world events also bear witness to the relevance and contribution of third sector non-governmental agencies – international aid, medical and environmental agencies – and their global roles and networks.

In some senses, then, some charities may be “big business” and are increasingly being seen as a legitimate arena for employment and even, to a certain extent, careers, yet where there is also a perceived lack of value for “home grown” managers and leaders with some organisations preferring to “to recruit senior staff from other sectors, because they place



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more emphasis on the 'hard' skills needed to run organisations, and believe that 'imports' are more likely to have them" (Bolton and Abdy, 2003, p. 5). However, findings from a recent report from the Association for Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations – two major third-sector national organisations – suggest that many voluntary sector leaders possess some of the "softer" skills – communication, emotional attachment, integrity, influencing and networking skills – that are "increasingly prized by both the corporate and public sectors" (Bolton and Abdy, 2003, p. 5).

While this distinction between "hard" (private sector) and "soft" (third sector) may be both limited and limiting, it still begs the question of what does management and leadership development look like in the non-profit sector? What we see is that while there is a growing pressure on the sector to "demonstrate good practice across a range of operational issues" (Etherington, 2001), there is no consistent or sustained approach to management development in the sector. Indeed, "[c]harities are, for the large part, absent from the analytical vocabulary of both organisation theory and strategic management" (Butler and Wilson, 1990, p. 21). Furthermore, if it is difficult to define what managers do and even "to make any coherent sense of management" (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996, p. 9) then to consider how to develop "management" seems equally difficult. Where traditional management education has been driven by the priorities of large for-profit businesses and in this sense privileged "the claims of technical, instrumental reasons [then] alternative . . . values and practices are frequently marginalised and devalued" (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996, p. 11, 13). In order, therefore, to be more inclusive of the needs, values and expertise of voluntary sector managers and to provide insights in to how "they modify or develop their understandings and practices", (Watson and Harris, 1999, p. 17), it may therefore be appropriate to consider the emergent and experiential nature of managing and learning in the sector (Billis and Harris, 1996).

In this way, developing managers can be seen through different lenses, for example: in terms of how learning opportunities and resources may be used in order to develop managers' skills, tools and techniques, which in turn may have implications for organisational performance (Myers and Sacks, 2003). Or, for example, a different yet related focus is to consider how, over time, through experience and participation, managers as practitioners learn through the context of their work and their interactions with others. Moreover, their continuous development and knowledge acquisition in "learning to manage" needs "to be understood in the light of their life, identity and biography as a whole" and it may be pertinent to "abandon the notion of management learning and talk instead about "life learning relevant to managerial work" (Watson, 2001, p. 230). This gives attention to the politicised nature of managerial action, acquisition and value of different kinds of knowledge and problematises the notion of "leadership" and "management development" as unstable.

Developing a view from the non-profit sector

In order to find out how this happens and in designing doctoral research it seemed appropriate to consider a number of questions: how do local development agency chief executives respond to changing circumstances? How do they enhance their practice? How do they learn from their experiences and construct personal theories (Kelly, 1955)? In this way, the main approach of the research so far has been to explore these and other questions by the "pursuit of essential meanings through dialogue with others" (Kaplan,

1995, p. 55), that is through the personal narratives and life stories of chief executives (Atkinson, 1998). To this end, 20 chief executives of local development agencies were approached to participate in research consisting of, at this point, two-rounds of in-depth semi-structured interviews. By giving chief executives time out to discuss and reflect on themselves and their experiences, the richness of the information collected gives depth and breadth to the biographical and experiential detail available for subsequent analysis. The scope of the research is confined to a specific part of the non-profit sector – local development or infrastructure organisations (LDAs). LDAs are intermediary charitable bodies that support the development and sustainability of other voluntary sector and volunteer-led organisations and act at the interface between the voluntary sector and public and private sectors. As such, the organisational context provides a particular challenge for chief executives and an interesting arena for research.

Working within a qualitative research framework, the first set of interviews were semi-structured providing opportunity for the participant to influence the process of the interview with issues considered relevant and important around broad themes of their own practice, personal development and the context in which they work. It is from this first set of interviews that the information and quotes used in this paper are derived.

Through this initial work, tensions became apparent in “supporting and facilitating the learning of individuals . . . groups . . . and organisations” (McGoldrick *et al.*, 2002, p. 396). Tensions also between enhancing learning through formal routes of education, training, development of practical management and leadership potential, appropriate application of tools and techniques (“best” practice) and the more informal routes of learning through social interaction, networks and exchange. This link between formal and informal learning may also echo previous discussions (Rachal, 2002; Knowles, 1990) in exploring a more andragogical approach to management learning and development for the non-profit sector. While mainstream management education may be dominated by for-profit needs and the language associated with this, where non-profit managers access such education they have to contextualise and reframe some (not all) of the tools and techniques on offer; in other words they have to develop a “bilinguality” where they have to “learn two paradigmatic-theoretical systems – they’re own and the dominant one” (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 189).

While this puts an emphasis on individual learning and capabilities, as key strategic players within their organisations, building the capacity of managers as “competent actors” (Poell *et al.*, 2000, p. 35) may in turn influence actions of other organisational members and provide the structures and processes to build the capacity (learning and development) of the organisation. Via an critical approach that considers individual learning in relation to the contexts, environments and cultures in which individuals think and act, there are opportunities to link non-profit sector and cross-sector learning and, to return to a previous concern, to attempt to harness the talents of the “loose and baggy monster”.

Juggling: multiple stakeholders and accountability

It is suggested that non-for-profit organisations tend to be “more complex than business firms of comparable size (Anheier, 2000, p. 7; Hill, 2000) both in “external” environmental considerations, e.g. diversity of stakeholder needs and requirements and multiplicity of revenue streams and, “internally”, in terms of relationships with and between staff, volunteers, service users and trustees. It is this context, which

provides a particular challenge for chief executives in “managing tensions between internal values or aims and the external policy environment” (Scott *et al.*, 2000) and multiple stakeholder perspectives. As chief executives explain:

I say to anybody that comes for a job here that you have to be happy living with grey. That nothing here is black and white . . . it's sort of a known world, but you never quite know where you are going.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to retain a sense of the issues and needs the organisation wishes to address without them being shaped by the analysis provided by each tier of government: central government, regional development agencies, local authorities.

In the same way that there has been increased public scrutiny of corporate social responsibility, there has been increasing scrutiny, too, of the not-for-profit sector and the need to demonstrate increased efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Predominantly, this has been in terms of financial accountability, but also in terms of broader social goals (for example, contributing to the social regeneration of communities, building social capital, and managing diversity). Juggling the needs of multiple stakeholders (see Figure 1), how managers assess priorities for action and how they evaluate their activities “provides insight into the conceptual and practical dilemmas of implementing a broad approach to accountability in nonprofits” (Ospina *et al.*, 2002, p. 6):

I think the accountabilities are fairly clear to me actually . . . they are on a balanced scorecard. They are inevitably a range of stakeholders facing slightly different directions and that's the politics of it; you have to balance it all. Sometimes, you know, if you can keep the balance all the time nicely then you're doing well, but it shifts around.

I mean, as voluntary organisations become more engaged on a contractual basis with public, with the state – local or central – there's been a need to demonstrate that you can hack it, delivering programmes funded from public money and that's one of the reasons we've had to professionalise.

Accelerating this perceived need to “professionalise”, has been a key shift in encouraging active engagement between public, private and voluntary sectors in

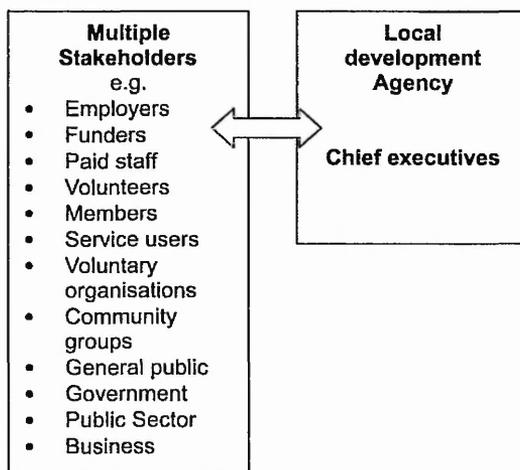


Figure 1.
Multiple stakeholders
impacting on CEOs

establishing and maintaining collaborative working relationships (policy and legislation aimed at modernising public services and local government; economic and social regeneration and volunteering as gateways to employment). With increasing privatisation of public sector services and the pressure to modernise, we also find the interpretation of business enhancing tools for use in public sector organisations being passed on to voluntary sector organisations (Myers and Sacks, 2003). This, in a sense, is a critical turn for the non-profit sector in both responding to this pressure and enhancing management development and leadership in the sector:

It's the cultural difference that is the interesting one and what I'm interested in trying to do is to get the professional elements [in planning, thinking, explaining and questioning] without losing the value of the voluntary commitment.

In order to be "both professional and entrepreneurial" (Etherington, 2001) in growing and developing non-profit sector organisations, there is increasing emphasis on "leadership, drive and effectiveness" (Gormley, 2000) and for non-profits to become "more business-like". Yet, which business and whose business-like practices are not defined.

Balancing: inside out or outside in?

The sector's confidence, and the ability and competence of voluntary sector leadership, to be proactive in determining the nature of these cross-sector relationships underpin much of the current debate on its future (Myers and Sacks, 2001). As LDAs deal with the opportunities and challenges arising from changing governmental priorities – local, national and increasingly international through a European agenda – there is a certain fluidity to LDAs as staffing levels fluctuate and organisational structures adapt and change over time:

I tell this story now, that on the 30th of March, I went home on Friday night with 16 staff and came in on Monday morning with 32 staff. And so I'm in the process of having to change the way I do things.

Partly, this is in response to the constraints of short-term project-based funding arrangements:

Our staffing at any one point is anywhere between two-dozen and 30, depending on what project might have just gone independent.

However, it also gives a "strategic-development dimension" to managerial activity (Anheier, 2000, p. 9). While it might be seen in the public and for-profit sector that "for many directors the pace of change can drive out ability to innovate" (Holbeche, 2002, p. 203), in the non-profit sector the pressure is on to anticipate, respond and create new opportunities, as chief executives explain:

We will, for example, look at the policy issues current and on the horizon i.e. statutory agencies priorities [and] consider the impact, opportunities and threats these pose for us, and for the groups we support. We also identify the "bottom-up agenda" of local groups by formal and informal feedback and through our networking activities. We then look at what we need to do to respond to these and what capacity building, resources, organisational development etc. is needed internally to enable us to do so. We try to be 12 months or so ahead of the game if we can in anticipating developments locally and nationally ... also in trying to be innovative in developing new approaches and initiatives.

My view is that the voluntary sector is not about mainstream social service provision. It's about doing innovative things: it's about change, it's about the critique.

However, there are also tensions and concerns about the non-profit sector becoming too similar to, particularly public sector agencies and in being subsumed into a larger mainly governmental agenda, which is perceived to affect the image and status of the sector:

I think for the sector it's the issues of independence of the sector and [being perceived as] the third arm of the State. And it's how far the objectives of the [LDAs] are allied with central government objectives and what the implications are long term . . . It's changing the way they do things and how that's going to pan out over the next few years is going to be important.

While this might be seen as positive – “it's quite nice when government catches up with your thinking at times” – it also means that managers need to be clear in the roles and relationships they have with significant stakeholders such as governmental funders:

I understand what the Government's proposition to the voluntary sector is, if you like. Therefore, I think I'm in a good position to understand what the opportunities for the sector are, which aren't necessarily the same. But then I'm also, because of my political skills as opposed to my interest in politics, I'm in quite a strong position to broker that.

Here, the central role of the manager is brought into focus and so far, what we've seen is an outer-directed (Anheier, 2000) dimension (see Figure 2) to the managerial role, working with ambiguity, change and shifting stages of engagement with other actors, which requires knowledge of and an ability to act and interact on a number of levels.

Indeed, the more internally focused processes of work design and day-to-day management responsibilities were not the key drivers for some managers:

I wouldn't want to go into an organisation just to manage it. I'd want to go in to an organisation to change its strategic direction . . . I get very frustrated with all the, you know, the organisational industrial stuff, it just drains my energy . . . I don't see myself managing a steady state organisation.

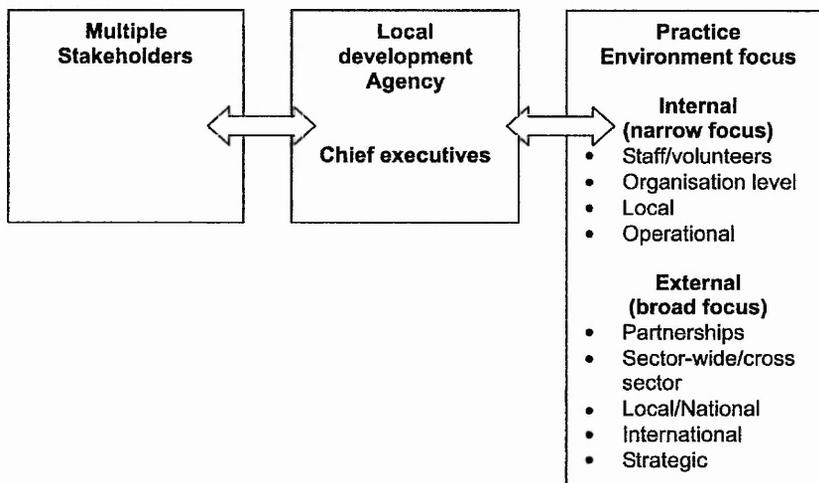


Figure 2.
Practice focus

Where there was a focus on internal arrangements, this was often where managers had recently moved into a role where the previous incumbent was perceived to have had “problems” or had “missed” key issues, or because of crisis or sudden growth. For example:

The organisational managerial demands on the job have risen significantly. But at the same time, I've had to do my best to develop the role, build the infrastructure within the organisation to cope with that. In terms of senior line management, in terms of development, planning, co-ordination and in terms of servicing, you know, administrative, IT servicing and so on . . . That's made big demands on my time and energy to make sure that we have the systems within the organisation to cope with this growth.

This is a critical issue that comes about . . . partly as a result of growth in the organisation and the HR management function is now quite substantial. I mean the overall responsibility of it falls on me, but with 40 staff heading towards 60 within a year, it's no longer sustainable for the chief executive to still be the personnel manager!

As we can see fluctuation in the numbers of employees has both an effect on the structure and processes within the organisation, but also on the strategic tenacity of individual managers. There are shifting external factors with which managers need not only to engage and respond, but also to anticipate and even shape. As “public” bodies, there are a range of “interested” people and accountable bodies with which to interact. Internally, there can be a number of different contractual arrangements with employees, with volunteers, with service providers and while there may be a finance manager, departmental managers and team leaders, there is often little in the way of infrastructural support and development opportunities for the chief executive. Even where LDAs offer training, this is often externally focused as a service to other organisations.

In responding to what Schön (1987, p. 36) might refer to an “indeterminate zones of practice”, and linking back to a need to become fluent in mainstream management-speak, local development agency chief executives also have to become “quick-change artists”, which can be both exhilarating and stressful:

I was in London and I had some spare time so I went to have a sort of semi-work, semi-catch-up lunch with another chief exec of another national organisation. Went to her office and she was cleaning out the fridge – on her knees, cleaning out the fridge because someone spilt the milk. And, as she said – that's the job of the chief exec and yeah, that's actually right. I mean, you have to do everything from cleaning out the fridge to argue with government ministers, and that's the appeal really.

I mean, I think you're a bit of a chameleon really.

The expert practitioner, then, is not only bi-lingual but also multi-lingual. They learn the art of modal participation, that is “the ability to play various roles in various fields of participation” where learning “implies becoming a different person” in different situations, contexts and in different sets of interrelationships and “to ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities” (Lave and Wenger, 1999, p. 20 and 53) (see Figure 3).

This ability to shift focus and cope with multifarious fields of participation, may also suggest the potential for a fusion, a blurring of boundaries between what is “internal” to the organisation, and what is “external” shown in this statement by a chief executive:

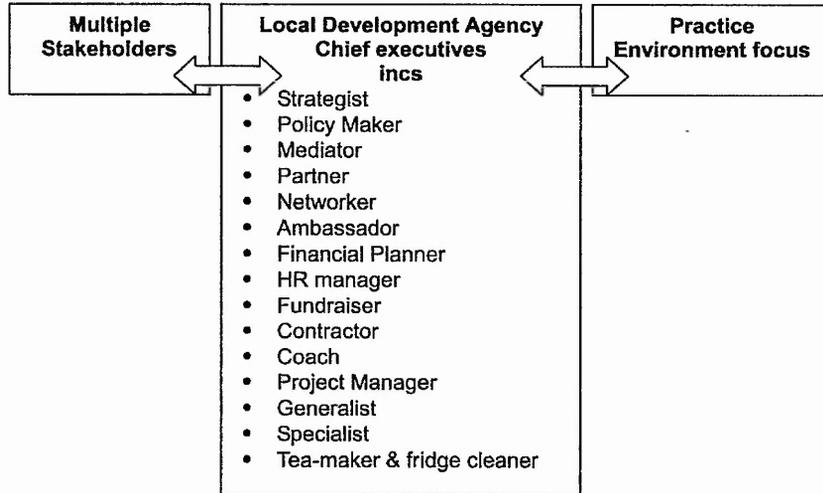


Figure 3.
Shifting roles and
identities

And so it doesn't matter what the government throws at us in terms of a variety of different things. All of them go into that filter and I say, well, what in that government idea is about changing people's lives for the better? And if it's not about that, we just ignore it.

Here, we can see that while this manager is strategically open to governmental (and other) factors, these are "filtered" in through an interpretation of aims and values. If they resonate at this fundamental level – have "structural congruence" (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 95) – then they become part of the manager's world, otherwise they are seen to be irrelevant to thinking and action.

What we need to consider is how this happens, whether it is purposeful (as this example suggests, even with the benefit of retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1995)), or spontaneous. And, if as Clancey and Sierhus (1996) propose "we understand the dynamics of the activity", then "we understand that changing it will change the knowledge and the learning". Furthermore, that "we will have a better way to manage the knowledge and learning", and contribute to developing appropriate support and learning opportunities for non-profit managers.

Developing non-profit managers

While apparent success as a manager may be somewhat dependent on the exploitation of "technical knowledge and managerial concepts", Smith (2001, p. 35) also contends that success comes from "an understanding of, and feel for, such factors as organisational politics and culture, the art of influencing others, the ability to delegate, the skills of timing, presentation and selling ideas". Furthermore, Johnson (2000, p. 403) makes a distinction between the "world of synthetic reason and logic" and the "cultural and political world of management practice", suggesting, "the models of the former are well rehearsed, explicit and readily available".

The idea of "success" in this instance seems to suggest a prescriptive approach of competences and skills development, which in various ways can be imparted to individuals to improve their management styles and abilities. A view, which Cacioppe (1997, p. 340) contends fits with the world of management and leadership education in

that "the more a person learns, the more he or she knows and the better they will be as a leader". It also suggests a more internal organisation focus.

Yet, Baumard (1999) suggests that success lies more in "top managers" ability to use tacit knowledge than in their gaining or updating explicit knowledge". This "practical and social wisdom" or "phronesis" (Baumard, 1999; Czarniawska, 2001) is part of a process of experiential learning: a contextual or situated knowledge. Similarly, Alvesson and Wilmott (1996, p. 28) suggest that "acquiring abstract techniques and skills is comparatively easy; establishing and maintaining the power and authority that supports their effective application in specific contexts presents challenges of a completely different order".

If, as Clancey (1995) explains, "situated learning ... is a theory about the nature of human knowledge, claiming that knowledge is dynamically constructed as we perceive what is happening to us, talk and move", then through context related learning, building "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1999) and learning networks, practitioners can meet. They can discover what they think, compare sources of information and different perceptions, take time to develop thinking and reflection, generate outcomes and infer or articulate a more global view of events; their "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977; MacMillan, 2002). This may align with what Weick (2001, p. 136) refers to as abilities to affiliate, triangulate, deliberate, effectuate and consolidate. This seems to resonate with the "prevailing opinion...that individual leadership capacity cannot be increased solely using traditional academic methods" (Bolton and Abdy, 2003).

If we look at chief executives of LDAs more closely, we start to see variety of behaviours and actions shaped by experience of "being" a manager in this context. Of the respondents interviewed, most had worked in the voluntary sector for five years or more and had been chief executives of LDAs for between one year and over 15 years. All had some form of higher education – if not graduate education, then masters' level vocational degrees (for example, MA/qualified social worker) and masters of business administration.

While most saw themselves as long-term voluntary sector people, having arrived often by accident via a number of routes – volunteering, political affiliation, from public sector, or from industry – there was acknowledgement of constraints in career development. Yet, at the same time, most had arrived at a senior management position in their 20s and early 30s:

I remember once joking with a guy from university who said that there were no career ladders in the voluntary sector. And I said, yes, actually, there are loads of career ladders, but the problem is they're all very short. You can reach the top of your chosen niche by the time you're in your late 20s.

So continuous learning, development, seeking out education, and learning opportunities is not always about promotion and career progression for people in this position. Indeed, Bolton and Abdy (2003, p. 23) cite Kotter's (1990) key factors evidenced in those who achieved leadership positions, which are of interest here: "significant leadership challenge early in their career (i.e. in their 20s and early 30s)" and "lateral career moves" – widening the breadth of experience and (personal) networks. Harrison and Kessels (2004, p. 101) cite Mumford *et al.*'s (1987) research "into learning processes undergone by successful directors of business", which gave weight to on-the-job experience and role models as opposed to formal learning. In some

instances, for LDA directors, there is even a certain amount of cynicism connected with what are perceived to be traditional routes to increased managerial know-how:

It [MBA] is a bit of proof but it's not convincing. I mean a lot of people will tell you that someone with an MBA is proof of the opposite, they're a bloody awful manager, but no, I still feel I'm not the manager I would like to be ... people are managed in a different ethos.

I'm quite cynical about management training and I'm very cynical about the MBA route, which is often the route that voluntary sector people go down ... because mostly people I know who've done it are hopeless managers. It doesn't seem to have affected their practice at all.

And I've seen them go away to college and learn in formal education ... they come back and they've lost the edge, you know. They've lost the kind of soul for the job.

What we also need to consider at this point is personal and organisational commitment to supporting learning at this level. While there are many instances citing lack of resources (finance, time, lack of capacity of the organisation to cover for training off-site), the context and circumstances in which CEOs in LDAs are working can also mean a pressure to concentrate on spending money on direct services. Also, how are managers approaching their work and how reflective are they in their need for support and development? Are managers so overloaded with information and the need to act that they are overwhelmed, reacting to the greatest pressure? Are they technically competent in keeping their head above the water – coping with the different demands and pressures? Are they performing – fulfilling the aims and objectives of the organisation and hitting targets? Are they “thinking about [their] actions and analysing them in a critical manner”, with the purpose of learning to improve their professional practice”? (Baumard, 1999, p. 96). Are they creating opportunities to learn – “seeking exposure within their job, aiming to make the most out of the learning resources and opportunities they have available and taking personal initiative? (see Figure 4).

Depending on what “level” managers are operating, perceived skills gaps might determine an “appropriate” intervention. So, what might be relevant at the beginning of their career – developing the skills and abilities to supervise and manage staff, produce budgets, strategic and development planning – may be accessed through short courses, structured events specifically, but not necessarily always, designed for non-profits. The perceived “know-how” in managing themselves in different situations, becoming voluntary sector managers and particularly local development agency chief

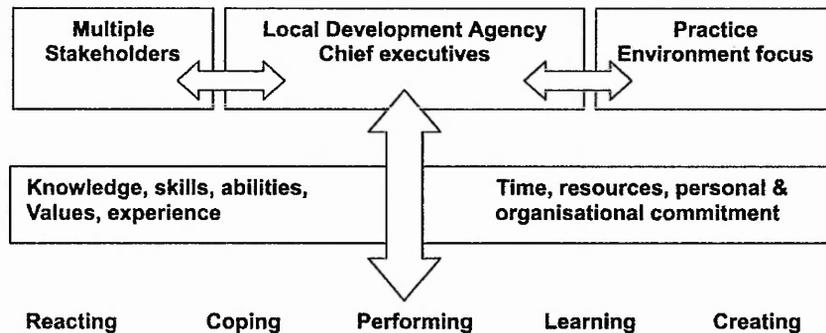


Figure 4.
Managerial behaviours
and responses

executives – i.e. “*becoming* a practitioner not learning about *practice*” (Brown and Duguid, 1991, p. 48, authors’ italics) may require a “multi-faceted approach, and not the use of ready-made management models carried over from the business world or public management” (Anheier, 2000, p. 8).

In terms of competencies and perceived need for successful managers to move from reacting to certainly performing, this may be addressed by providing “management” development and education (the bread and butter of many business schools). The less clear-cut areas of learning and creativity, which no doubt impact on performance, may be more about what is perceived as supporting “leadership” potential (a developing area of interest for public and non-profit sectors and the practice of some universities in their links into corporate and public sectors).

What’s missing in exploring these issues in terms of non-profit experience in the UK, has been “an almost total absence ... of a ready-made or generally accepted management discourse for voluntary organisations (Batsleer, 1995, p. 225) compared to say, North America. Yet, Smith (2000) feels it is important to stress, “just how young the field of non-profit management education is in the United States”. While this is changing in the UK and there are notable providers of information, education and training at executive levels, there is still the vexed question of whether the sector is sufficiently different from other sectors to warrant separate management education provision. Yet, part of the problem here is that by remaining “outside” current structures and programmes there is little influence to change the mode of operation of business and management education and the view of non-profit management and leadership as being “other than the norm”. On the other hand, it might be that while traditional business and management courses “ignore” non-profits both at undergraduate (for instance, how many undergraduate students on sandwich courses have non-for-profit sector placements?) and post-graduate levels, it is pertinent to provide “alternative” arrangements. Current consultation papers for the sector on skills development, for example, include the provision for a “leadership and management hub” for the sector as well as looking at local and regional support networks (Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation, 2003).

Part of the remit for such a hub is also seen as an encouraging take-up of development opportunities by the sector. There are a number of chief executives who are choosing not to take up postgraduate courses in non-profit studies, preferring instead other options including more specialised areas such as leadership “fellowships”. Some are opting out of formal provision altogether – not because they do not appreciate the need to learn, what Antonacopoulou (2001, p. 223) would refer to as mathophobic managers, but because they perceive their learning, for various reasons, to be “beyond” what’s on offer:

Once you get to a certain level frankly you’ve had a bellyful of short courses – it’s not at a sophisticated enough level to answer the questions that you have as somebody managing and doing partnerships and working up contracts and all the rest of it.

What we may be seeing in relation to LDA chief executives – operating at this fairly sophisticated level (not all agencies and/or individuals do) – is what Södergren and Söderholm (2001, p. 248) refer to as “knowledge-intensive work”. This requires “constant and informal learning” which, in turn, may be as much about interacting with “others in the same professional areas” (Stein, 2001, p. 213) as being sent off to learn (Huysman,

2001). For LDA chief executives the communities of practice may well be the other chief executives in their field, but it is also as much about the different communities of which they are a part, particularly the multi-disciplinary, cross-sector partnerships and coalitions and these do seem to provide for learning *in situ* and for personal support:

You go along to your first partnership meeting and you haven't got a clue. You go to the second with a little bit more. You do a load of reading and by the third – you're an expert.

We can get a bit insular sometimes, although I have a lot of contact with managers locally, not involved in [the local development agency], obviously nationally you tend to network a bit in your own back yard as it were. I think it's quite useful sometimes to be able to touch base with other people struggling with management issues but perhaps from a perspective of an organisation trying to deliver different kinds of service.

So, what's emerging is the sense of networked practitioners – using both the tight networks of their own “back yard” but also the looser connections – those people with technical knowledge when required, others with more strategic awareness:

There are one or two guys in the health service scene – very senior people ... that I think are quite visionaries in their own kind of way ... I occasionally get ... reassurance from them that I'm going in the right direction.

Here, we see people seeking out significant others “to develop and improve themselves as being resourceful, self-directed, inquisitive and creative in their approach to learning” (Antonacopoulou, 2001, pp. 223-224); often working from the periphery of practice to become immersed over time and relying on abduction (Pierce cited in Bøje, 2001, p. 50) to make sense of their worlds. In some instances, there are parallels with findings from a survey of “directors who were known for their innovative approaches” (cited in Holbeche, 2002, p. 203) where much of this sense-making activity takes place outside of work. Where Holbeche describes these activities as “innocuous and seemingly unrelated activities”, we could also construe such activities as opportunities for reflexive practice and therefore as more purposeful. While chief executives of LDAs engaged in such activities while running, contemplating in the back garden with a glass of wine or while driving to and from work, some also engaged in more directed sensemaking:

When I accept speaking engagements I very often use those to explore things that I'm thinking about.

This need for an analytical framework is also something that was commented on by Holbeche (2002, p. 17) in relation to the strategic role of HR practitioners, albeit with an internal organisational focus. As chief executives in LDAs often lack this support within the organisation, this may be increasingly why they are looking to external sources through meetings with fellow officers, through action learning, external supervision and mentoring:

My Chair is great but not really in a position to give me my line management support so the board agreed for me to buy in that support and I talk about issues with her ... about every six to eight weeks.

Just recently I've formed a close dialogue with counterparts [in neighbouring counties], simply because we discovered more or less by accident at the chief executives' meeting last year, that we were grappling with a lot of the same issues, so we now meet every three or four months.

I've just begun to develop an action learning set for five voluntary sector chief executives, including myself, and the five of us are very excited about that.

This is also a slight divergence from looking at learning networks and communities of practice as purely work place based (Harrison and Kessels, 2004) and also where the artificial split between "internal" organisation and "external" environment is problematic since much of the learning for these managers is taking place outside their own organisations with senior managers and leaders from other sectors, through partnership arrangements.

Challenges of and responses to developing managers

There is a range of short courses available to voluntary sector managers and there are some non-profit research and practice-oriented units and centres within universities. There are also a number of independent consultants specialising in personal and organisational development in the sector. In addition, key national organisations are providing information and access to research; development and networking opportunities, as well as technical resources such as, legal and financial management and training for trustees. Yet, as a national director points out:

The lack of management training, management support is an issue for the sector as a whole and certainly an issue for the [LDAs]. If you look at the voluntary sector national training organisation, their relatively recent report . . . says that one of the gaps is management skills, management training and I think that's reflected in chief officers [wanting] something for them, focussed on their needs.

This report brings to the fore technical know-how and skills. Whereas the picture being assembled in this paper is one that looks – particularly for long-serving practitioners – at more experientially-based approaches to learning:

What I've never really done is actually spent some time with them [public service and private-sector counterparts] trying in a structured way to learn what they are – what their motivation is, what their philosophies are, or their approaches or the constraints and parameters they work within. Though I think I know a lot of them, or understand some of them just from observing, maybe spending time like that would be useful (Secondment).

It would have to be the right people so that it can be reciprocated. I tried [and was matched] with this guy from [well known high street bank]. I met him once and it was a bit of a waste of time really because he was a business manager in a branch and managed like 200 business accounts. And he was in a system that was so rigid, so set down . . . And I was trying to explain to him that it's a bit different to my world, you know (Mentoring).

The [. . .] leadership fellowship is a useful mechanism . . . trying to replicate that on a more, not local but say regional basis would be useful (Leaders/aspiring leader networks).

What I would like the opportunity to do is maybe to have some week-long sessions, which were cheap. And which the organisation could afford that would actually improve my performance in certain areas and give me some additional skills to be a better manager . . . the opportunity to sit down and actually consider collectively how you might tackle a particular project, a particular strategy, look at it from different angles (Anticipatory learning).

I think probably now I'd like someone to come along and say, well, you know actually you could so with some training in these areas – perhaps some kind of consultancy really – come along

and say well, yes, these are areas where we think we can help you to improve your performance (Individual consultancy).

I find the research methods are sort of important as well, you know, again dealing with the public sector so much . . . you suddenly realise how little of what is done [in voluntary sector] is actually based on any sort of research or based on any factual knowledge that it might work (Research and inquiry-based learning).

I will need somebody who understands at that level . . . facilitating the thinking (Facilitation and coaching).

CEOs also mentioned the need for long-term modular approach to include both formal learning and validation of managerial experience, which could be developed and added to over time (and accredited by an academic institution to give some kind of academic award – or a professional body for the sector?). Also, there needs to be consideration of learning for personal and organisational needs and capturing the cross-sector partnership learning of both processes and outcomes. This takes us back to working on the strategic roles and diversity of tasks of local development agency chief executives (the “what”) in order to “improve the how’s and discuss the why’s” (Huysman, 2001, p. 87) and, as we can see from Figure 5, a focus on the issues contained within the dotted lines. It is here where we need to think critically about the ways in which learning for non-profit managers is facilitated and supported.

Where does this take us?

This debate is not new and flexible approaches to learning and critical pedagogy are in evidence within learning institutions, what is not necessarily included is a non-profit dimension in mainstream management education both at an undergraduate level and for adult learning. Moreover, Rafo *et al.* (2000, p. 262) purport that “critical forays launched by management development educationalists” still suggest, “that classic undergraduate, postgraduate and other VET business programmes do little to enhance real business acumen and real business skills. They suggest instead the need to make greater use of action learning theories and approaches”. It will be interesting to see the results of a three-year programme of action learning for non-profit managers and aspiring managers currently being run by the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service.

Perhaps, where there are signs of more inclusion of non-profit dimensions are in more specialist or vocational areas such as social work, public health education and public sector management where there are a number of community-based and non-profit provider-based practice environments and it is here where most inter-agency work is concentrated. There is some inclusion in other professional areas, for example law and accounting, where there are accounting practices “peculiar” to charitable companies.

Taking on board the lessons learned from development of non-profit education in North America (where it is most advanced) may continue to develop dialogue around organically grown senior management training and the need for competencies-based frameworks (Hudson, and Bruce and Leat respectively cited in Clutterbuck and Dearlove, 1996, p. 94) in response to management training needs. And if it means to be inclusive, management education has to take on board that non-profit sector managers have something to give to that process, that learning is not just from private to public to non-profit: it is a three-way process. Perhaps, then, continuing to learn from the experience of business schools who, although are working mainly with the private-sector

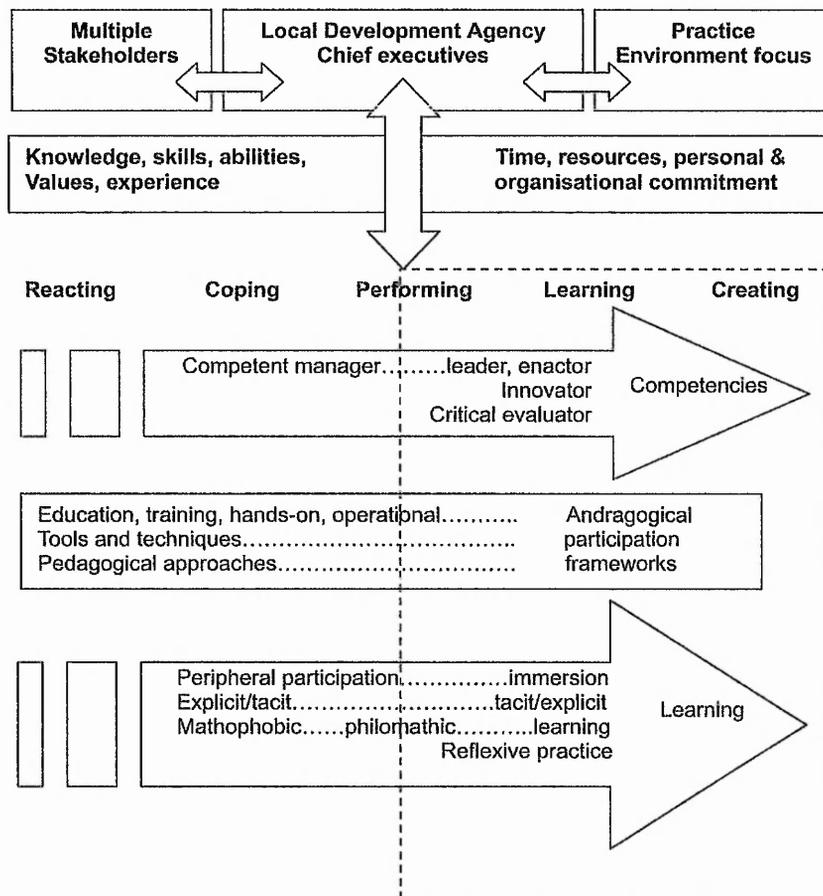


Figure 5. Developing managers

organisations, are experimenting with different approaches to developing managers (see for example Gold and Holman, 2001) may start to provide space for non-profit experience. As Osborne (1996, p. 207) suggests in his review of training needs for the voluntary sector "the ideal appeared to be programmes which took the best [sic] practice from this [mainstream] tradition and integrated it into a voluntary context".

Yet, management education is not the same as management development and management learning and maybe, as some of the LDA CEOs' comments illustrate this is situated somewhere other than in academic institutions. In 1996, Osborne was looking at industry training standards, NVQs and working at a locality level through Training and Enterprise Councils. The Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation has been brought into existence and the Sector Skills and Learning and Skills Councils are starting to include workforce development issues for the non-profit sector.

The probable instigation of a leadership and management hub for the sector seeks to raise the profile of the sector and to understand the leadership requirements through research and through working with providers to deliver the programmes that meet the

needs of the sector. In order to do this, we need to incorporate the lived experiences of non-profit managers. For some LDA chief executives this is at the interface between voluntary, private and public sectors. By observing (and researching) these executives in action, we can inform and deepen management discourse by including views from the non-profit sector. If pressure continues for public sector organisations and private-sector organisations to work in partnership with one another and with non-profit organisations, this may also provide useful insights into the development and leadership aspects of working at this interface and encourage cross-sector learning – the challenge being how to capture this learning on a routine basis? Maybe this gives increased opportunities to build on some of the community based work carried out by a number of academic institutions and to draw some of this learning back in to inform the development and delivery of mainstream programmes, but that's another paper...

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Appendix D

A logic of partnerships: working and learning across boundaries – organisational conformity or valuing diversity?

Jan Myers

Nottingham Business School Research Department
Nottingham Trent University
Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU, UK

Dalhousie University
Faculty of Management
School of Business Administration
Kenneth C Rowe Building
6100 University Avenue
Halifax, NS B3H 3J5, Canada
E-mail: Jan.Myers@dal.ca

Abstract: This paper considers the complexity of managerial work in the UK non-profit sector that can be particularly observed at the interface between for-profit and public sector organisations. This nexus of working and learning, which requires knowledge of and an ability to act and interact on a number of levels, comes together in a variety of partnership arrangements with public sector, non-profit and private sector agencies. Key questions are raised: how can this individual and collective learning outside the organisation both contribute to the success of partnership working and be transferred back into the 'internal' dimension of building the capacity of one's own organisation? Can active alliances of different organisations value the diversity of sector differences? How might the learning brought about by these arrangements be captured and harnessed and where does the ownership of learning processes and knowledge creation lie?

Keywords: non-profit; partnerships; sensemaking; learning.

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Biographical notes: Jan Myers was a Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management at Nottingham Business School at the time of her contribution to this special edition. She is currently working at both Saint Mary's and Dalhousie Universities in Halifax, Nova Scotia and continues her association with Nottingham Trent University as a doctoral student. Previously with a background in managing non-profit organisations and training and consultancy with non-profit and public sector organisations, her research interests include learning and sensemaking of senior managers in non-profit organisations.

1 Introduction

Interest in developing this particular enquiry is part borne out of academic research as a doctoral student and partly out of practitioner experience of facilitating strategic workshops and time-out events for key public sector organisations involved in partnership arrangements. This practice-based experience led to reflection on my own and others' roles in carrying information and knowledge between significant contributors to the 'partnership agenda' and concern for how this could be sustained, maintained and developed. While this experience provides a stepping-off point, this working paper is primarily shaped by doctoral research on non-profit leadership and learning.

2 Research questions

The focus of doctoral research has been on the impact of experiential learning on 20 non-profit chief executives' accounts of their managerial behaviour and how personal theories emerge and how these may be utilised by chief executives to develop and enhance their practice. In-depth interviews have been supplemented with shadowing key respondents, which has included observation of formal partnership working.

As key voluntary sector contributors to an increasingly strategic partnership agenda in many areas of England, Scotland and Wales, the research participants are chief executives of local development agencies – organisations such as councils for voluntary service and rural community councils. These intermediary charitable bodies generally support the development and sustainability of other local voluntary and community based organisations as well as provide a network for information exchange for non-profit organisations in a particular geographical area. They provide a link or bridge between voluntary sector and volunteer-led organisations and public and private sector organisations.

As such, the organisational context provides a particular challenge for chief executives in "managing tensions between internal values or aims and the external policy environment" (Scott *et al.*, 2000). As strategic players in organisations, building the capacity of managers as 'competent actors' (Poell *et al.*, 2000) may in turn influence learning and development (human and social capital) within their organisations and in the networks in which they play a role.

In addition, three key managers whose jobs are directly connected with supporting and working in formal and informal networks and partnerships together with evaluation and learning in partnerships were interviewed in connection with this paper.

From this, a significant amount of strategic activity was seen to occur outside the boundaries of chief executives' own organisations and within multi-organisational networks. This central role for the local development agency chief executive brings in to focus an outer-directed (Anheier, 2000) dimension. Similarly, much of the individual management learning and competencies development, as well as many strategic and social influencing skills can be seen to be gained 'outside' of the employing organisation. Their organisational worlds extend beyond formal organisational boundaries into a much more diverse inter-organisational environment.

In some respects, this requires a more critical approach to human resource development and management development that considers learning in relation to contexts, environments and cultures in which individuals think and act and to take into account that these *networked practitioners* appear to learn through the context of their work and their interactions with others than by gaining access to more formal modes of learning and development. While this would fit with the “concept of knowledge as a process that is continuously formed, developed and changed by human interactions” (Harrison and Kessels, 2004, p.xv), Harrison and Kessels (2004, p.4) also suggest that “HRD...the skilful planning and facilitation of a variety of formal and informal learning and knowledge processes and experiences” takes place “primarily but not exclusively in the work place”. In relation to local development agency chief executives and increasingly public sector and local authority personnel, key interactions are *outside* of the workplace: growing communities of practitioners, or what Venkatraman and Subramaniam (2002, cited in Harrison and Kessels, 2004, p.8) might refer to as ‘economies of expertise’ – ‘leveraging intellectual capital and knowledge flows in a complex network of internal and external relationships’.

Key questions have to be: how can this individual and collective learning outside the organisation both contribute to the success of partnership working and be transferred back into the ‘internal’ dimension of building the capacity of one’s own organisation? And, a further question is raised as to the usefulness of dimensions of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ in this context?

As local development agencies are increasingly being seen as significant ‘partners’ in consultation and action planning around modernisation of public services and community involvement in the UK and elsewhere, there is also a question of balance in terms of maintaining the aims, objectives and values of the non-profit organisation and being an active member of a partnership coalition. In particular, there are tensions around power, participation and influence for non-profit organisations working in ‘partnership’ networks: whose agenda is being worked to; whose targets are being set and met; how can different priorities and ways of working be aligned? Moreover, there is always the added challenge of avoiding becoming subsumed into a larger mainly governmental agenda; what one Russian development agency chief executive refers to as the ‘governmentalisation’ of the sector (Myers and Sacks, 2001) and losing sight of one’s own organisational aims and objectives.

This raises the further question of whether active alliances of different organisations can value the diversity of sector differences and work on commonalities or whether there is an inevitable convergence in terms of strategic aims, ways of working and accountability (to the most significant partner)?

3 Aspects of non-profit contribution

If we consider the development of non-profit organisations within particular countries we can see the different influences on the growth and scope of the sectors. Some of this is linked to the origin of philanthropic and independent social institutions, the age and country definition of the sector, extent of codification in law and the extent or otherwise of state provision of health, education and social services. However, there are issues and problems common to non-profit organisations, which cut across international boundaries

and are linked to increased legislation and scrutiny (of publicly provided services), moves to decentralise government and welfare provision together with continued privatisation of public and social services (Hodgkinson, 1999) and affect how organisations are funded, managed and resourced.

Size and economic contribution has been an increasing focus for the sector over the last ten years with research at local and national levels and cross-national comparative studies being undertaken. The Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, for example, surveyed a range of organisations undertaking different sets of activities in 22 countries (Salamon *et al.*, 1999) and described the sector as a \$1.1 trillion industry employing around nineteen million full-time equivalent workers.

To supplement this national overview, and to tie in with signifying the potential and contribution of the sector in regional and local partnerships around social inclusion, inequalities and social and economic regeneration, a number of umbrella voluntary organisations and development agencies have undertaken their own surveys of voluntary sector size and contribution (for example, Dowson and Irving, 2000; Lewis, 2001; Wilding, 2000).

Yet, while voluntary sector managers may be money-conscious both in terms of their economic contribution and also income generation and funding of core costs, they are not necessarily driven by the 'bottom-line' and as Drucker (1994, pp.39–40), points out in relation to American non-profits:

"they start with the environment, the community, the 'customers' to be; they do not, as American businesses tend to do, start with the inside, that is, with the organisation or with financial returns... successful and performing nonprofits have learned to define clearly what changes outside the organisation constitute 'results' and to focus on them".

In this respect, it may be necessary to move beyond the 'economic impact/output models' as "these often do not provide the qualitative or in-depth analysis that will be needed to... understand the true potential of the sector's contribution" (Grogan, 2002, p.5). This may also recognise the suggestion that non-profit organisations tend to be "more complex than business forms of comparable size" (Anheier, 2000, p.7) both in 'external' environmental considerations and 'internally' in terms of relationships with and between staff, volunteers, service users and trustees.

This complexity of managerial work in the UK non-profit sector can be particularly observed at the interface with for-profit and public sector organisations, which requires knowledge of and an ability to act and interact on a number of levels. This nexus of working and learning comes together in a variety of *partnership* arrangements with public sector, non-profit and private sector agencies collaborating to address increasingly (national and European) Government driven agenda around rebuilding social cohesion, increasing social capital, economic regeneration and of tackling inequalities.

Many voluntary sector organisations, whether development agencies or service providers have had what one interviewee referred to as 'bi-lateral relationships', for example local authority/voluntary sector or health/voluntary sector, for a number of years. These have manifested in, for example, one-to-one and sector liaison over funding arrangements, involvement in joint planning and commissioning processes, moving through to local area partnerships, networks around crime and disorder, drugs and alcohol, children's services and so on and more recently through the more overarching frameworks of local strategic partnerships – a major focus of this paper.

So, in many respects, the voluntary and community sector is seen by some to have had much more practice of working in this kind of multi-agency environment than other partners both public and private sector, who in the past may have been considered, in the words of one interviewee, as arriving at the partnership table 'kicking and screaming'. Yet, with a strong steer from central government and an emphasis on both changing current working practices and learning seen as central to public sector management, planning and provision, working more closely and across boundaries is increasingly a significant managerial activity if "policy makers at all levels" are "to coordinate ideas, resources and people rather than prescribe solutions" (NRU, 2002, p.6).

Furthermore, the voluntary sector's role and contribution "to developing learning, and in service delivery more generally, has been recognised in a wide range of government initiatives and reports" (Flude and Selby, 2003, p.16). Anticipation of this can be seen in a Local Government Association survey in 2000 (cited by Pearson and Morgan, 2001), when 96% of local authorities believed 'that the voluntary and community sector will be a key strategic partner in the next five years'.

4 Partnerships in focus

One of the key issues mentioned in research surrounding community wide initiatives involving multi-agency working (*e.g.*, Weiss, 1995) is the need to recognise the diversity of strategic objectives and the specific language used by partners in the same and different sectors. At a recent workshop for multi-sector partners facilitated by the author and aimed at surfacing assumptions a number of statements were offered to help to define 'partnerships'. Common themes were creation of *shared* understanding, aims, outcomes and resources; meaningful and purposeful relationships; and respect for difference. While there was mention of equality in relationships, this was not a common feature. Indeed, if we consider how 'partnership' is used on a day-to-day basis it can describe a number of different types of relationships and individual roles: senior partner, junior partner, sleeping partner; partnerships between employers and employees (internal partnerships); and formal contractual arrangements. As one respondent stated, "Every single government department has its own definition of partnership" and there is some cynicism shown by practitioners of what might be considered a 'true' or 'real' partnership. A chief executive commented, this can lead to difficulties in terms of 'differentiation within the voluntary sector – those who are involved and those who are not, the insiders and the outsiders':

"By and large, partnership does not exist because the whole ethos of partnership is about, you know, coming together, having respect for each other and looking to deliver something which brings benefits across all partners."

"Partnerships are pouring out of our ears at the moment, and none of them are true partnerships, but we're getting there with some of them."

"A lot of them aren't proper partnerships, but they are starting to bring people into contact with other sectors much more positively than before and there's much better understanding now."

Even if we abandon the phrase and consider instead alliances that embody a set of active and collaborative roles, relationships and responsibilities, there is some concern from voluntary sector respondents that even acceptance of the sector has having a central role to play in those arena, may not necessarily confer full 'membership' status:

"There are real dangers for the voluntary sector at the moment. I think the opportunities are to play a bigger role but the danger is that you're there as a bit of window dressing...and...whether those opportunities do become real partnership work or you're just there as part of the decoration."

"You're still going to be on the outer edge and still a bit removed from the hub of decision making."

And concern also over partial involvement and 'lip-service':

"Well, we now have things like, you know, local strategic partnerships...and everybody has to tick a box which says we've listened to the community, so the theory is firmly embedded. The challenge now is to actually make the practice actually work rather than it just being a theory and a tick-box exercise."

However, there is also some cautious optimism and a sense that, over time, relationships, expectations and partnerships functioning are changing and improving:

"If you want to change things and learn, I suppose that's incremental rather than revolutionary – you don't throw the jigsaw out of the window, you undo it and put it together again and see if you can find more of the pieces that fit."

"Obviously, the partnership isn't equal and never will be entirely equal. But on the other hand, I think that there is increasing respect in statutory authorities for the voluntary sector particularly the key ones like {LDA} and some other bodies."

5 Individual and organisational identity in partnerships

The pull towards collaborative working may seem an uphill struggle: maintaining independence and 'distinctive organisational cultures and processes' (Batsleer, 1995) while creating common ground and priorities where participants begin "to talk in language that we each of us understand" (CEO quoted in Myers and Sacks, 2003). For some local development agency managers, this means reactive planning, absorption of central and local government agenda and becoming the 'third arm of the state' – convergence of ideas, aims, priorities, ways of working, and measuring outputs. For others, in the view of one development agency chief executive, it is an opportunity to "be proactive partly in anticipating issues and developments but also in trying to be innovative in developing new approaches and initiatives" – recognising the creativity of diverse viewpoints, which is more about creative tensions than automatic compromise.

The challenge for non-profit managers in these situations is to make partnership working purposeful and meaningful while avoiding the isomorphic tendency to become a quasi-public institution (Anheier, 2000, p.4). This aspect of identity is pertinent both on an individual level and from an organisational perspective especially when considering working in partnership arrangements:

"I feel- well, I mean in terms of power – which is how I would analyse it, then no...we're not {equal}."

"What was driving my thinking was the voluntary sector was nearly always the poor relation in the partnerships...and that we always have to fight to be at the table or be any part of the package of delivery or funding."

"One of the things I've been thinking is about the influence on others, and how I'm viewed by the public and private sector partners, if you like, that I work with – and I think there's an element that however good (X) is in his job, he still works for the voluntary sector. And it's still, you know, it's still qualified with that."

This is not necessarily the experience only of voluntary and community-based organisations but also of new and emerging partnership bodies. In a report considering Learning Partnerships (LPs) seen by government as being "well placed to form the 'learning arm' or sub-group of the local strategic partnership" (Flude and Selby, 2003, p.5), it was recognised that while LPs are making links and contributions, there "is no strong policy clout behind the engagement of Learning Partnerships in regeneration and this means that the LP always has to earn its place with Local Strategic Partnerships". Similarly, the experience of some support bodies for the local strategic partnerships may find transitional difficulties of establishing their role especially if staff are employed outside of local authorities:

"Quite a lot of LSP executive teams are based within the local authority...there are pros and cons. You could argue that you would get a lot more commitment from the local authority and it would be a lot easier in some ways to work with them because they'd think we were part of them. But on the other hand where would that leave everyone else and that's one of the reasons why we're not."

Feeling marginalised could in some instances trigger a passive response from organisations in that, in the words of one respondent: "the easiest thing is to stay in the groove". This may be especially so when there is recognition, explained by one respondent that:

"previous programmes haven't worked" and there's "a lurching between oh, get on with it and we want some quick wins to we want that community engagement and we recognise it's going to take twenty years...There's bits of schizophrenia that goes on quite a lot...it's kind of hard to reconcile".

Yet for a number of chief executives in local development agencies this presents both the challenges and frustrations of the job as well as the interest to keep doing it:

"I understand what the government's proposition to the voluntary sector is, if you like. Therefore, I think I'm in a good position to understand what the opportunities are for the sector, which aren't necessarily the same. But then I'm also because of my political skills as opposed to my interest in politics, I'm in quite a strong position to broker that."

This reflects in the ability to both combine central and local government agenda while keeping a keen perspective of one's own organisational needs. These are not necessary seen as either/or, but as becoming interlinked and interdependent, where appropriate, and where context and interpretation become significant factors:

“And so it doesn’t matter what the government throws at us...All of them go into that filter and I say, well, what in that government idea is about changing people’s lives for the better? And if it’s not about that, I ignore it”.

There are also significant roles to be played:

“What I think is also quite interesting is the community and voluntary sector I think here does try to model good ways of working than some of the other participants in terms of having mechanisms of going back to their sector, having some – not necessarily perfect – ways of challenging and holding people to account.”

And opportunities:

“I think coming together around the table in partnership like this gives the voluntary sector more of an opportunity to demonstrate, to model how they can do things, think things through, deliver things, work with other people...and to build a relationship which isn’t just one which is about having a service level agreement.”

6 Working and learning across boundaries

Very often, traditional management training and development is seen to focus on helping an individual to become ‘expert’ in one area – a manager in their organisation – whereas if we observe the lived experience of these chief executives, what we start to see is that the expert practitioner learns the art of modal participation. Simply put, this is the ‘ability to play various roles in various fields of participation’ where learning ‘implies becoming a different person’ in different situations, contexts and in different sets of interrelationships (Lave and Wenger, 1999) and is linked to the development and construction of personal and professional identities.

While organisations in similar fields of operation may have similar characteristics and may absorb similar environmental factors, which have an effect on their make-up, how they set aims and objectives, and how they measure their effectiveness and efficiency and how they interpret environmental factors is also influenced by other factors such as education and professional allegiance, leadership style, staff development, competence and flexibility to manage change. Interacting with ‘others in the same professional areas’ requires ‘constant and informal learning’ (Stein, 2001): learning through experience and participation and through the context of work being undertaken.

Another key component is capturing and harnessing the learning brought about by this situation and ownership of learning processes and knowledge creation. Increasingly, the UK government sees this as a central theme for employers, where “people will only really be able to learn and use what they learn, if they are working in or with organisations that are also willing to learn” (NRU, 2002, p.6) and the need for developed ‘reflective behaviours’ and, in effect to become ‘learning organizations’ (NRU, 2002, pp.32, 38). For partnerships to be active learner networks (as opposed to learning organisations *per se*) they need to safeguard a dynamic, flexible structure and to try to avoid the tendency to bureaucratise when housed within existing bureaucratic structures or when they develop their own staffing and physical structures often associated with some kind of permanence.

Often partnerships can be linked to project development and government initiatives, which although focused on long-term outcomes can be short-lived in terms of specific pilots and fixed-term pots of money for pump-priming projects. This in turn gives way to the emphasis on mainstreaming projects and ideas to change the way services are planned, delivered and used: internalising lessons learned from partnership working to change the way in which individual partner organisations work on a day-to-day basis. While there may be a tendency for 'clicking back to models that work', this necessitates the valuing of 'a rich mix of backgrounds' (NRU, 2002, p.12) and more work on 'the processes, structures and vehicles of partnership working'.

This emphasises the link between individuals' participation in partnership networks, their individual learning and development and the key strategic roles they play in influencing the actions of their own organisation members and in building the capacity (learning and development) of their organisations. Those interviewed whose role is in supporting partnerships and encouraging learning see this also in terms of whether partnership working is fully integrated into a person's everyday work, rather than a temporary bolt-on activity:

"Is it an add-on to what people do as their day job, or is it actually genuinely part of their day job, built into their job descriptions, built into their performance evaluations, built into their way of working...{it's} a major psychological shift for people to make."

"The biggest downside of {the initiative} was that it was all done in parallel to what was happening in the mainstream and what I've tried to do is integrate it a bit more."

"We've done a very good job of mainstreaming the learning...but little money given to the {organisation} has been used to generate more learning. In terms of what we could have done if there was real commitment..."

In addition, we need to consider how the knowledge created by the partnership does not dissipate when individuals leave the partnership to resume full time roles within their own organisations or, indeed, move to another partnership arena:

"The {initiative} was a nightmare from the point of view that we lost so many people because funding was never known for a longer period and so people were on short term contracts and decided to jump ship and I think we lost an awful lot of learning."

7 Learning solutions?

If, as Clancey (1995) explains, "situated learning...is a theory about the nature of human knowledge, claiming that knowledge is dynamically constructed as we perceive what is happening to us, talk and move", then through context related learning, building 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1999) and learning networks, practitioners can meet. They can discover what they think, compare sources of information and different perceptions, take time to develop thinking and reflection, generate outcomes and infer or articulate a more global view of events:

"At a regional level that's been really quite nice to see, you know, that private, public and voluntary sector have come together and had space in which to sort of learn about each other."

The opportunity to sit down and actually to consider collectively how you might tackle a particular project, a particular strategy, look at it from different angles, you know – how do other people think about this? How can we make use of industry – the sort of processes that industry might go through, how does this compare with someone from a senior management role in the local authority or voluntary sector? You know, do we have things to teach each other about how we manage and go about things?”

There is current debate among practitioners as to the best ways to participate, measure and account for these activities and respond to different organisational interpretations of the cross-sector partnership agenda. While it is felt that “if we have a better way of understanding the dynamics of an activity, we have a better way to manage the knowledge and learning” (Clancey and Sierhuis, 1996), and contribute to developing appropriate support and learning opportunities for non-profit managers and others in partnership arrangements, there are no definitive ways of knowing how to achieve this. What is accepted by some is that not investing in partnership and networking could, as one chief executive explained, have particular consequences for management and leadership development in the sector: “It does take a lot of time, and it does need maintaining and it is often not seen as being proper work in a way. Yet if, we don’t do that we miss out on support, we miss out on opportunities, we miss out on information.”

It does seem clear in some instances that local development agencies are able to embed learning from external activities into their strategic and operational planning. Partly this is because this activity is seen as their ‘natural habitat’ – contextualising, interpreting, responding and anticipating the changing local and national agenda.

There are examples, particularly where there is focused input on learning and evaluation and dedicated resources for learning (either in terms of allocated time, but more significantly in dedicated worker input). For example, one partnership board has built into its agenda group work for exchange of ideas and to act in a ‘critical friend’ capacity for specific agenda items and policy proposals. Another is looking to set up deliberate learning events for members, to enable them to experience other peoples’ work environments:

“It’s a kind of notion that’s been around for a long time, and it’s basically a recognition of what different people’s lives are like in different sectors...The point is people don’t, to some extent, have a real sense of how each other works, and are often quite critical of each other on fairly limited knowledge of what people are actually doing and the kind of pressure they are working under...There’s a whole set of things where if you don’t have some reasonable understanding you can reach quite the wrong conclusion and it’s a bit about giving people a chance to get an insight into other people’s worlds because we can only work better together by starting to do that.”

“A good example that we’ve tried is with the health sub-group of the LSP. We held a seminar which was about bringing people from the different sub-groups of the LSP – crime, education, *etc.* – together and what we did was use the day to present issues around health inequalities and the targets and the policies that were driving that work and what we did was to get people in their own themes to have a think about how their organisations and their theme groups are actually tackling health inequalities and if they’re not how they could in future. And that was really successful...”

Some higher education institutions, while largely absent from some of the partnerships have been active in establishing research and databases of information either through direct research projects or through the establishment of observatories (centres for evaluation, research and information particularly but not exclusively around regeneration). There are specific quasi governmental agencies also developing web-sites of good practice examples and evidence-based research and practice.

As one participant in a recent multi-sector meeting stated, there's perhaps "too much information out there" and it's knowing where it is and how to access it and also as a respondent stated, there is a need to "try different ways of sharing learning over and above the norm of a conference or whatever". Further, that there is a need to build active learning into partnerships as close to their inception as possible and as an interviewee suggested, "to try out different action learning sets and different ways of actually bringing people together to share learning in a more kind of deep down way so you actually get people to change and to think about the ways in which they're doing things".

For the voluntary sector and local development agencies a number of organisations have websites and databases of information, and there is a complex array of information, bulletins and briefings from national, regional and local sources, as one chief executive states: "we're incredibly well fed with national information...we have incredible networks of information". To add to this, one large LDA is helping to support the setting up of a voluntary sector research institute

8 Continuing themes for enquiry and research?

In trying to learn from past partnerships' experience and the knowledge partners bring to the table, there are a number of common themes emerging that need to be considered if partnerships can encourage and embed working and learning across boundaries, which include:

- The capacity of partnerships themselves to learn: the processes and structures that encourage active participation of all members, how business is conducted and how this is enacted within member organisations.
- The capacity of partnerships to lead or support initiatives for learning: to join-up different government and local priorities to create synergies and contribute to a learning agenda.
- How other organisations and communities engage with and influence the agenda of 'lead' partner agencies to encourage cross-(organisational) cultural and non-mainstream approaches to problem-solving.
- Working to outcomes rather than inputs and outputs and balancing this with short term targets and changing agenda and priorities. As one respondent put it, "it's hard to keep a strategic focus when the scenery around you keeps changing". This emphasises again the importance of 'capturing' learning over time and at significant periods in time.

- How management and leadership courses for non-profit and public sector embrace the realities of working across organisational boundaries and build this into existing curricula. Some universities are offering courses or modules specifically around regeneration; others offer community development approaches as part of courses; some are engaging in applied research and evaluation.
- Evaluating how the different providers and suppliers of learning experiences and interventions whether public bodies, education or private contractors are contributing.
- How qualitative research can contribute to the evidence-based agenda.

Finally, while "Government has committed itself to supporting the role of the voluntary sector" (Flude and Selby, 2003, p.16), there is need for specific resources to accompany this. This is currently part of a governmental infrastructure review. Meanwhile, as I write this paper at least two city-based voluntary and community sectors are facing significant cutbacks in funding for a number of projects. While it is recognised by all parties that some of the cutbacks may be necessary and one might anticipate de-funding of some organisations, there is much consternation as to how these reviews and decisions have been made. In both cases, there has seemingly been lack of consultation and involvement.

Some may see this as an echo of former relationships between the voluntary sector and local authorities, viz a comment from one respondent: "Councils found it very useful to boost their flagging resources through grabbing the money", whereas relationships of late had been seen as much more positive in terms of 'grabbing' of 'people's creative energy and channelling it'.

Such actions can only be a setback for partnership relations – temporally or otherwise – and raises the vexed issues of how organisations' existing methods of working – especially those with such a central role in fostering multi-agency relationships – can support the ethos of partnership development. And further, how organisations that might appear to have less to bring to the partnership table in terms of power and financial resources can remain influential in such relationships.

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